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THE CALIFORNIA GENERAL PLAN GLOSSARY

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Abbreviations Used in the General Plan Glossary

ADT: Average daily trips made by vehicles or persons in a 24-hour period
ALUC: Airport Land Use Commission
BMR: Below-market-rate dwelling unit
CBD: Central Business District
CC&Rs: Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions
CDBG: Community Development Block Grant
CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act
CFD: A Mello-Roos Community Facilities District
CHFA: California Housing Finance Agency
CIP: Capital Improvements Program
CNEL: Community Noise Equivalent Level
CMP: Congestion Management Plan
COG: Council of Governments
CRA: Community Redevelopment Agency
dB: Decibel
dBA: "A-weighted" decibel
EIR: Environmental Impact Report (State)
EIS: Environmental Impact Statement (Federal)

FAR: Floor Area Ratio
FAUS: Federal Aid to Urban Systems
FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA: Federal Highway Administration
FIR: Fiscal Impact Report
FIRM: Flood Insurance Rate Map
FmHA: Farmers Home Administration
GMI: Gross Monthly Income
HAP: Housing Assistance Plan
HCD: Housing and Community Development Department of the State of California
HOV: High Occupancy Vehicle
HUD: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
JPA: Joint Powers Authority
LAFCo: Local Agency Formation Commission
Ldn: Day and Night Average Sound Level
Leq: Sound Energy Equivalent Level
LHA: Local Housing Authority
LOS: Level of Service
LRT: Light (duty) Rail Transit
NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act
OPR: Office of Planning and Research, State of California
PUD: Planned Unit Development
SRO: Single Room Occupancy
TDM: Transportation Demand Management
TDR: Transfer of Development Rights
TOD: Transit-oriented Development
TSM: Transportation Systems Management
UBC: Uniform Building Code
UHC: Uniform Housing Code
UMTA: Urban Mass Transportation Administration
VMT: Vehicle Miles Traveled

The Definitions

Acceptable Risk

A hazard deemed to be a tolerable exposure to danger given the expected benefits to be obtained. Different levels of acceptable risk may be assigned according to the potential danger and the criticalness of the threatened structure. The levels may range from "near zero" for nuclear plants and natural gas transmission lines to "moderate" for open space, ranches and low-intensity warehouse uses.

Access/Egress

The ability to enter a site from a roadway and exit a site onto a roadway by motorized vehicle.

Acres, Gross

The entire acreage of a site. Most communities calculate gross acreage to the centerline of proposed bounding streets and to the edge of the right-of-way of existing or dedicated streets.

Acres, Net

The portion of a site that can actually be built upon. The following generally are not included in the net acreage of a site: public or private road rights-of-way, public open

space, and flood ways.

Active Solar System

A system that uses a mechanical device, such as pumps or fans run by electricity in addition to solar energy, to transport air or water between a solar collector and the interior of a building for heating or cooling. (See "[Passive Solar System.](#)")

Adaptive Reuse

The conversion of obsolescent or historic buildings from their original or most recent use to a new use. For example, the conversion of former hospital or school buildings to residential use, or the conversion of an historic single-family home to office use.

Adverse Impact

A negative consequence for the physical, social, or economic environment resulting from an action or project.

Affordability Requirements

Provisions established by a public agency to require that a specific percentage of housing units in a project or development remain affordable to very low- and low- income households for a specified period.

Affordable Housing

Housing capable of being purchased or rented by a household with very low, low, or moderate income, based on a household's ability to make monthly payments necessary to obtain housing. Housing is considered affordable when a household pays less than 30 percent of its gross monthly income (GMI) for housing including utilities.

Agency

The governmental entity, department, office, or administrative unit responsible for carrying out regulations.

Agricultural Preserve

Land designated for agriculture or conservation. (See "[Williamson Act.](#)")

Agriculture

Use of land for the production of food and fiber, including the growing of crops and/or the grazing of animals on natural prime or improved pasture land.

Agriculture-Related Business

Feed mills, dairy supplies, poultry processing, creameries, auction yards, veterinarians and other businesses supporting local agriculture.

Air Pollution

Concentrations of substances found in the atmosphere that exceed naturally occurring quantities and are undesirable or harmful in some way.

Air Rights

The right granted by a property owner to a buyer to use space above an existing right-of-way or other site, usually for development.

Airport-related Use

A use that supports airport operations including, but not limited to, aircraft repair and maintenance, flight instruction, and aircraft chartering.

Alley

A narrow service way, either public or private, which provides a permanently reserved but secondary means of public access not intended for general traffic circulation. Alleys typically are located along rear property lines.

Alluvial

Soils deposited by stream action.

Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone Act, Earthquake Fault Zone

A state designated seismic hazard zone along traces of potentially and recently active faults, in which specialized geologic investigations must be prepared prior to approval of certain types of new development.

Ambient

Surrounding on all sides; used to describe measurements of existing conditions with respect to traffic, noise, air and other environments.

Analysis

The examination of a subject, particularly its component parts and their interrelationships.

Annex, v.

To incorporate a land area into an existing district or municipality, with a resulting change in the boundaries of the annexing jurisdiction.

Apartment

(1) One or more rooms of a building used as a place to live, in a building containing at least one other unit used for the same purpose. (2) A separate suite, not owner occupied, which includes kitchen facilities and is designed for and rented as the home, residence, or sleeping place of one or more persons living as a single housekeeping unit.

Approach Zone

The air space at each end of a landing strip that defines the glide path or approach path of an aircraft and that should be free from obstruction.

Appropriate

An act, condition, or state that is considered suitable.

Aquifer

An underground, water-bearing layer of earth, porous rock, sand, or gravel, through which water can seep or be held in natural storage. Aquifers generally hold sufficient water to be used as a water supply.

Arable

Land capable of being cultivated for farming.

Archaeological

Relating to the material remains of past human life, culture, or activities.

Architectural Control; Architectural Review

Regulations and procedures requiring the exterior design of structures to be suitable, harmonious, and in keeping with the general appearance, historic character, and/or style of surrounding areas. A process used to exercise control over the design of buildings and their settings. (See "[Design Review.](#)")

Area; Area Median Income

As used in State of California housing law with respect to income eligibility limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), "area" means metropolitan area or non-metropolitan county. In non-metropolitan areas, the "area median income" is the higher of the county median family income or the statewide non-metropolitan median family income.

Area of Interest

That area having a direct physical and social influence on a city's planning area but not appropriate for annexation.

Arterial

Medium-speed (30-40 mph), medium-capacity (10,000-35,000 average daily trips) roadway that provides intra-community travel and access to the county-wide highway system. Access to community arterials should be provided at collector roads and local streets, but direct access from parcels to existing arterials is common.

Artesian

An aquifer in which water is confined under pressure between layers of impermeable material. Wells tapping into an artesian stratum will flow naturally without the use of pumps. (See "[Aquifer.](#)")

Article 34 Referendum

Article 34 of the Constitution of the State of California requires passage of a referendum within a city or county for approval of the development or acquisition of a publicly financed housing project where more than 49 percent of the units are set aside for low-income households.

Articulation

Variation in the depth of the building plane, roof line, or height of a structure that breaks up plain, monotonous areas and creates patterns of light and shadow.

Assessment District

(See "[Benefit Assessment District.](#)")

Assisted Housing

Generally multi-family rental housing, but sometimes single-family ownership units, whose construction, financing, sales prices, or rents have been subsidized by federal, state, or local housing programs including, but not limited to Federal Section 8 (new construction, substantial rehabilitation, and loan management set-asides), Federal Sections 213, 236, and 202, Federal Section 221(d)(3) (below-market interest rate program), Federal Section 101 (rent supplement assistance), CDBG, FmHA Section 515, multi-family mortgage revenue bond programs, local redevelopment and in lieu fee programs, and units developed pursuant to local inclusionary housing and density bonus programs. By January 1, 1992, all California Housing Elements are required to address the preservation or replacement of assisted housing that is eligible to change to market rate housing by 2002.

Attainment

Compliance with State and federal ambient air quality standards within an air basin. (See "[Non-attainment.](#)")

Auto Mall

A single location that provides sales space and centralized services for a number of

automobile dealers, and which may include such related services as auto insurance dealers and credit institutions that provide financing opportunities.

Automobile-intensive Use

A use of a retail area that depends on exposure to continuous auto traffic.

Base Flood

In any given year, a 100-year flood that has 1 percent likelihood of occurring, and is recognized as a standard for acceptable risk.

Baylands

Areas along a bay that are permanently wet or periodically covered with shallow water, such as saltwater and freshwater marshes, open or closed brackish marshes, swamps, mudflats, and fans.

Bed and Breakfast

Usually a dwelling unit, but sometimes a small hotel, which provides lodging and breakfast for temporary overnight occupants, for compensation.

Below-market-rate (BMR) Housing Unit

(1) Any housing unit specifically priced to be sold or rented to low- or moderate-income households for an amount less than the fair-market value of the unit. Both the State of California and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development set standards for determining which households qualify as "low income" or "moderate income." (2) The financing of housing at less than prevailing interest rates.

Benefit Assessment District

An area within a public agency's boundaries that receives a special benefit from the construction of one or more public facilities. A Benefit Assessment District has no legal life of its own and cannot act by itself. It is strictly a financing mechanism for providing public infrastructure as allowed under the Streets And Highways Code. Bonds may be issued to finance the improvements, subject to repayment by assessments charged against the benefitting properties. Creation of a Benefit Assessment District enables property owners in a specific area to cause the construction of public facilities or to maintain them (for example, a downtown, or the grounds and landscaping of a specific area) by contributing their fair share of the construction and/or installation and operating costs.

Bicycle Lane (Class II facility)

A corridor expressly reserved for bicycles, existing on a street or roadway in addition to any lanes for use by motorized vehicles.

Bicycle Path (Class I facility)

A paved route not on a street or roadway and expressly reserved for bicycles traversing an otherwise unpaved area. Bicycle paths may parallel roads but typically are separated from them by landscaping.

Bicycle Route (Class III facility)

A facility shared with motorists and identified only by signs, a bicycle route has no pavement markings or lane stripes.

Bikeways

A term that encompasses bicycle lanes, bicycle paths, and bicycle routes.

Biomass

Plant material, used for the production of such things as fuel alcohol and non-chemical fertilizers. Biomass sources may be plants grown especially for that purpose or waste products from livestock, harvesting, milling, or from agricultural production or processing.

Biotic Community

A group of living organisms characterized by a distinctive combination of both animal and plant species in a particular habitat.

Blight

A condition of a site, structure, or area that may cause nearby buildings and/or areas to decline in attractiveness and/or utility. The Community Redevelopment Law (Health and Safety Code, Sections 33031 and 33032) contains a definition of blight used to determine eligibility of proposed redevelopment project areas.

Bond

An interest-bearing promise to pay a stipulated sum of money, with the principal amount due on a specific date. Funds raised through the sale of bonds can be used for various public purposes.

Brownfield

An area with abandoned, idle, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion, redevelopment, or reuse is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. (See "[Greenfield.](#)")

Buffer Zone

An area of land separating two distinct land uses that acts to soften or mitigate the effects of one land use on the other.

Building

Any structure used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy.

Building Height

The vertical distance from the average contact ground level of a building to the highest point of the coping of a flat roof or to the deck line of a mansard roof or to the mean height level between eaves and ridge for a gable, hip, or gambrel roof. The exact definition varies by community. For example, in some communities building height is measured to the highest point of the roof, not including elevator and cooling towers.

Buildout; Build-out

Development of land to its full potential or theoretical capacity as permitted under current or proposed planning or zoning designations. (See "[Carrying Capacity.](#)")

Business Services

A subcategory of commercial land use that permits establishments primarily engaged in rendering services to other business establishments on a fee or contract basis, such as advertising and mailing; building maintenance; personnel and employment services; management and consulting services; protective services; equipment rental and leasing; photo finishing; copying and printing; travel; office supply; and similar services.

Busway

A vehicular right-of-way or portion thereof--often an exclusive lane--reserved exclusively for buses.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

A State law requiring State and local agencies to regulate activities with consideration for environmental protection. If a proposed activity has the potential for a significant adverse environmental impact, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared and certified as to its adequacy before taking action on the proposed project. General Plans require the preparation of a "program EIR."

California Housing Finance Agency (CHFA)

A State agency, established by the Housing and Home Finance Act of 1975, which is authorized to sell revenue bonds and generate funds for the development, rehabilitation, and conservation of low-and moderate-income housing.

Caltrans

California Department of Transportation.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

A program, administered by a city or county government and reviewed by its planning commission, which schedules permanent improvements, usually for a minimum of five years in the future, to fit the projected fiscal capability of the local jurisdiction. The program generally is reviewed annually, for conformance to and consistency with the general plan.

Carbon Dioxide

A colorless, odorless, non-poisonous gas that is a normal part of the atmosphere.

Carbon Monoxide

A colorless, odorless, highly poisonous gas produced by automobiles and other machines with internal combustion engines that imperfectly burn fossil fuels such as oil and gas.

Carrying Capacity

Used in determining the potential of an area to absorb development: (1) The level of land use, human activity, or development for a specific area that can be accommodated permanently without an irreversible change in the quality of air, water, land, or plant and animal habitats. (2) The upper limits of development beyond which the quality of human life, health, welfare, safety, or community character within an area will be impaired. (3) The maximum level of development allowable under current zoning. (See "[Buildout.](#)")

Caulking

A waterproof compound or material used to stop up and make tight against leakage (as the cracks in a window frame).

Census

The official decennial enumeration of the population conducted by the federal government.

Central Business District (CBD)

The major commercial downtown center of a community. General guidelines for delineating a downtown area are defined by the U.S. Census of Retail Trade, with specific boundaries being set by the local municipality.

Channelization

(1) The straightening and/or deepening of a watercourse for purposes of storm-runoff control or ease of navigation. Channelization often includes lining of stream banks with a retaining material such as concrete. (2) At the intersection of roadways, the directional separation of traffic lanes through the use of curbs or raised islands that limit the paths that

vehicles may take through the intersection.

Character

Special physical characteristics of a structure or area that set it apart from its surroundings and contribute to its individuality.

Circulation Element

One of the seven State-mandated elements of a local general plan, it contains adopted goals, policies, and implementation programs for the planning and management of existing and proposed thoroughfares, transportation routes, and terminals, as well as local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the general plan.

Circulation System

A network of transit, automobile, bicycle and pedestrian rights-of-way that connect origins and destinations.

City

City with a capital "C" generally refers to the government or administration of a city. City with a lower case "c" may mean any city or may refer to the geographical area of a city (*e.g.*, the city bikeway system.)

Clear Zone

That section of an approach zone of an airport where the plane defining the glide path is 50 feet or less above the center-line of the runway. The clear zone ends where the height of the glide path above ground level is above 50 feet. Land use under the clear zone is restricted.

Clustered Development

Development in which a number of dwelling units are placed in closer proximity than usual, or are attached, with the purpose of retaining an open space area.

Cogeneration

The harnessing of heat energy, that normally would be wasted, to generate electricity-- usually through the burning of waste.

Collector

Relatively-low-speed (25-30 mph), relatively-low-volume (5,000-20,000 average daily trips) street that provides circulation within and between neighborhoods. Collectors usually serve short trips and are intended for collecting trips from local streets and distributing them to the arterial network.

Combined Sewer/Combination Sewer

A sewerage system that carries both sanitary sewage and stormwater runoff.

Commercial

A land use classification that permits facilities for the buying and selling of commodities and services.

Commercial Strip

Commercial development, usually one store deep, that fronts on a major street for a distance of one city block or more. Includes individual buildings on their own lots, with or without on-site parking, and small linear shopping centers with shallow on-site parking in front of the stores.

Community Care Facility

Elderly housing licensed by the State Health and Welfare Agency, Department of Social Services, typically for residents who are frail and need supervision. Services normally include three meals daily, housekeeping, security and emergency response, a full activities program, supervision in the dispensing of medicine, personal services such as assistance in grooming and bathing, but no nursing care. Sometimes referred to as residential care or personal care. (See "[Congregate Care.](#)")

Community Center

A public facility in which educational, therapeutic and/or recreational programs are provided.

Community Child Care Agency

A non-profit agency established to organize community resources for the development and improvement of child care services.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

A grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on a formula basis for entitlement communities, and by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for non-entitled jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development.

Community Facilities District

Under the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 (Government Code Section 53311 *et seq*), a legislative body may create within its jurisdiction a special district that can issue tax-exempt bonds for the planning, design, acquisition, construction, and/or operation of public facilities, as well as provide public services to district residents. Special tax assessments levied by the district are used to repay the bonds.

Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)

A 24-hour energy equivalent level derived from a variety of single-noise events, with weighting factors of 5 and 10 dBA applied to the evening (7 PM to 10 PM) and nighttime (10 PM to 7 AM) periods, respectively, to allow for the greater sensitivity to noise during these hours.

Community Park

Land with full public access intended to provide recreation opportunities beyond those supplied by neighborhood parks. Community parks are larger in scale than neighborhood parks but smaller than regional parks.

Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)

A local agency created under California Redevelopment Law, or a local legislative body that has elected to exercise the powers granted to such an agency, for the purpose of planning, developing, re-planning, redesigning, clearing, reconstructing, and/or rehabilitating all or part of a specified area with residential, commercial, industrial, and/or public (including recreational) structures and facilities. The redevelopment agency's plans must be compatible with adopted community general plans.

Community Service Area

A geographic subarea of a city or county used for the planning and delivery of parks, recreation, and other human services based on an assessment of the service needs of the population in that subarea.

Commute-shed

The area from which people do or might commute from their homes to a specific workplace destination, given specific assumptions about maximum travel time or distance.

Comparison Goods

Retail goods for which consumers will do comparison shopping before making a purchase. These goods tend to have a style factor and to be "larger ticket" items such as clothes, furniture, appliances and automobiles.

Compatible

Capable of existing together without conflict or ill effects.

Composting

The treatment of solid organic refuse through aerobic, biologic decomposition.

Concurrency

Installation and operation of facilities and services needed to meet the demands of new development simultaneous with the development.

Condominium

A structure of two or more units, the interior spaces of which are individually owned; the balance of the property (both land and building) is owned in common by the owners of the individual units. (See "[Townhouse.](#)")

Congestion Management Plan (CMP)

A mechanism employing growth management techniques, including traffic level of service requirements, standards for public transit, trip reduction programs involving transportation systems management and jobs/housing balance strategies, and capital improvement programming, for the purpose of controlling and/or reducing the cumulative regional traffic impacts of development. AB 1791, effective August 1, 1990, requires all cities, and counties that include urbanized areas, to adopt by December 1, 1991, and annually update a Congestion Management Plan.

Congregate Care

Apartment housing, usually for seniors, in a group setting that includes independent living and sleeping accommodations in conjunction with shared dining and recreational facilities. (See "[Community Care Facility.](#)")

Conservation

The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or degradation. (See "[Conservation Element.](#)")

Conservation Element

One of the seven State-mandated elements of a local general plan, it contains adopted goals, policies, and implementation programs for the conservation, development, and use of natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources.

Consistency, Consistent With

Free from significant variation or contradiction. The various diagrams, text, goals, policies, and programs in the general plan must be consistent with each other, not contradictory or preferential. The term "consistent with" is used interchangeably with "conformity with." The courts have held that the phrase "consistent with" means "agreement with; harmonious with." Webster defines "conformity with" as meaning

harmony, agreement when used with "with." The term "conformity" means in harmony therewith or agreeable to (Sec 58 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 21, 25 [1975]). California State law also requires that a general plan be internally consistent and also requires consistency between a general plan and implementation measures such as the zoning ordinance.

Consistent

Free from variation or contradiction. Programs in the General Plan are to be consistent, not contradictory or preferential. State law requires consistency between a general plan and implementation measures such as the zoning ordinance.

Convenience Goods

Retail items generally necessary or desirable for everyday living, usually purchased at a convenient nearby location. Because these goods cost relatively little compared to income, they are often purchased without comparison shopping.

Conveyance Tax

A tax imposed on the sale, lease, or transfer of real property.

Cordon Count

A measurement of all travel (usually vehicle trips, but sometimes person trips) in and out of a defined area (around which a "cordon" is drawn).

County

County with a capital "C" generally refers to the government or administration of a county. County with a lower case "c" may mean any county or may refer to the geographical area of a county (*e.g.*, the county road system).

Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs)

A term used to describe restrictive limitations that may be placed on property and its use, and which usually are made a condition of holding title or lease.

Criterion

A standard upon which a judgment or decision may be based. (See ["Standards."](#))

Critical Facility

Facilities housing or serving many people, which are necessary in the event of an earthquake or flood, such as hospitals, fire, police, and emergency service facilities, utility "lifeline" facilities, such as water, electricity, and gas supply, sewage disposal, and communications and transportation facilities.

Cross-acceptance

The review by two or more jurisdictions of each other's plans. Each jurisdiction determines whether the plans submitted are consistent or can be made compatible with its own. The process provides for communication and negotiation between the affected jurisdictions. (See ["Consistent With"](#))

Cul-de-sac

A short street or alley with only a single means of ingress and egress at one end and with a large turnaround at its other end.

Cumulative Impact

As used in CEQA, the total impact resulting from the accumulated impacts of individual projects or programs over time.

dB

Decibel; a unit used to express the relative intensity of a sound as it is heard by the human ear.

dBA

The "A-weighted" scale for measuring sound in decibels; weighs or reduces the effects of low and high frequencies in order to simulate human hearing. Every increase of 10 dBA doubles the perceived loudness though the noise is actually ten times more intense.

Dedication

The turning over by an owner or developer of private land for public use, and the acceptance of land for such use by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses often are made conditions for approval of a development by a city or county.

Dedication, In lieu of

Cash payments that may be required of an owner or developer as a substitute for a dedication of land, usually calculated in dollars per lot, and referred to as in lieu fees or in lieu contributions.

Defensible space

(1) In fire-fighting and prevention, a 30-foot area of non-combustible surfaces separating urban and wildland areas. (2) In urban areas, open spaces, entry points, and pathways configured to provide maximum opportunities to rightful users and/or residents to defend themselves against intruders and criminal activity.

Deficiency Plan

An action program for improving or preventing the deterioration of level of service on the Congestion Management Agency street and highway network.

Density, Residential

The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. Densities specified in the General Plan may be expressed in units per gross acre or per net developable acre. (See ["Acres, Gross,"](#) and ["Developable Acres, Net."](#))

Density Bonus

The allocation of development rights that allow a parcel to accommodate additional square footage or additional residential units beyond the maximum for which the parcel is zoned, usually in exchange for the provision or preservation of an amenity at the same site or at another location. Under California law, a housing development that provides 20 percent of its units for lower income households, or 10 percent of its units for very low-income households, or 50 percent of its units for seniors, is entitled to a density bonus. (See ["Development Rights, Transfer of."](#))

Density, Control of

A limitation on the occupancy of land. Density can be controlled through zoning in the following ways: use restrictions, minimum lot-size requirements, floor area ratios, land use-intensity ratios, setback and yard requirements, minimum house-size requirements, ratios comparing number and types of housing units to land area, limits on units per acre, and other means. Allowable density often serves as the major distinction between residential districts.

Density, Employment

A measure of the number of employed persons per specific area (for example, employees/acre).

Density Transfer

A way of retaining open space by concentrating densities—usually in compact areas adjacent to existing urbanization and utilities—while leaving unchanged historic, sensitive, or hazardous areas. In some jurisdictions, for example, developers can buy development rights of properties targeted for public open space and transfer the additional density to the base number of units permitted in the zone in which they propose to develop.

Design Review; Design Control

The comprehensive evaluation of a development and its impact on neighboring properties and the community as a whole, from the standpoint of site and landscape design, architecture, materials, colors, lighting, and signs, in accordance with a set of adopted criteria and standards. "Design *Control*" requires that certain specific things be done and that other things not be done. Design Control language is most often found within a zoning ordinance. "Design Review" usually refers to a system set up outside of the zoning ordinance, whereby projects are reviewed against certain standards and criteria by a specially established design review board or committee. (See "[Architectural Control](#).")

Destination Retail

Retail businesses that generate a special purpose trip and that do not necessarily benefit from a high-volume pedestrian location.

Detachment

Withdrawal of territory from a special district or city.

Detention Dam/Basin/Pond

Dams may be classified according to the broad function they serve, such as storage, diversion, or detention. Detention dams are constructed to retard flood runoff and minimize the effect of sudden floods. Detention dams fall into two main types. In one type, the water is temporarily stored, and released through an outlet structure at a rate which will not exceed the carrying capacity of the channel downstream. Often, the basins are planted with grass and used for open space or recreation in periods of dry weather. The other type, most often called a *Retention Pond*, allows for water to be held as long as possible and may or may not allow for the controlled release of water. In some cases, the water is allowed to seep into the permeable banks or gravel strata in the foundation. This latter type is sometimes called a Water-Spreading Dam or Dike because its main purpose is to recharge the underground water supply. Detention dams are also constructed to trap sediment. These are often called Debris Dams.

Developable Acres, Net

The portion of a site that can be used for density calculations. Some communities calculate density based on gross acreage. Public or private road rights-of-way are not included in the net developable acreage of a site.

Developable Land

Land that is suitable as a location for structures and that can be developed free of hazards to, and without disruption of, or significant impact on, natural resource areas.

Developer

An individual who or business that prepares raw land for the construction of buildings or causes to be built physical building space for use primarily by others, and in which the preparation of the land or the creation of the building space is in itself a business and is not incidental to another business or activity.

Development

The physical extension and/or construction of urban land uses. Development activities include: subdivision of land; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities, and other facilities; installation of septic systems; grading; deposit of refuse, debris, or fill materials; and clearing of natural vegetative cover (with the exception of agricultural activities). Routine repair and maintenance activities are exempted.

Development Agreement

A legislatively-approved contract between a jurisdiction and a person having legal or equitable interest in real property within the jurisdiction (California Government Code Section 5865 *et seq.*) that "freezes" certain rules, regulations, and policies applicable to development of a property for a specified period of time, usually in exchange for certain concessions by the owner.

Development Fee

(See ["Impact Fee."](#))

Development Rights

The right to develop land by a land owner who maintains fee-simple ownership over the land or by a party other than the owner who has obtained the rights to develop. Such rights usually are expressed in terms of density allowed under existing zoning. For example, one development right may equal one unit of housing or may equal a specific number of square feet of gross floor area in one or more specified zone districts. (See ["Interest, Fee."](#), ["Interest, Less-than-fee."](#) and "Development Rights, Transfer of (TDR).")

Development Rights, Transfer of (TDR)

Also known as "Transfer of Development Credits," a program that can relocate potential development from areas where proposed land use or environmental impacts are considered undesirable (the "donor" site) to another ("receiver") site chosen on the basis of its ability to accommodate additional units of development beyond that for which it was zoned, with minimal environmental, social, and aesthetic impacts. (See "Development Rights.")

Disability

Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual, or a record of such impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.

Discourage, v.

To advise or persuade to refrain from.

Discretionary Decision

As used in CEQA, an action taken by a governmental agency that calls for the exercise of judgment in deciding whether to approve and/or how to carry out a project.

Dissolution

Elimination of a special district; the opposite of formation.

Distribution Use

(See ["Warehousing Use."](#))

District

(1) An area of a city or county that has a unique character identifiable as different from surrounding areas because of distinctive architecture, streets, geographic features, culture,

landmarks, activities, or land uses. (2) A portion of the territory of a city or county within which uniform zoning regulations and requirements apply; a zone.

Diversion

The direction of water in a stream away from its natural course (*i.e.*, as in a diversion that removes water from a stream for human use).

Diversity

Differences among otherwise similar elements that give them unique forms and qualities. *e.g.*, housing diversity can be achieved by differences in unit size, tenure, or cost.

Dnl

Used interchangeably with Ldn.

Duet

A detached building designed for occupation as the residence of two families living independently of each other, with each family living area defined by separate fee title ownership.

Duplex

A detached building under single ownership that is designed for occupation as the residence of two families living independently of each other.

Dwelling Unit

A room or group of rooms (including sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation facilities, but not more than one kitchen), which constitutes an independent housekeeping unit, occupied or intended for occupancy by one household on a long-term basis.

Easement

Usually the right to use property owned by another for specific purposes or to gain access to another property. For example, utility companies often have easements on the private property of individuals to be able to install and maintain utility facilities.

Easement, Conservation

A tool for acquiring open space with less than full-fee purchase, whereby a public agency buys only certain specific rights from the land owner. These may be positive rights (providing the public with the opportunity to hunt, fish, hike, or ride over the land), or they may be restrictive rights (limiting the uses to which the land owner may devote the land in the future.)

Easement, Scenic

A tool that allows a public agency to use an owner's land for scenic enhancement, such as roadside landscaping or vista preservation.

Ecology

The interrelationship of living things to one another and their environment; the study of such interrelationships.

Economic Base

Economic Base theory essentially holds that the structure of the economy is made up of two broad classes of productive effort—basic activities that produce and distribute goods and services for export to firms and individuals outside a defined localized economic area, and nonbasic activities whose goods and services are consumed at home within the boundaries of the local economic area. Viewed another way, basic activity exports goods

and services and brings new dollars into the area; non-basic activity recirculates dollars within the area. This distinction holds that the reason for the growth of a particular region is its capacity to provide the means of payment for raw materials, food, and services that the region cannot produce itself and also support the nonbasic activities that are principally local in productive scope and market area. (See "[Industry, Basic.](#)" and "[Industry, Non-basic.](#)")

Economic Development Commission (EDC)

An agency charged with seeking economic development projects and economic expansion at higher employment densities.

Ecosystem

An interacting system formed by a biotic community and its physical environment.

Elderly

Persons age 62 and older. (See "[Seniors.](#)")

Elderly Housing

Typically one- and two-bedroom apartments or condominiums designed to meet the needs of persons 62 years of age and older or, if more than 150 units, persons 55 years of age and older, and restricted to occupancy by them. (See "[Congregate Care.](#)")

Emergency Shelter

A facility that provides immediate and short-term housing and supplemental services for the homeless. Shelters come in many sizes, but an optimum size is considered to be 20 to 40 beds. Supplemental services may include food, counseling, and access to other social programs. (See "[Homeless.](#)" and "[Transitional Housing.](#)")

Eminent Domain

The right of a public entity to acquire private property for public use by condemnation, and the payment of just compensation.

Emission Standard

The maximum amount of pollutant legally permitted to be discharged from a single source, either mobile or stationary.

Encourage, v.

To stimulate or foster a particular condition through direct or indirect action by the private sector or government agencies.

Endangered Species

A species of animal or plant is considered to be endangered when its prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes.

Energy Benefit, Net

The difference between the energy produced and the energy required for production, including the indirect energy consumed in the manufacture and delivery of components.

Enhance, v.

To improve existing conditions by increasing the quantity or quality of beneficial uses or features.

Environment

CEQA defines environment as "the physical conditions which exist within the area which

will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance."

Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

A report required of general plans by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and which assesses all the environmental characteristics of an area and determines what effects or impacts will result if the area is altered or disturbed by a proposed action. (See ["California Environmental Quality Act."](#))

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, a statement on the effect of development proposals and other major actions that significantly affect the environment.

Erosion

(1) The loosening and transportation of rock and soil debris by wind, rain, or running water. (2) The gradual wearing away of the upper layers of earth.

Exaction

A contribution or payment required as an authorized precondition for receiving a development permit; usually refers to mandatory dedication (or fee in lieu of dedication) requirements found in many subdivision regulations.

Expansive Soils

Soils that swell when they absorb water and shrink as they dry.

Export-Employment Use

An activity that produces and/or distributes goods and services for export to firms and individuals outside of the city (or county). (See ["Economic Base."](#))

Expressway

A divided multi-lane major arterial street for through traffic with partial control of access and with grade separations at major intersections.

Exurban Area

The region that lies beyond a city and its suburbs.

Fair Market Rent

The rent, including utility allowances, determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for purposes of administering the Section 8 Existing Housing Program.

Family

(1) Two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption [U.S. Bureau of the Census]. (2) An individual or a group of persons living together who constitute a bona fide single-family housekeeping unit in a dwelling unit, not including a fraternity, sorority, club, or other group of persons occupying a hotel, lodging house or institution of any kind [California].

Farmers Home Administration (FmHA)

A federal agency providing loans and grants for improvement projects and low-income housing in rural areas.

Farmland

Refers to eight classifications of land mapped by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil

Conservation Service. The five agricultural classifications defined below -- except Grazing Land -- do not include publicly owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use.

- ***Prime Farmland***. Land which has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to current farming methods. Prime Farmland must have been used for the production of irrigated crops within the last three years.
- ***Farmland of Statewide Importance***. Land other than Prime Farmland which has a good combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. It must have been used for the production of irrigated crops within the last three years.
- ***Unique Farmland***. Land which does not meet the criteria for Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, that is currently used for the production of specific high economic value crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high quality or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to current farming methods. Examples of such crops may include oranges, olives, avocados, rice, grapes, and cut flowers.
- ***Farmland of Local Importance***. Land other than Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland that is either currently producing crops, or that has the capability of production. This land may be important to the local economy due to its productivity.
- ***Grazing Land***. Land on which the existing vegetation, whether grown naturally or through management, is suitable for grazing or browsing of livestock. This classification does not include land previously designated as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance, and heavily brushed, timbered, excessively steep, or rocky lands which restrict the access and movement of livestock.

Fast-food Restaurant

Any retail establishment intended primarily to provide short-order food services for on-site dining and/or take-out, including self-serve restaurants (excluding cafeterias where food is consumed on the premises), drive-in restaurants, and formula restaurants required by contract or other arrangement to offer standardized menus, ingredients, and fast-food preparation.

Fault

A fracture in the earth's crust forming a boundary between rock masses that have shifted.

Feasible

Capable of being done, executed, or managed successfully from the standpoint of the physical and/or financial abilities of the implementer(s).

Feasible, Technically

Capable of being implemented because the industrial, mechanical, or application technology exists.

Field Act

Legislation, passed after a 1933 Long Beach earthquake that collapsed a school, that established more stringent structural requirements and standards for construction of schools than for other buildings.

Finding(s)

The result(s) of an investigation and the basis upon which decisions are made. Findings are used by government agents and bodies to justify action taken by the entity.

Fire Hazard Zone

An area where, due to slope, fuel, weather, or other fire-related conditions, the potential loss of life and property from a fire necessitates special fire protection measures and planning before development occurs.

Fire-resistive

Able to withstand specified temperatures for a certain period of time, such as a one-hour fire wall; not fireproof.

Fiscal Impact Analysis

A projection of the direct public costs and revenues resulting from population or employment change to the local jurisdiction(s) in which the change is taking place. Enables local governments to evaluate relative fiscal merits of general plans, specific plans, or projects.

Fiscal Impact Report (FIR)

A report projecting the public costs and revenues that will result from a proposed program or development. (See ["Fiscal Impact Analysis."](#))

Flag Lot

A lot that is located behind another lot or lots, has street access only via a long driveway corridor, and does not have a standard street frontage.

Flood, 100-Year

The magnitude of a flood expected to occur on the average every 100 years, based on historical data. The 100-year flood has a 1/100, or one percent, chance of occurring in any given year.

Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)

For each community, the official map on which the Federal Insurance Administration has delineated areas of special flood hazard and the risk premium zones applicable to that community.

Flood Plain

The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream regularly subject to flooding. That part of the flood plain subject to a one percent chance of flooding in any given year is designated as an "area of special flood hazard" by the Federal Insurance Administration.

Flood Plain Fringe

All land between the floodway and the upper elevation of the 100-year flood.

Floodway

The channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the "base flood" without cumulatively increasing the water

surface elevation more than one foot. No development is allowed in floodways.

Floor Area, Gross

The sum of the horizontal areas of the several floors of a building measured from the exterior face of exterior walls, or from the centerline of a wall separating two buildings, but not including any space where the floor-to-ceiling height is less than six feet. Some cities exclude specific kinds of space (*e.g.*, elevator shafts, parking decks) from the calculation of gross floor area.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

The gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the total net area of the site, expressed in decimals to one or two places. For example, on a site with 10,000 net sq. ft. of land area, a Floor Area Ratio of 1.0 will allow a maximum of 10,000 gross sq. ft. of building floor area to be built. On the same site, an FAR of 1.5 would allow 15,000 sq. ft. of floor area; an FAR of 2.0 would allow 20,000 sq. ft.; and an FAR of 0.5 would allow only 5,000 sq. ft. Also commonly used in zoning, FARs typically are applied on a parcel- by-parcel basis as opposed to an average FAR for an entire land use or zoning district.

Footprint; Building Footprint

The outline of a building at all of those points where it meets the ground.

Freeway

A high-speed, high-capacity, limited-access transportation facility serving regional and county-wide travel. Such roads are free of tolls, as contrasted with "turnpikes" or other "toll roads" that are now being introduced into Southern California. Freeways generally are used for long trips between major land use generators. At Level of Service "E," they carry approximately 1,875 vehicles per lane per hour, in both directions. Major streets cross at a different grade level.

Friction Factor

Constraint applied in a traffic model to introduce an approximation of conditions that exist on streets in a city or county. These conditions reduce the speed of traffic and the desirability of specific links in the network upon which the traffic model distributes trips. Examples are frequency of low-speed curves, frequency of driveways, narrowness of lanes, and lack of turning lanes at intersections.

Gateway

A point along a roadway entering a city or county at which a motorist gains a sense of having left the environs and of having entered the city or county.

General Plan

A compendium of city or county policies regarding its long-term development, in the form of maps and accompanying text. The General Plan is a legal document required of each local agency by the State of California Government Code Section 65301 and adopted by the City Council or Board of Supervisors. In California, the General Plan has 7 mandatory elements (Circulation, Conservation, Housing, Land Use, Noise, Open Space, Safety and Seismic Safety) and may include any number of optional elements (such as Air Quality, Economic Development, Hazardous Waste, and Parks and Recreation). The General Plan may also be called a "City Plan," "Comprehensive Plan," or "Master Plan."

Geologic Review

The analysis of geologic hazards, including all potential seismic hazards, surface ruptures, liquefaction, landsliding, mudsliding, and the potential for erosion and sedimentation.

Geological

Pertaining to rock or solid matter.

Goal

A general, overall, and ultimate purpose, aim, or end toward which the City or County will direct effort.

Granny Flat

(See "[Second Unit.](#)")

Grasslands

Land reserved for pasturing or mowing, in which grasses are the predominant vegetation.

Greenfield

Farmland and open areas where there has been no prior industrial or commercial activity, and therefore where the threat of contamination is much lower than in urbanized areas.

(See "[Brownfield.](#)")

Greenhouse Effect

A term used to describe the warming of the Earth's atmosphere due to accumulated carbon dioxide and other gases in the upper atmosphere. These gases absorb energy radiated from the Earth's surface, "trapping" it in the same manner as glass in a greenhouse traps heat.

Groundwater

Water under the earth's surface, often confined to aquifers capable of supplying wells and springs.

Groundwater Recharge

The natural process of infiltration and percolation of rainwater from land areas or streams through permeable soils into water-holding rocks that provide underground storage ("aquifers").

Group Quarters

A residential living arrangement, other than the usual house, apartment, or mobile home, in which two or more unrelated persons share living quarters and cooking facilities.

Institutional group quarters include nursing homes, orphanages, and prisons. *Non-institutional* group quarters include dormitories, shelters, and large boardinghouses.

Growth Management

The use by a community of a wide range of techniques in combination to determine the amount, type, and rate of development desired by the community and to channel that growth into designated areas. Growth management policies can be implemented through growth rates, zoning, capital improvement programs, public facilities ordinances, urban limit lines, standards for levels of service, and other programs. (See "[Congestion Management Plan.](#)")

Guidelines

General statements of policy direction around which specific details may be later established.

Guideway

A roadway system that guides the vehicles using it as well as supporting them. The "monorail" is one such system. The most familiar and still most used guideway is the railroad. Most guideway transit systems make use of wayside electrical power for propulsion.

Habitat

The physical location or type of environment in which an organism or biological population lives or occurs.

Handicapped

A person determined to have a physical impairment or mental disorder expected to be of long or indefinite duration. Many such impairments or disorders are of such a nature that a person's ability to live independently can be improved by appropriate housing conditions.

Hazardous Material

Any substance that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. The term includes, but is not limited to, hazardous substances and hazardous wastes.

Hidden Lot

A parcel that contains more than one legal building site but only one dwelling unit.

High-Occupancy Structure

All pre-1935 buildings with over 25 occupants, and all pre-1976 buildings with more than 100 occupants.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

Any vehicle other than a driver-only automobile (*e.g.*, a vanpool, a bus, or two or more persons to a car).

Highway

High-speed, high-capacity, limited-access transportation facility serving regional and county-wide travel. Highways may cross at a different grade level.

Hillsides

Land that has an average percent of slope equal to or exceeding fifteen percent.

Historic; Historical

An historic building or site is one that is noteworthy for its significance in local, state, or national history or culture, its architecture or design, or its works of art, memorabilia, or artifacts.

Historic Preservation

The preservation of historically significant structures and neighborhoods until such time as, and in order to facilitate, restoration and rehabilitation of the building(s) to a former condition.

Home Occupation

A commercial activity conducted solely by the occupants of a particular dwelling unit in a manner incidental to residential occupancy.

Homeless

Persons and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Includes those staying in temporary or emergency shelters or who are accommodated with friends or others with the understanding that shelter is being provided as a last resort. California Housing Element law, Section 65583(c)(1) requires all cities and counties to address the housing needs of the homeless. (See ["Emergency Shelter."](#) and ["Transitional Housing."](#))

Hotel

A facility in which guest rooms or suites are offered to the general public for lodging with or without meals and for compensation, and where no provision is made for cooking in any individual guest room or suite. (See ["Motel."](#))

Household

All those persons--related or unrelated--who occupy a single housing unit. (See ["Family."](#))

Householder

The head of a household.

Households, Number of

The count of all year-round housing units occupied by one or more persons. The concept of *household* is important because the formation of new households generates the demand for housing. Each new household formed creates the need for one additional housing unit or requires that one existing housing unit be shared by two households. Thus, household formation can continue to take place even without an increase in population, thereby increasing the demand for housing.

Housing and Community Development Department of the State of California (HCD)

The State agency that has principal responsibility for assessing, planning for, and assisting communities to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income households.

Housing Authority, Local (LHA)

Local housing agency established in State law, subject to local activation and operation. Originally intended to manage certain federal subsidies, but vested with broad powers to develop and manage other forms of affordable housing.

Housing Element

One of the seven State-mandated elements of a local general plan, it assesses the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community, identifies potential sites adequate to provide the amount and kind of housing needed, and contains adopted goals, policies, and implementation programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. Under State law, Housing Elements must be updated every five years.

Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of (HUD)

A cabinet-level department of the federal government that administers housing and community development programs.

Housing Unit

The place of permanent or customary abode of a person or family. A housing unit may be a single-family dwelling, a multi-family dwelling, a condominium, a modular home, a mobile home, a cooperative, or any other residential unit considered real property under State law. A housing unit has, at least, cooking facilities, a bathroom, and a place to sleep. It also is a dwelling that cannot be moved without substantial damage or unreasonable cost. (See ["Dwelling Unit."](#), ["Family."](#), and ["Household."](#))

Hydrocarbons

A family of compounds containing carbon and hydrogen in various combinations. They are emitted into the atmosphere from manufacturing, storage and handling, or combustion of petroleum products and through natural processes. Certain hydrocarbons interact with nitrogen oxides in the presence of intense sunlight to form photochemical air pollution.

Identity

A consistent quality that makes a city, place, area, or building unique and gives it a distinguishing character.

Image

The mental picture or impression of a city or place taken from memory and held in common by members of the community.

Impact

The effect of any direct man-made actions or indirect repercussions of man-made actions on existing physical, social, or economic conditions.

Impact Fee

A fee, also called a development fee, levied on the developer of a project by a city, county, or other public agency as compensation for otherwise-unmitigated impacts the project will produce. California Government Code Section 66000 *et seq.* specifies that development fees shall not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fee is charged. To lawfully impose a development fee, the public agency must verify its method of calculation and document proper restrictions on use of the fund.

Impacted Areas

Census tracts where more than 50 percent of the dwelling units house low- and very low-income households.

Impervious Surface

Surface through which water cannot penetrate, such as roof, road, sidewalk, and paved parking lot. The amount of impervious surface increases with development and establishes the need for drainage facilities to carry the increased runoff.

Implementation

Actions, procedures, programs, or techniques that carry out policies.

Improvement

The addition of one or more structures or utilities on a parcel of land.

In Lieu Fee

(See "[Dedication, In lieu of.](#)")

Incineration

The burning of refuse at high temperatures to reduce the volume of waste.

Incorporation

Creation of a new city.

Incubator Space

Retail or industrial space that is affordable to new, low-margin businesses.

Industrial

The manufacture, production, and processing of consumer goods. Industrial is often divided into "heavy industrial" uses, such as construction yards, quarrying, and factories; and "light industrial" uses, such as research and development and less intensive warehousing and manufacturing.

Industrial Park; Office Park

A planned assemblage of buildings designed for "Workplace Use." (See ["Workplace Use."](#))

Industry, Basic

The segment of economic activity that brings dollars to a region from other areas. Traditional examples are manufacturing, mining and agriculture. The products of all of these activities are exported (sold) to other regions. The money thus brought into the local economy is used to purchase locally-provided goods and services as well as items that are not available locally and that must be imported from other regions. Other, less traditional examples of basic industry are tourism, higher education, and retirement activities that also bring new money into a region.

Industry, Non-basic

The segment of economic activity that is supported by the circulation of dollars within a region. Examples are the wholesale, retail, and service functions that supply goods and services to local sources of demand such as businesses, public agencies, and households.

Infill Development

Development of vacant land (usually individual lots or left-over properties) within areas that are already largely developed.

Infrastructure

Public services and facilities, such as sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems, and roads.

Institutional Uses

(1) Publicly or privately owned and operated activities such as hospitals, convalescent hospitals, intermediate care facilities, nursing homes, museums, and schools and colleges; (2) churches and other religious organizations; and (3) other non-profit activities of a welfare, educational, or philanthropic nature that can not be considered residential, commercial, or industrial. (See ["Public and Quasi-public Facilities."](#))

Integrity

As used in historic preservation, the degree to which authenticity of a property's historic identity has been maintained, evidenced by the survival of substantial physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic period.

Intensity, Building

For residential uses, the actual number or the allowable range of dwelling units per net or gross acre. For non-residential uses, the actual or the maximum permitted floor area ratios (FARs).

Inter-agency

Indicates cooperation between or among two or more discrete agencies in regard to a specific program.

Interest, Fee

Entitles a land owner to exercise complete control over use of land, subject only to government land use regulations.

Interest, Less-than-fee

The purchase of interest in land rather than outright ownership; includes the purchase of development rights via conservation, open space, or scenic easements. (See ["Development](#)

[Rights.](#)", ["Easement, Scenic."](#), ["Lease."](#), and ["Leasehold Interest."](#))

Intermittent Stream

A stream that normally flows for at least thirty (30) days after the last major rain of the season and is dry a large part of the year.

Issues

Important unsettled community matters or problems that are identified in a community's general plan and dealt with by the plan's goals, objectives, policies, plan proposals, and implementation programs.

Jobs/Housing Balance; Jobs/Housing Ratio

The availability of affordable housing for employees. The jobs/housing ratio divides the number of jobs in an area by the number of employed residents. A ratio of 1.0 indicates a balance. A ratio greater than 1.0 indicates a net in-commute; less than 1.0 indicates a net out-commute.

Joint Powers Authority (JPA)

A legal arrangement that enables two or more units of government to share authority in order to plan and carry out a specific program or set of programs that serves both units.

Land Banking

The purchase of land by a local government for use or resale at a later date. "Banked lands" have been used for development of low- and moderate-income housing, expansion of parks, and development of industrial and commercial centers. Federal rail-banking law allows railroads to bank unused rail corridors for future rail use while allowing interim use as trails.

Landmark

(1) A building, site, object, structure, or significant tree, having historical, architectural, social, or cultural significance and marked for preservation by the local, state, or federal government. (2) A visually prominent or outstanding structure or natural feature that functions as a point of orientation or identification.

Landscaping

Planting—including trees, shrubs, and ground covers—suitably designed, selected, installed, and maintained as to enhance a site or roadway permanently.

Landslide

A general term for a falling mass of soil or rocks.

Land Use

The occupation or utilization of land or water area for any human activity or any purpose defined in the General Plan.

Land Use Classification

A system for classifying and designating the appropriate use of properties.

Land Use Element

A required element of the General Plan that uses text and maps to designate the future use or reuse of land within a given jurisdiction's planning area. The land use element serves as a guide to the structuring of zoning and subdivision controls, urban renewal and capital improvements programs, and to official decisions regarding the distribution and intensity of development and the location of public facilities and open space. (See ["Mandatory](#)

[Element."](#))

Land Use Regulation

A term encompassing the regulation of land in general and often used to mean those regulations incorporated in the General Plan, as distinct from zoning regulations (which are more specific).

Ldn

Day-Night Average Sound Level. The A-weighted average sound level for a given area (measured in decibels) during a 24-hour period with a 10 dB weighting applied to night-time sound levels. The Ldn is approximately numerically equal to the CNEL for most environmental settings.

Leapfrog Development

New development separated from existing development by substantial vacant land.

Lease

A contractual agreement by which an owner of real property (the lessor) gives the right of possession to another (a lessee) for a specified period of time (term) and for a specified consideration (rent).

Leasehold Interest

(1) The interest that the lessee has in the value of the lease itself in condemnation award determination. (2) The difference between the total remaining rent under the lease and the rent the lessee would currently pay for similar space for the same time period.

Leq

The energy equivalent level, defined as the average sound level on the basis of sound energy (or sound pressure squared). The *Leq* is a "dosage" type measure and is the basis for the descriptors used in current standards, such as the 24-hour CNEL used by the State of California.

Level of Service (LOS) Standard

A standard used by government agencies to measure the quality or effectiveness of a municipal service, such as police, fire, or library, or the performance of a facility, such as a street or highway.

Level of Service (Traffic)

A scale that measures the amount of traffic that a roadway or intersection can accommodate, based on such factors as maneuverability, driver dissatisfaction, and delay.

- **Level of Service A**
Indicates a relatively free flow of traffic, with little or no limitation on vehicle movement or speed.
- **Level of Service B**
Describes a steady flow of traffic, with only slight delays in vehicle movement and speed. All queues clear in a single signal cycle.
- **Level of Service C**
Denotes a reasonably steady, high-volume flow of traffic, with some limitations on movement and speed, and occasional backups on critical approaches.
- **Level of Service D**

Designates the level where traffic nears an unstable flow. Intersections still function, but short queues develop and cars may have to wait through one cycle during short peaks.

- ***Level of Service E***

Represents traffic characterized by slow movement and frequent (although momentary) stoppages. This type of congestion is considered severe, but is not uncommon at peak traffic hours, with frequent stopping, long-standing queues, and blocked intersections.

- ***Level of Service F***

Describes unsatisfactory stop-and-go traffic characterized by "traffic jams" and stoppages of long duration. Vehicles at signalized intersections usually have to wait through one or more signal changes, and "upstream" intersections may be blocked by the long queues.

Life-cycle Costing

A method of evaluating a capital investment that takes into account the sum total of all costs associated with the investment over the lifetime of the project.

Light (duty) Rail Transit (LRT)

"Street cars" or "trolley cars" that typically operate entirely or substantially in mixed traffic and in non-exclusive, at-grade rights-of-way. Passengers typically board vehicles from the street level (as opposed to a platform that is level with the train) and the driver may collect fares. Vehicles are each electrically self-propelled and usually operate in one or two-car trains.

Linkage

With respect to jobs/housing balance, a program designed to offset the impact of employment on housing need within a community, whereby project approval is conditioned on the provision of housing units or the payment of an equivalent in-lieu fee. The linkage program must establish the cause-and-effect relationship between a new commercial or industrial development and the increased demand for housing.

Liquefaction

The transformation of loose water-saturated granular materials (such as sand or silt) from a solid into a liquid state. A type of ground failure that can occur during an earthquake.

Live-work Quarters

Buildings or spaces within buildings that are used jointly for commercial and residential purposes where the residential use of the space is secondary or accessory to the primary use as a place of work.

Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)

A five- or seven-member commission within each county that reviews and evaluates all proposals for formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts, and merger of districts with cities. Each county's LAFCo is empowered to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve such proposals. The five LAFCo members generally include two county supervisors, two city council members, and one member representing the general public. Some LAFCos include two representatives of special districts.

Local Coastal Program (LCP)

A combination of a local government's land use plans, zoning ordinances, zoning district maps, and (within sensitive coastal resources areas) other implementing actions that

together meet the local requirements of, and implement the provisions and policies of, the California Coastal Act of 1976.

Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan

The relevant portion of a local government general plan or coastal element that details type, location, and intensity of land use, applicable resource protection and development policies, and, where necessary, implementation actions.

Lot

(See "[Site.](#)")

Lot of Record

A lot that is part of a recorded subdivision or a parcel of land that has been recorded at the county recorder's office containing property tax records.

Low-income Household

A household with an annual income usually no greater than 80 percent of the area median family income adjusted by household size, as determined by a survey of incomes conducted by a city or a county, or in the absence of such a survey, based on the latest available eligibility limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program. (See "[Area.](#)")

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits

Tax reductions provided by the federal and State governments for investors in housing for low-income households.

L10

A statistical descriptor indicating peak noise levels--the sound level exceeded ten percent of the time. It is a commonly used descriptor of community noise, and has been used in Federal Highway Administration standards and the standards of some cities and counties.

Maintain, v.

To keep in an existing state. (See "[Preserve, v.](#)")

Mandatory Element

A component of the General Plan mandated by State Law. California State law requires that a General Plan include elements dealing with seven subjects--circulation, conservation, housing, land use, noise, open space and safety--and specifies to various degrees the information to be incorporated in each element. (See "[Land Use Element.](#)")

Manufactured Housing

Residential structures that are constructed entirely in the factory, and that since June 15, 1976, have been regulated by the federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 under the administration of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). (See "[Mobile Home.](#)", and "[Modular Unit.](#)")

Marine Life

Living organisms existing in the sea.

Marsh

Any area designated as marsh or swamp on the largest scale United States Geologic Survey topographic map most recently published. A marsh usually is an area periodically or permanently covered with shallow water, either fresh or saline.

Master Environmental Assessment

An inventory or data base for use with later Environmental Impact Reports. A Master Environmental Assessment can assist a city or county in formulating a general plan or any element thereof by identifying environmental characteristics and constraints required to be addressed in the general plan. Relevant portions of the Master Environmental Assessment can be referenced and summarized in preparing later EIRs and Negative Declarations. (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15169.)

Master EIR ("MEIR")

Section 21156 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code authorizes preparation of a "master environmental impact report" for specific kinds of projects involving broad policy decisions, specifically including general plans. The MEIR is designed to allow an agency to eliminate, or to reduce the scope of, environmental review of subsequent discretionary activities or projects that follow the expected course of action whose environmental effects are addressed in the MEIR.

May

That which is permissible.

Mean Sea Level

The average altitude of the sea surface for all tidal stages.

Median Strip

The dividing area, either paved or landscaped, between opposing lanes of traffic on a roadway.

Mello-Roos Bonds

Locally issued bonds that are repaid by a special tax imposed on property owners within a "community facilities" district established by a governmental entity. The bond proceeds can be used for public improvements and for a limited number of services. Named after the program's legislative authors.

Mercalli Intensity Scale

A subjective measure of the observed effects (human reactions, structural damage, geologic effects) of an earthquake. Expressed in Roman numerals from I to XII.

Merger (District)

Elimination of a special district by transferring its service responsibilities to a city government. The merging district's territory must be totally included inside the city.

Metropolitan

Of, relating to, or characteristic of a large important city.

Microclimate

The climate of a small, distinct area, such as a city street or a building's courtyard; can be favorably altered through functional landscaping, architecture, or other design features.

Mineral Resource

Land on which known deposits of commercially viable mineral or aggregate deposits exist. This designation is applied to sites determined by the State Division of Mines and Geology as being a resource of regional significance, and is intended to help maintain the quarrying operations and protect them from encroachment of incompatible land uses.

Minimize, v.

To reduce or lessen, but not necessarily to eliminate.

Mining

The act or process of extracting resources, such as coal, oil, or minerals, from the earth.

Minipark

Small neighborhood park of approximately one acre or less.

Ministerial (Administrative) Decision

An action taken by a governmental agency that follows established procedures and rules and does not call for the exercise of judgment in deciding whether to approve a project.

Mitigate, v.

To ameliorate, alleviate, or avoid to the extent reasonably feasible.

Mixed-use

Properties on which various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, and residential, are combined in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development project with significant functional interrelationships and a coherent physical design. A "single site" may include contiguous properties.

Mobile Home

A structure, transportable in one or more sections, built on a permanent chassis and designed for use as a single-family dwelling unit and that (1) has a minimum of 400 square feet of living space; (2) has a minimum width in excess of 102 inches; (3) is connected to all available permanent utilities; and (4) is tied down (a) to a permanent foundation on a lot either owned or leased by the homeowner or (b) is set on piers, with wheels removed and skirted, in a mobile home park. (See "[Manufactured Housing.](#)" and "[Modular Unit.](#)")

Moderate-income Household

A household with an annual income between the lower income eligibility limits and 120 percent of the area median family income adjusted by household size, usually as established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program. (See "[Area.](#)" and "[Low-income Household.](#)")

Modular Unit

A factory-fabricated, transportable building or major component designed for use by itself or for incorporation with similar units on-site into a structure for residential, commercial, educational, or industrial use. Differs from mobile homes and manufactured housing by (in addition to lacking an integral chassis or permanent hitch to allow future movement) being subject to California housing law design standards. California standards are more restrictive than federal standards in some respects (*e.g.*, plumbing and energy conservation). Also called Factory-built Housing and regulated by State law of that title. (See "[Mobile Home.](#)" and "[Manufactured Housing.](#)")

Motel

(1) A hotel for motorists. (2) A facility in which guest rooms or suites are offered to the general public for lodging with or without meals and for compensation, and where guest parking is provided in proximity to guest rooms. Quite often, provision is made for cooking in individual guest rooms or suites. (See "[Hotel.](#)")

Multiple Family Building

A detached building designed and used exclusively as a dwelling by three or more families

occupying separate suites.

Multiplier Effect

The recirculation of money through the economy multiplies its impact on jobs and income. For example, money paid as salaries to industrial and office workers is spent on housing, food, clothes and other locally-available goods and services. This spending creates jobs in housing construction, retail stores (*e.g.*, grocery and drug stores) and professional offices. The wage paid to workers in those industries is again re-spent, creating still more jobs. Overall, one job in basic industry is estimated to create approximately one more job in non-basic industry.

Municipal Services

Services traditionally provided by local government, including water and sewer, roads, parks, schools, and police and fire protection.

Must

That which is mandatory.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards

The prescribed level of pollutants in the outside air that cannot be exceeded legally during a specified time in a specified geographical area.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

An act passed in 1974 establishing federal legislation for national environmental policy, a council on environmental quality, and the requirements for environmental impact statements.

National Flood Insurance Program

A federal program that authorizes the sale of federally subsidized flood insurance in communities where such flood insurance is not available privately.

National Historic Preservation Act

A 1966 federal law that established a National Register of Historic Places and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and that authorized grants-in-aid for preserving historic properties.

National Register of Historic Places

The official list, established by the National Historic Preservation Act, of sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects significant in the nation's history or whose artistic or architectural value is unique.

Natural State

The condition existing prior to development.

Necessary

Essential or required.

Need

A condition requiring supply or relief. The City or County may act upon findings of need within or on behalf of the community.

Neighborhood Park

City- or County-owned land intended to serve the recreation needs of people living or working within one-half mile radius of the park.

Neighborhood Unit

According to one widely-accepted concept of planning, the neighborhood unit should be the basic building block of the city. It is based on the elementary school, with other community facilities located at its center and arterial streets at its perimeter. The distance from the school to the perimeter should be a comfortable walking distance for a school-age child; there would be no through traffic uses. Limited industrial or commercial would occur on the perimeter where arterials intersect. This was the model for American suburban development after World War II.

Neotraditional Development

An approach to land use planning and urban design that promotes the building of neighborhoods with a mix of uses and housing types, architectural variety, a central public gathering place, interconnecting streets and alleys, and edges defined by greenbelts or boulevards. The basic goal is integration of the activities of potential residents with work, shopping, recreation, and transit all within walking distance.

Nitrogen Oxide(s)

A reddish brown gas that is a byproduct of combustion and ozone formation processes. Often referred to as NOX, this gas gives smog its "dirty air" appearance.

Noise

Any sound that is undesirable because it interferes with speech and hearing, or is intense enough to damage hearing, or is otherwise annoying. Noise, simply, is "unwanted sound."

Noise Attenuation

Reduction of the level of a noise source using a substance, material, or surface, such as earth berms and/or solid concrete walls.

Noise Contour

A line connecting points of equal noise level as measured on the same scale. Noise levels greater than the 60 Ldn contour (measured in dBA) require noise attenuation in residential development.

Noise Element

One of the seven State-mandated elements of a local general plan, it assesses noise levels of highways and freeways, local arterials, railroads, airports, local industrial plants, and other ground stationary sources, and adopts goals, policies, and implementation programs to reduce the community's exposure to noise.

Non-attainment

The condition of not achieving a desired or required level of performance. Frequently used in reference to air quality. (See "[Attainment.](#)")

Non-conforming Use

A use that was valid when brought into existence, but by subsequent regulation becomes no longer conforming. "Non-conforming use" is a generic term and includes (1) non-conforming structures (by virtue of size, type of construction, location on land, or proximity to other structures), (2) non-conforming use of a conforming building, (3) non-conforming use of a non-conforming building, and (4) non-conforming use of land. Thus, any use lawfully existing on any piece of property that is inconsistent with a new or amended General Plan, and that in turn is a violation of a zoning ordinance amendment subsequently adopted in conformance with the General Plan, will be a non-conforming use. Typically, non-conforming uses are permitted to continue for a designated period of time, subject to certain restrictions.

Non-urban Land Use

Land use that is not urban. (See "[Urban](#)" and "[Urban Land Use.](#)")

Notice (of Hearing)

A legal document announcing the opportunity for the public to present their views to an official representative or board of a public agency concerning an official action pending before the agency.

Objective

A specific statement of desired future condition toward which the City or County will expend effort in the context of striving to achieve a broader goal. An objective should be achievable and, where possible, should be measurable and time-specific. The State Government Code (Section 65302) requires that general plans spell out the "objectives," principles, standards, and proposals of the general plan. "The addition of 100 units of affordable housing by 1995" is an example of an objective.

Office Park

(See "[Industrial Park.](#)")

Office Use

The use of land by general business offices, medical and professional offices, administrative or headquarters offices for large wholesaling or manufacturing operations, and research and development.

Official County Scenic Highway

A segment of state highway identified in the Master Plan of State Highways Eligible for Official Scenic Highway Designation and designated by the Director of the Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

Open Space Element

One of the seven State-mandated elements of a local general plan, it contains an inventory of privately and publicly owned open-space lands, and adopted goals, policies, and implementation programs for the preservation, protection, and management of open space lands.

Open Space Land

Any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purposes of (1) the preservation of natural resources, (2) the managed production of resources, (3) outdoor recreation, or (4) public health and safety.

Orchard

A group of fruit or nut trees, either small and diverse and grown for home use, or large and uniform (*i.e.*, of one variety) and cultivated for revenue. Such a collection must be planted, managed and renewed by the householder or farmer and should not be confused with a naturally occurring grove. Citrus and nut plantations are customarily called groves.

Ordinance

A law or regulation set forth and adopted by a governmental authority, usually a city or county.

Outdoor Advertising Structure

Any device used or intended to direct attention to a business, profession, commodity, service, or entertainment conducted, sold, or offered elsewhere than upon the lot where

such device is located.

Outdoor Recreation Use

A privately or publicly owned or operated use providing facilities for outdoor recreation activities.

Outer Approach Zone

Airspace in which an air-traffic controller initiates radar monitoring for incoming flights approaching an airport.

Overlay

A land use designation on the Land Use Map, or a zoning designation on a zoning map, that modifies the basic underlying designation in some specific manner.

Ozone

A tri-atomic form of oxygen (O₃) created naturally in the upper atmosphere by a photochemical reaction with solar ultraviolet radiation. In the lower atmosphere, ozone is a recognized air pollutant that is not emitted directly into the environment, but is formed by complex chemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen and reactive organic compounds in the presence of sunlight, and becomes a major agent in the formation of smog.

Para-transit

Refers to transportation services and that operate vehicles, such as buses, jitneys, taxis, and vans for senior citizens, and/or mobility- impaired.

Parcel

A lot, or contiguous group of lots, in single ownership or under single control, usually considered a unit for purposes of development.

Park Land, Parkland

Land that is publicly owned or controlled for the purpose of providing parks, recreation, or open space for public use.

Parking, Shared

A public or private parking area used jointly by two or more uses.

Parking Area, Public

An open area, excluding a street or other public way, used for the parking of automobiles and available to the public, whether for free or for compensation.

Parking Management

An evolving TDM technique designed to obtain maximum utilization from a limited number of parking spaces. Can involve pricing and preferential treatment for HOVs, non-peak period users, and short-term users. (See ["High Occupancy Vehicle."](#) and ["Transportation Demand Management."](#))

Parking Ratio

The number of parking spaces provided per 1,000 square of floor area, *e.g.*, 2:1 or "two per thousand."

Parking Space, Compact

A parking space (usually 7.5 feet wide by 16 feet long when perpendicular to a driveway or aisle) permitted in some localities on the assumption that many modern cars are

significantly smaller, and require less room, than a standard automobile. A standard parking space, when perpendicular to a driveway or aisle, is usually 8.5 feet wide by 18 feet long.

Parks

Open space lands whose primary purpose is recreation. (See "[Open Space Land.](#)", "[Community Park.](#)", and "[Neighborhood Park.](#)")

Parkway

An expressway or freeway designed for non-commercial traffic only; usually located within a strip of landscaped park or natural vegetation.

Parkway Strip

A piece of land located between the rear of a curb and the front of a sidewalk, usually used for planting low ground cover and/or street trees, also known as "planter strip."

Passive Solar System

A system that distributes collected heat via direct transfer from a thermal mass rather than mechanical power. Passive systems rely on building design and materials to collect and store heat and to create natural ventilation for cooling. (See "[Active Solar System.](#)")

Patio Unit

A detached single family unit, typically situated on a reduced-sized lot, that orients outdoor activity within rear or side yard patio areas for better utilization of the site for outdoor living space.

Payback Period

The number of years required to accumulate savings or profit equal to the value of a proposed investment.

Peak Hour/Peak Period

For any given roadway, a daily period during which traffic volume is highest, usually occurring in the morning and evening commute periods. Where "F" Levels of Service are encountered, the "peak hour" may stretch into a "peak period" of several hours' duration.

Performance Standards

Zoning regulations that permit uses based on a particular set of standards of operation rather than on particular type of use. Performance standards provide specific criteria limiting noise, air pollution, emissions, odors, vibration, dust, dirt, glare, heat, fire hazards, wastes, traffic impacts, and visual impact of a use.

Personal Services

Services of a personal convenience nature, as opposed to products that are sold to individual consumers, as contrasted with companies. Personal services include barber and beauty shops, shoe and luggage repair, fortune tellers, photographers, laundry and cleaning services and pick-up stations, copying, repair and fitting of clothes, and similar services.

Physical Diversity

A quality of a site, city, or region in which are found a variety of architectural styles, natural landscapes, and/or land uses.

Picnic Area, Group

Two or more picnic tables reserved for use by 10 or more persons equipped with picnic tables, barbecue stands, and may be provided with a roofed shelter.

Plan Line

A precise line that establishes future rights-of-way along any portion of an existing or proposed street or highway and that is depicted on a map showing the streets and lot line or lines and the proposed right-of-way lines, and the distance thereof from the established centerline of the street or highway, or from existing or established property lines.

Planned Community

A large-scale development whose essential features are a definable boundary; a consistent, but not necessarily uniform, character; overall control during the development process by a single development entity; private ownership of recreation amenities; and enforcement of covenants, conditions, and restrictions by a master community association.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

A description of a proposed unified development, consisting at a minimum of a map and adopted ordinance setting forth the regulations governing, and the location and phasing of all proposed uses and improvements to be included in the development.

Planning and Research, Governor's Office of (OPR)

A division of the Governor's Office responsible for coordinating state, regional, and local planning in California, including publishing guidelines for the preparation and content of city and county general plans.

Planning Area

The area directly addressed by the general plan. A city's planning area typically encompasses the city limits and potentially annexable land within its sphere of influence.

Planning Commission

A body, usually having five or seven members, created by a city or county in compliance with California law (Section 65100) that requires the assignment of the planning functions of the city or county to a planning department, planning commission, hearing officers, and/or the legislative body itself, as deemed appropriate by the legislative body.

Policy

A specific statement of principle or of guiding actions that implies clear commitment but is not mandatory. A general direction that a governmental agency sets to follow, in order to meet its goals and objectives before undertaking an action program. (See "[Program.](#)")

Pollutant

Any introduced gas, liquid, or solid that makes a resource unfit for its normal or usual purpose

Pollution

The presence of matter or energy whose nature, location, or quantity produces undesired environmental effects.

Pollution, Non-Point

Sources for pollution that are less definable and usually cover broad areas of land, such as agricultural land with fertilizers that are carried from the land by runoff, or automobiles.

Pollution, Point

In reference to water quality, a discrete source from which pollution is generated before it enters receiving waters, such as a sewer outfall, a smokestack, or an industrial waste pipe.

Poverty Level

As used by the U.S. Census, families and unrelated individuals are classified as being above or below the poverty level based on a poverty index that provides a range of income cutoffs or "poverty thresholds" varying by size of family, number of children, and age of householder. The income cutoffs are updated each year to reflect the change in the Consumer Price Index.

Preservation

As used in historic preservation, the process of sustaining the form and extent of a structure essentially as it exists. Preservation aims at halting further deterioration and providing structural stability but does not contemplate significant rebuilding. (See ["Historic Preservation."](#))

Preserve, n.

An area in which beneficial uses in their present condition are protected; for example, a nature preserve or an agricultural preserve. (See ["Agricultural Preserve."](#) and ["Protect."](#))

Preserve, v.

To keep safe from destruction or decay; to maintain or keep intact. (See ["Maintain."](#))

Prime Agricultural Land

(1) Land used actively in the production of food, fiber, or livestock. (2) All land which qualifies for rating as Class I or Class II in the Soil Conservation Service land use compatibility classifications. (3) Land which qualifies for rating 80 through 100 in the Storie Index Rating. (See ["Prime Farmland"](#) and ["Storie Index."](#))

Prime Farmland

Land which has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops. Prime Farmland must have been used for the production of irrigated crops within the last three years. Prime Farmland does not include publicly-owned lands for which there is an adopted policy preventing agricultural use. (See ["Prime Agricultural Land."](#))

Principle

An assumption, fundamental rule, or doctrine that will guide general plan policies, proposals, standards, and implementation measures. The State Government Code (Section 65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, "principles," standards, and proposals of the general plan. "Adjacent land uses should be compatible with one another" is an example of a principle.

Private Road/Private Street

Privately owned (and usually privately maintained) motor vehicle access that is not dedicated as a public street. Typically the owner posts a sign indicating that the street is private property and limits traffic in some fashion. For density calculation purposes, some jurisdictions exclude private roads when establishing the total acreage of the site; however, aisles within and driveways serving private parking lots are not considered private roads.

Professional Offices

A use providing professional or consulting services in the fields of law, medicine, architecture, design, engineering, accounting, and similar professions, but not including financial institutions or real estate or insurance offices.

Program

An action, activity, or strategy carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve a

specific goal or objective. Policies and programs establish the "who," "how" and "when" for carrying out the "what" and "where" of goals and objectives.

Pro Rata

Refers to the proportionate distribution of the cost of something to something else or to some group, such as the cost of infrastructure improvements associated with new development apportioned to the users of the infrastructure on the basis of projected use.

Protect, v.

To maintain and preserve beneficial uses in their present condition as nearly as possible. (See ["Enhance."](#))

Public and Quasi-public Facilities

Institutional, academic, governmental and community service uses, either owned publicly or operated by non-profit organizations, including private hospitals and cemeteries. (See ["Institutional Uses."](#))

Public Services

(See ["Municipal Services."](#))

Ranchette

A single dwelling unit occupied by a non-farming household on a parcel of 2.5 to 20 acres that has been subdivided from agricultural land.

Rare or Endangered Species

A species of animal or plant listed in: Sections 670.2 or 670.5, Title 14, California Administrative Code; or Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 17.11 or Section 17.2, pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act designating species as rare, threatened, or endangered.

Ravelling

An erosion process in which the soil surface of a tunnel crumbles and falls away.

Reclamation

The reuse of resources, usually those present in solid wastes or sewage.

Recognize, v.

To officially (or by official action) identify or perceive a given situation.

Reconstruction

As used in historic preservation, the process of reproducing by new construction the exact form and detail of a vanished structure, or part thereof, as it appeared during a specific period of time. Reconstruction is often undertaken when the property to be reconstructed is essential for understanding and interpreting the value of an historic district and sufficient documentation exists to insure an exact reproduction of the original.

Recreation, Active

A type of recreation or activity that requires the use of organized play areas including, but not limited to, softball, baseball, football and soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts and various forms of children's play equipment.

Recreation, Passive

Type of recreation or activity that does not require the use of organized play areas.

Recycle, v.

The process of extraction and reuse of materials from waste products.

Redevelop, v.

To demolish existing buildings; or to increase the overall floor area existing on a property; or both; irrespective of whether a change occurs in land use.

Regional

Pertaining to activities or economies at a scale greater than that of a single jurisdiction, and affecting a broad geographic area.

Regional Housing Needs Plan

A quantification by a COG or by HCD of existing and projected housing need, by household income group, for all localities within a region.

Regional Park

A park typically 150-500 acres in size focusing on activities and natural features not included in most other types of parks and often based on a specific scenic or recreational opportunity.

Regulation

A rule or order prescribed for managing government.

Rehabilitation

The repair, preservation, and/or improvement of substandard housing.

Remodeling

As used in historic preservation, making over or rebuilding all or part of an historic structure in a way that does not necessarily preserve its historical, architectural, and cultural features and character.

Research and Development Use

A use engaged in study, testing, design, analysis, and experimental development of products, processes, or services.

Residential

Land designated in the City or County General Plan and zoning ordinance for buildings consisting only of dwelling units. May be improved, vacant, or unimproved. (See ["Dwelling Unit."](#))

Residential Care Facility

A facility that provides 24-hour care and supervision to its residents.

Residential, Multiple Family

Usually three or more dwelling units on a single site, which may be in the same or separate buildings.

Residential, Single-family

A single dwelling unit on a building site.

Resources, Non-renewable

Refers to natural resources, such as fossil fuels and natural gas, which, once used, cannot be replaced and used again.

Restore, v.

To renew, rebuild, or reconstruct to a former state.

Restrict, v.

To check, bound, or decrease the range, scope, or incidence of a particular condition.

Retention Basin/Retention Pond

(See "[Detention Basin/Detention Pond.](#)")

Retrofit, v.

To add materials and/or devices to an existing building or system to improve its operation, safety, or efficiency. Buildings have been retrofitted to use solar energy and to strengthen their ability to withstand earthquakes, for example.

Reverse Annuity Mortgages

A home financing mechanism that enables a homeowner who a senior citizen to release equity from his or her home. The senior receives periodic payments that can be put to immediate use. Loans are fixed term and are paid when the house is sold or when the term expires.

Rezoning

An amendment to the map and/or text of a zoning ordinance to effect a change in the nature, density, or intensity of uses allowed in a zoning district and/or on a designated parcel or land area.

Richter Scale

A measure of the size or energy release of an earthquake at its source. The scale is logarithmic; the wave amplitude of each number on the scale is 10 times greater than that of the previous whole number.

Rideshare

A travel mode other than driving alone, such as buses, rail transit, carpools, and vanpools.

Ridgeline

A line connecting the highest points along a ridge and separating drainage basins or small-scale drainage systems from one another.

Right-of-way

A strip of land occupied or intended to be occupied by certain transportation and public use facilities, such as roadways, railroads, and utility lines.

Rilling

An erosion process which forms numerous small shallow channels.

Riparian Lands

Riparian lands are comprised of the vegetative and wildlife areas adjacent to perennial and intermittent streams. Riparian areas are delineated by the existence of plant species normally found near freshwater.

Risk

The danger or degree of hazard or potential loss.

Runoff

That portion of rain or snow that does not percolate into the ground and is discharged into

streams instead.

Safety Element

One of the seven State-mandated elements of a local general plan, it contains adopted goals, policies, and implementation programs for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with seismic and geologic hazards, flooding, and wildland and urban fires. Many safety elements also incorporate a review of police needs, objectives, facilities, and services.

Sanitary Landfill

The controlled placement of refuse within a limited area, followed by compaction and covering with a suitable thickness of earth and other containment material.

Sanitary Sewer

A system of subterranean conduits that carries refuse liquids or waste matter to a plant where the sewage is treated, as contrasted with storm drainage systems (that carry surface water) and septic tanks or leech fields (that hold refuse liquids and waste matter on-site). (See "[Combined Sewer.](#)" and "[Septic System.](#)")

Scenic Highway Corridor

The area outside a highway right-of-way that is generally visible to persons travelling on the highway.

Scenic Highway/Scenic Route

A highway, road, drive, or street that, in addition to its transportation function, provides opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and man-made scenic resources and access or direct views to areas or scenes of exceptional beauty or historic or cultural interest. The aesthetic values of scenic routes often are protected and enhanced by regulations governing the development of property or the placement of outdoor advertising. Until the mid-1980s, general plans in California were required to include a Scenic Highways element.

School District Lands

Properties owned by public school districts and used for educational, recreational, and administrative purposes.

Second Mortgage Program

The lending by a public or private agency of a portion of a required down payment to a developer or first-time homebuyer, usually with restrictions requiring that the units assisted through the program remain affordable to very low- and low-income households.

Second Unit

A Self-contained living unit, either attached to or detached from, and in addition to, the primary residential unit on a single lot. Sometimes called "Granny Flat."

Section 8 Rental Assistance Program

A federal (HUD) rent-subsidy program that is **one of** the main sources of federal housing assistance for low-income households. The program operates by providing "housing assistance payments" to owners, developers, and public housing agencies to make up the difference between the "Fair Market Rent" of a unit (set by HUD) and the household's contribution toward the rent, which is calculated at 30 percent of the household's adjusted gross monthly income (GMI). "Section 8" includes programs for new construction, existing housing, and substantial or moderate housing rehabilitation.

Seiche

An earthquake-generated wave in an enclosed body of water such as a lake, reservoir, or bay.

Seismic

Caused by or subject to earthquakes or earth vibrations.

Senior Housing

(See "[Elderly Housing.](#)")

Seniors

Persons age 62 and older. (See "[Elderly.](#)")

Septic System

A sewage-treatment system that includes a settling tank through which liquid sewage flows and in which solid sewage settles and is decomposed by bacteria in the absence of oxygen. Septic systems are often used for individual-home waste disposal where an urban sewer system is not available. (See "[Sanitary Sewer.](#)")

Setback

The horizontal distance between the property line and any structure.

Settlement

(1) The drop in elevation of a ground surface caused by settling or compacting. (2) The gradual downward movement of an engineered structure due to compaction. *Differential* settlement is uneven settlement, where one part of a structure settles more or at a different rate than another part.

Shall

That which is obligatory; an unequivocal direction.

Shared Living

The occupancy of a dwelling unit by persons of more than one family in order to reduce housing expenses and provide social contact, mutual support, and assistance. Shared living facilities serving six or fewer persons are permitted in all residential districts by Section 1566.3 of the California Health and Safety Code.

Shoppers Goods

Another name for comparison goods.

Shopping Center

A group of commercial establishments, planned, developed, owned, or managed as a unit, with common off-street parking provided on the site.

Should

Signifies a directive to be honored if at all possible; a less rigid directive than "shall," to be honored in the absence of compelling or contravening considerations.

Sign

Any representation (written or pictorial) used to convey information, or to identify, announce, or otherwise direct attention to a business, profession, commodity, service, or entertainment, and placed on, suspended from, or in any way attached to, any structure, vehicle, or feature of the natural or manmade landscape.

Signal Preemption

A system used by emergency vehicles, public transit vehicles and/or trains to change signal phasing from red to green assigning immediate right-of-way for a specific purpose.

Significance

As used in historic preservation, a term ascribed to buildings, sites, objects, or districts that possess exceptional value or quality for illustrating or interpreting the cultural heritage of the community when evaluated in relation to other properties and property types within a specific historic theme, period, and geographical setting. A principal test of significance for historic property is "integrity."

Significant Effect

A beneficial or detrimental impact on the environment. May include, but is not limited to, significant changes in an area's air, water, and land resources.

Siltation

(1) The accumulating deposition of eroded material. (2) The gradual filling in of streams and other bodies of water with sand, silt, and clay.

Single-family Dwelling, Attached

A dwelling unit occupied or intended for occupancy by only one household that is structurally connected with at least one other such dwelling unit. (See "[Townhouse.](#)")

Single-family Dwelling, Detached

A dwelling unit occupied or intended for occupancy by only one household that is structurally independent from any other such dwelling unit or structure intended for residential or other use. (See "[Family.](#)")

Single Room Occupancy (SRO)

A single room, typically 80-250 square feet, with a sink and closet, but that requires the occupant to share a communal bathroom, shower, and kitchen.

Site

A parcel of land used or intended for one use or a group of uses and having frontage on a public or an approved private street. A lot.

Slope

Land gradient described as the vertical rise divided by the horizontal run, and expressed in percent.

Soil

The unconsolidated material on the immediate surface of the earth created by natural forces that serves as natural medium for growing land plants.

Solar Access

The provision of direct sunlight to an area specified for solar energy collection when the sun's azimuth is within 45 degrees of true south.

Solar System, Active

A system using a mechanical device, such as a pump or a fan, and energy in addition to solar energy to transport a conductive medium (air or water) between a solar collector and the interior of a building for the purpose of heating or cooling.

Solar System, Passive

A system that uses direct heat transfer from thermal mass instead of mechanical power to distribute collected heat. Passive systems rely on building design and materials to collect and store heat and to create natural ventilation for cooling.

Solid Waste

Any unwanted or discarded material that is not a liquid or gas. Includes organic wastes, paper products, metals, glass, plastics, cloth, brick, rock, soil, leather, rubber, yard wastes, and wood, but does not include sewage and hazardous materials. Organic wastes and paper products comprise about 75 percent of typical urban solid waste.

Specific Plan

A legal tool authorized by Article 8 of the Government Code (Section 65450 *et seq.*) for the systematic implementation of the general plan for a defined portion of a community's planning area. A specific plan must specify in detail the land uses, public and private facilities needed to support the land uses, phasing of development, standards for the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, and a program of implementation measures, including financing measures.

Speed, Average

The sum of the speeds of the cars observed divided by the number of cars observed.

Speed, Critical

The speed that is not exceeded by 85 percent of the cars observed.

Sphere of Influence

The probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of the County.

Standards

(1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. The State Government Code (Section 65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, principles, "standards," and proposals of the general plan. Examples of standards might include the number of acres of park land per 1,000 population that the community will attempt to acquire and improve, or the "traffic Level of Service" (LOS) that the plan hopes to attain. (2) Requirements in a zoning ordinance that govern building and development as distinguished from use restrictions— for example, site-design regulations such as lot area, height limit, frontage, landscaping, and floor area ratio.

State Clearinghouse

A division of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research responsible for coordinating review of environmental documents and federal grant applications by State agencies.

State Responsibility Areas

As used in the Safety Element of the general plan, areas of the state in which the financial responsibility for preventing and suppressing fires has been determined by the State Board of Forestry (pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 4125) to be primarily the responsibility of the State.

Stock Cooperative Housing

Multiple-family ownership housing in which the occupant of a unit holds a share of stock in a corporation that owns the structure in which the unit is located.

Storie Index

A numerical system (0p100) rating the degree to which a particular soil can grow plants or

produce crops, based on four factors: soil profile, surface texture, slope, and soil limitations. (See "[Prime Agricultural Land.](#)")

Storm Runoff

Surplus surface water generated by rainfall that does not seep into the earth but flows overland to flowing or stagnant bodies of water.

Street Furniture

Those features associated with a street that are intended to enhance that street's physical character and use by pedestrians, such as benches, trash receptacles, kiosks, lights, newspaper racks.

Street Tree Plan

A comprehensive plan for all trees on public streets that sets goals for solar access, and standards for species selection, maintenance, and replacement criteria, and for planting trees in patterns that will define neighborhood character while avoiding monotony or maintenance problems.

Streets, Local

(See "[Streets, Minor.](#)")

Streets, Major

The transportation network that includes a hierarchy of freeways, arterials, and collectors to service through traffic.

Streets, Minor

Local streets not shown on the Circulation Plan, Map, or Diagram, whose primary intended purpose is to provide access to fronting properties.

Streets, Through

Streets that extend continuously between other major streets in the community.

Structure

Anything constructed or erected that requires location on the ground (excluding swimming pools, fences, and walls used as fences).

Subdivision

The division of a tract of land into defined lots, either improved or unimproved, which can be separately conveyed by sale or lease, and which can be altered or developed. "Subdivision" includes a condominium project as defined in Section 1350 of the California Civil Code and a community apartment project as defined in Section 11004 of the Business and Professions Code.

Subdivision Map Act

Division 2 (Sections 66410 *et seq*) of the California Government code, this act vests in local legislative bodies the regulation and control of the design and improvement of subdivisions, including the requirement for tentative and final maps. (See "[Subdivision.](#)")

Subregional

Pertaining to a portion of a region. The Golden Triangle is a subregional task force.

Subsidence

The gradual settling or sinking of an area with little or no horizontal motion. (See "[Settlement.](#)")

Subsidize

To assist by payment of a sum of money or by the granting of terms or favors that reduce the need for monetary expenditures. Housing subsidies may take the forms of mortgage interest deductions or tax credits from federal and/or state income taxes, sale or lease at less than market value of land to be used for the construction of housing, payments to supplement a minimum affordable rent, and the like.

Substandard Housing

Residential dwellings that, because of their physical condition, do not provide safe and sanitary housing.

Substantial

Considerable in importance, value, degree, or amount.

Sustainability

Community use of natural resources in a way that does not jeopardize the ability of future generations to live and prosper.

Sustainable Development

Development that maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (*Source: Minnesota State Legislature.*)

Taking

A real estate term traditionally used to mean acquisition by eminent domain but broadened by the U.S. Supreme Court to mean any government action that denies economically viable use of property. More recent federal and state legislative proposals would consider any government program causing a "substantial" reduction in property values to be a taking.

Target Areas

Specifically designated sections of the community where loans and grants are made to bring about a specific outcome, such as the rehabilitation of housing affordable by very low- and low-income households.

Tax Credit

A dollar amount that may be subtracted from the amount of taxes owed.

Tax Increment

Additional tax revenues that result from increases in property values within a development area. State law permits the tax increment to be earmarked for redevelopment purposes but requires at least 20 percent to be used to increase and improve the community's supply of very low- and low-income housing.

Telecommuting

An arrangement in which a worker is at home or in a location other than the primary place of work, and communicates with the workplace and conducts work via wireless or telephone lines, using modems, fax machines, or other electronic devices in conjunction with computers.

Thermal Mass

Large quantities of heavy or dense material with a high heat capacity, used in solar buildings to absorb heat, which is then stored and re-radiated as needed for heating and cooling.

Topography

Configuration of a surface, including its relief and the position of natural and man-made features.

Tourism

The business of providing services for persons traveling for pleasure, tourism contributes to the vitality of the community by providing revenue to local business. Tourism can be measured through changes in the transient occupancy tax, or restaurant sales.

Townhouse; Townhome

A one-family dwelling in a row of at least three such units in which each unit has its own front and rear access to the outside, no unit is located over another unit, and each unit is separated from any other unit by one or more common and fire-resistant walls.

Townhouses usually have separate utilities; however, in some condominium situations, common areas are serviced by utilities purchased by a homeowners association on behalf of all townhouse members of the association. (See ["Condominium."](#))

Traffic Model

A mathematical representation of traffic movement within an area or region based on observed relationships between the kind and intensity of development in specific areas.

Many traffic models operate on the theory that trips are produced by persons living in residential areas and are attracted by various non-residential land uses. (See ["Trip."](#))

Transit

The conveyance of persons or goods from one place to another by means of a local, public transportation system.

Transit-dependent

Refers to persons unable to operate automobiles or other motorized vehicles, or those who do not own motorized vehicles. Transit-dependent citizens must rely on transit, para-transit, or owners of private vehicles for transportation. Transit-dependent citizens include the young, the handicapped, the elderly, the poor, and those with prior violations in motor vehicle laws.

Transit-oriented Development (TOD)

A mixed-use community within an average 2,000-foot walking distance of a transit stop and core commercial area. TODs mix residential, retail, office, and public uses in a walkable environment, making it convenient for residents and employees to travel by transit, bicycle, foot, or car.

Transit, Public

A system of regularly-scheduled buses and/or trains available to the public on a fee-per-ride basis. Also called "Mass Transit."

Transition Zone

Controlled airspace extending upward from 700 or more feet above the ground wherein procedures for aircraft approach have been designated. The transition zone lies closer to an airport than the outer approach zone and outside of the inner approach zone. (See ["Approach Zone."](#) and ["Outer Approach Zone."](#))

Transitional Housing

Shelter provided to the homeless for an extended period, often as long as 18 months, and generally integrated with other social services and counseling programs to assist in the transition to self-sufficiency through the acquisition of a stable income and permanent housing. (See "[Homeless.](#)" and "[Emergency Shelter.](#)")

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

A strategy for reducing demand on the road system by reducing the number of vehicles using the roadways and/or increasing the number of persons per vehicle. TDM attempts to reduce the number of persons who drive alone on the roadway during the commute period and to increase the number in carpools, vanpools, buses and trains, walking, and biking. TDM can be an element of TSM (see below).

Transportation Systems Management (TSM)

A comprehensive strategy developed to address the problems caused by additional development, increasing trips, and a shortfall in transportation capacity. Transportation Systems Management focuses on more efficiently utilizing existing highway and transit systems rather than expanding them. TSM measures are characterized by their low cost and quick implementation time frame, such as computerized traffic signals, metered freeway ramps, and one-way streets.

Trees, Heritage

Trees planted by a group of citizens or by the City or County in commemoration of an event or in memory of a person figuring significantly in history.

Trees, Landmark

Trees whose size, visual impact, or association with a historically significant structure or event have led the City or County to designate them as landmarks.

Trees, Street

Trees strategically planted--usually in parkway strips, medians, or along streets--to enhance the visual quality of a street.

Trip

A one-way journey that proceeds from an origin to a destination via a single mode of transportation; the smallest unit of movement considered in transportation studies. Each trip has one "production end," (or origin--often from home, but not always), and one "attraction end," (destination). (See "[Traffic Model.](#)")

Trip Generation

The dynamics that account for people making trips in automobiles or by means of public transportation. Trip generation is the basis for estimating the level of use for a transportation system and the impact of additional development or transportation facilities on an existing, local transportation system. Trip generations of households are correlated with destinations that attract household members for specific purposes.

Truck Route

A path of circulation required for all vehicles exceeding set weight or axle limits, a truck route follows major arterials through commercial or industrial areas and avoids sensitive areas.

Tsunami

A large ocean wave generated by an earthquake in or near the ocean.

Underutilized Parcel

A parcel that is not developed to its full zoning potential.

Undevelopable

Specific areas where topographic, geologic, and/or surficial soil conditions indicate a significant danger to future occupants and a liability to the City or County are designated as "undevelopable" by the City or County.

Undue

Improper, or more than necessary.

Uniform Building Code (UBC)

A national, standard building code that sets forth minimum standards for construction, published by the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO).

Uniform Housing Code (UHC)

State housing regulations governing the condition of habitable structures with regard to health and safety standards, and which provide for the conservation and rehabilitation of housing in accordance with the Uniform Building Code (UBC).

Urban

Of, relating to, characteristic of, or constituting a city. Urban areas are generally characterized by moderate and higher density residential development (*i.e.*, three or more dwelling units per acre), commercial development, and industrial development, and the availability of public services required for that development, specifically central water and sewer, an extensive road network, public transit, and other such services (*e.g.*, safety and emergency response). Development not providing such services may be "non-urban" or "rural." (See "[Urban Land Use.](#)")

Urban Design

The attempt to give form, in terms of both beauty and function, to selected urban areas or to whole cities. Urban design is concerned with the location, mass, and design of various urban components and combines elements of urban planning, architecture, and landscape architecture.

Urban Growth Boundary

An officially adopted and mapped line dividing land to be developed from land to be protected for natural or rural uses. Urban growth boundaries are regulatory tools, often designated for long periods of time (20 or more years) to provide greater certainty for both development and conservation goals. (*Source: Greenbelt Alliance.*)

Urban Land Use

Residential, commercial, or industrial land use in areas where urban services are available.

Urban Limit Line

A boundary, sometimes parcel-specific, located to mark the outer limit beyond which urban development will not be allowed. It has the aim of discouraging urban sprawl by containing urban development during a specified period, and its location may be modified over time.

Urban Open Space

The absence of buildings or development, usually in well-defined volumes, within an urban environment.

Urban Reserve

An area outside of an urban service area but within an urban growth boundary, in which future development and extension of municipal services are contemplated but not imminent.

Urban Service Area

(1) An area in which urban services will be provided and outside of which such services will not be extended. (2) Developed, undeveloped, or agricultural land, either incorporated or unincorporated, within the sphere of influence of a city, which is served or will be served during the first five years of an adopted capital improvement program by urban facilities, utilities, and services. The boundary around an urban service area is called the "urban service area boundary" and is to be developed in cooperation with a city and adopted by a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). (*California Government Code Section 56080.*)

Urban Services

Utilities (such as water, gas, electricity, and sewer) and public services (such as police, fire, schools, parks, and recreation) provided to an urbanized or urbanizing area.

Urban Sprawl

Haphazard growth or outward extension of a city resulting from uncontrolled or poorly managed development.

Use

The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, erected, moved, altered, and/or enlarged in accordance with the City or County zoning ordinance and General Plan land use designations.

Use, Non-conforming

(See "[Non-conforming Use.](#)")

Use Permit

The discretionary and conditional review of an activity or function or operation on a site or in a building or facility.

Utility Corridors

Rights-of-way or easements for utility lines on either publicly or privately owned property. (See "[Right-of-way.](#)" or "[Easement.](#)")

Vacant

Lands or buildings that are not actively used for any purpose.

Variance

A departure from any provision of the zoning requirements for a specific parcel, except use, without changing the zoning ordinance or the underlying zoning of the parcel. A variance usually is granted only upon demonstration of hardship based on the peculiarity of the property in relation to other properties in the same zone district.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

A key measure of overall street and highway use. Reducing VMT is often a major objective in efforts to reduce vehicular congestion and achieve regional air quality goals.

Very Low-income Household

A household with an annual income usually no greater than 50 percent of the area median family income adjusted by household size, as determined by a survey of incomes conducted by a city or a county, or in the absence of such a survey, based on the latest available eligibility limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program. (See "[Area.](#)")

View Corridor

The line of sight—identified as to height, width, and distance—of an observer looking toward an object of significance to the community (*e.g.*, ridgeline, river, historic building, etc.); the route that directs the viewers attention.

Viewshed

The area within view from a defined observation point.

Volume-to-Capacity Ratio

A measure of the operating capacity of a roadway or intersection, in terms of the number of vehicles passing through, divided by the number of vehicles that theoretically could pass through when the roadway or intersection is operating at its designed capacity. Abbreviated as "v/c." At a v/c ratio of 1.0, the roadway or intersection is operating at capacity. If the ratio is less than 1.0, the traffic facility has additional capacity. Although ratios slightly greater than 1.0 are possible, it is more likely that the peak hour will elongate into a "peak period." (See "[Peak Hour.](#)" and "[Level of Service.](#)")

Warehousing Use

A use engaged in storage, wholesale, and distribution of manufactured products, supplies, and equipment, excluding bulk storage of materials that are inflammable or explosive or that present hazards or conditions commonly recognized as offensive.

Wastewater Irrigation

The process by which wastewater that has undergone appropriate treatment is used to irrigate land.

Water-efficient Landscaping

Landscaping designed to minimize water use and maximize energy efficiency.

Watercourse

Natural or once natural flowing (perennially or intermittently) water including rivers, streams, and creeks. Includes natural waterways that have been channelized, but does not include manmade channels, ditches, and underground drainage and sewage systems.

Watershed

The total area above a given point on a watercourse that contributes water to its flow; the entire region drained by a waterway or watercourse that drains into a lake, or reservoir.

Waterway

(See "[Watercourse.](#)")

Wetlands

Transitional areas between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is covered by shallow water. Under a "unified" methodology now used by all federal agencies, wetlands are defined as "those areas meeting certain criteria for hydrology, vegetation, and soils." Wildlife Refuge

An area maintained in a natural state for the preservation of both animal and plant life.

Wilderness Areas

Uncultivated and unimproved areas which are not readily accessible.

Wildlife

Animals or plants existing in their natural habitat.

Wildlife Refuge

An area maintained in a natural state for the preservation of both animal and plant life.

Will

That which is expected or may be expected. Expresses intent or purpose. (See ["Shall"](#) and ["Should."](#))

Williamson Act

Known formally as the *California Land Conservation Act of 1965*, it was designed as an incentive to retain prime agricultural land and open space in agricultural use, thereby slowing its conversion to urban and suburban development. The program entails a 10-year contract between the City or County and an owner of land whereby the land is taxed on the basis of its agricultural use rather than the market value. The land becomes subject to certain enforceable restrictions, and certain conditions need to be met prior to approval of an agreement.

Woodlands

Lands covered with woods or trees.

Workplace Use

The combination of a variety of businesses, from office to research and development to light industry to warehousing, located in structures built with open floor plans, so as to leave most interior improvements to the tenants to design to their needs. (See also ["Industrial Park."](#))

Zero Lot Line

A detached single family unit distinguished by the location of one exterior wall on a side property line.

Zone, Combining

A special purpose zone that is superimposed over the regular zoning map. Combining zones are used for a variety of purposes, such as airport compatibility, flood plain or wetlands protection, historic designation, or special parking regulations. Also called "overlay zone."

Zone, Interim

A zoning designation that temporarily reduces or freezes allowable development in an area until a permanent classification can be fixed; generally assigned during General Plan preparation to provide a basis for permanent zoning.

Zone, Study

(See " Zone, Interim.")

Zone, Traffic

In a mathematical traffic model the area to be studied is divided into zones, with each zone treated as producing and attracting trips. The production of trips by a zone is based on the number of trips to or from work or shopping, or other trips produced per dwelling unit.

Zoning

The division of a city or county by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that implements policies of the General Plan.

Zoning Bonus

(See "Zoning, Incentive.")

Zoning District

A designated section of a city or county for which prescribed land use requirements and building and development standards are uniform.

Zoning, Exclusionary

Development regulations that result in the exclusion of low- and moderate-income and/or minority families from a community.

Zoning, Incentive

The awarding of bonus credits to a development in the form of allowing more intensive use of land if public benefits--such as preservation of greater than the minimum required open space, provision for low- and moderate-income housing, or plans for public plazas and courts at ground level--are included in a project.

Zoning, Inclusionary

Regulations that increase housing choice by providing the opportunity to construct more diverse and economical housing to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income families. Often such regulations require a minimum percentage of housing for low- and moderate-income households in new housing developments and in conversions of apartments to condominiums.

Zoning Map

Government Code Section 65851 permits a legislative body to divide a county, a city, or portions thereof, into zones of the number, shape, and area it deems best suited to carry out the purposes of the zoning ordinance. These zones are delineated on a map or maps, called the Zoning Map.

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