

General Plan Glossary

Abbreviations

ADT	Average daily trips made by vehicles or persons in a 24-hour period
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
CC&Rs	Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CIP	Capital Improvements Program
CMP	Congestion Management Plan
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
dB	Decibel
EIR	Environmental Impact Report (State)
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement (Federal)
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
FIR	Fiscal Impact Report
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
GOPR	Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State of California
LAFCO	Local Agency Formation Commission
PUD	Planned Unit Development
UBC	Uniform Building Code

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 floodways.

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. "Affordable to low- and moderate-income households" means that at least 20 percent of the units in a development will be sold or rented to lower income households, and the remaining units to either lower or moderate income households. Housing units for lower income households must sell or rent for a monthly cost not greater than



30 percent of 60 percent of area median income as periodically established by HCD. Housing units for moderate income must sell or rent for a monthly cost not greater than 30 percent of area median income.

Agricultural Preserve

Land designated for agriculture or conservation.

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.

Airport-Related Use

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

Ambient

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

Annex

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

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.

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.

Arterial

Medium-speed (30 to 40 mph), medium-capacity (10,000 to 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.

Attainment

Compliance with state and federal ambient air quality standards within an air basin.

Base Flood

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

Bikeways

A term that encompasses bicycle lanes, bicycle paths, and bicycle routes. Backbone bikeways are major throughway trails that connect to regional trails. Secondary bikeways connect to backbone trails.

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* §33031 and §33032) contains a definition of blight used to determine eligibility of proposed redevelopment project areas.

Blueline Stream

A watercourse shown as a blue line on a U.S. Geological Service topographic quadrangle map.

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.

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.



Buildout; Build-out

Development of land to its full potential or theoretical capacity as permitted under current or proposed planning or zoning designations.

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.

Caltrans

California Department of Transportation

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

A program established 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.

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.

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.

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 (§53311, et seq.), a legislative body may create within its jurisdiction a special tax district that can finance tax-exempt bonds for the planning, design, acquisition, construction, and/or operation of public facilities, as well as public services for district residents. Special taxes levied solely within 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 (7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and nighttime (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) periods, respectively, to allow for the greater sensitivity to noise during these hours.

Community Parks

Larger than neighborhood parks and designed to serve the needs of a broader age group; generally range in size from 5 to 30 acres.

Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)

A local agency created under California Redevelopment Law (*Health & Safety Code* §33300, et seq.), or a local legislative body that has been 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.

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.

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.

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 (§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. As a general rule, an action program or project is consistent with the general plan if, considering all its aspects, it will further the objectives and policies of the general plan and not obstruct their attainment.

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.

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.

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.

Density Bonus

The allocation of development rights that allows a parcel to accommodate additional square footage or additional residential units beyond the maximum for which the parcel is zoned. Under *Government Code* §65915, a housing development that provides 20 percent of its units for lower income households, or ten percent of its units for very low income households, or 50 percent of its units for seniors, is entitled to a density bonus and other concessions.



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 the zoning ordinance whereby projects are reviewed against certain standards and criteria by a specially established design review board or committee.

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.

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* §65865, 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.

Dwelling Unit

A room or group of rooms (including sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation facilities, but not more than one kitchen) that 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.

Elderly

Persons age 62 and older.

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.

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.

Endangered Species

A species of animal or plant whose prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes.

Environment

Defined by CEQA as "the physical conditions that 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 pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act that assesses all the environmental characteristics of an area, determines what effects or impacts will result



if the area is altered or disturbed by a proposed action, and identifies alternatives or other measures to avoid or reduce those impacts.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 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.

Expansive Soils

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

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, a lodging house, or an institution of any kind (California).

Fault

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

Feasible

Capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable time taking into account economic, environmental, social, and technological factors.

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.

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 lo-



cal governments to evaluate relative fiscal merits of general plans, specific plans, or projects.

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.

Floodplain

The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream regularly subject to flooding. That part of the floodplain 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.

Floodplain 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, and 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.

Greenbelts and Open Space Corridors

Recognizable expanses of undeveloped land that provide an attractive open space setting and a buffer between adjacent land uses.

Ground Failure

Ground movement or rupture caused by strong shaking during an earthquake. Includes landslide, lateral spreading, liquefaction, and subsidence.

Ground Shaking

Ground movement resulting from the transmission of seismic waves during an earthquake.

Groundwater

Water under the earth's surface, of ten 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").

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.

Habitat

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



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.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

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

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.

Household

All those persons – related or unrelated – who occupy a single housing unit (see “Family”).

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 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 unit that cannot be moved without substantial damage or unreasonable cost.

Impact Fee

A fee, also called a “development fee,” levied on the developer of a project by a city, a county, or other public agency as compensation for otherwise-unmitigated impacts the project will produce. 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 roofs, roads, sidewalks, and paved parking lots. The amount of impervious surface increases with development and establishes the need for drainage facilities to carry the increased runoff.

Inclusionary Zoning

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.

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.

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 nonprofit activities of a welfare, educational, or philanthropic nature that cannot be considered residential, commercial, or industrial.

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.

Intermittent Stream

A stream that normally flows for at least 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 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.

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.



Landslide

Downslope movement of soil and/or rock, which typically occurs during an earthquake or following heavy rainfall.

Land Use Classification

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

Lateral Spreading

Lateral movement of soil, often as a result of liquefaction during an earthquake.

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.

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.

Liquefaction

The transformation of loose, wet soil from a solid to a liquid state, often as a result of ground shaking 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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.



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 which (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.

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.

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. In addition to lacking an integral chassis or permanent hitch to allow future movement, differs from mobile homes and manufactured housing by 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.

Municipal Services

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



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 Resource Land

Areas within a city that have been designed for the preservation of natural resources.

Natural State

The condition existing prior to development.

Neighborhood

A planning area commonly identified as such in a community's planning documents, and by the individuals residing and working within the neighborhood. Documentation may include a map prepared for planning purposes, on which the names and boundaries of the neighborhood are shown.

Neighborhood Park

Designed to meet the needs of individual residential developments within the city; varies in size from a single lot to parcels of approximately 5 acres.



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 a model for American suburban development after World War II.

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.

Non-Attainment

The condition of not achieving a desired or required level of performance. Frequently used in reference to air quality.

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 permit-



ted to continue for a designated period of time, subject to certain restrictions.

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.

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 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.

Ordinance

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

Overlay

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

Parcel

A lot in single ownership or under single control, usually considered a unit for purpose 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.

Parking Ratio

The number of parking spaces provided per 1,000 square feet 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.

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.”

Pedestrian Trails

Improved or unimproved walkways or sidewalks located within park, beach, greenbelt, or open space areas.

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.

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 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 (§65100) which 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.

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.

Prime Agricultural Land

(1) Land used actively in the production of food, fiber, or livestock; (2) all land that qualifies for rating as Class I or Class II in the Natural Resources Conservation Service land use compatibility classifications; (3) land that qualifies for rating 80 through 100 in the Storie Index Rating.

Prime Farmland

Land that 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.

Pro Rata

Refers to the proportionate distribution 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.

Public and Quasi-Public Facilities

Institutional, academic, governmental, and community service uses, either owned publicly or operated by nonprofit organizations, including private hospitals and cemeteries.

Reclamation

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

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.

Redevelop

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 Beaches and Parks

Designated to meet the needs of residents and non-residents and usually attracting a large number of people from outside the immediate area; generally over 30 acres in size.

Regional Park

A park typically 150 to 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.

Rehabilitation

The repair, preservation, and/or improvement of sub-standard housing.

Retrofit

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.

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.

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 roads, railroads, and utility lines.

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 fresh water.

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 (which carry surface water) and septic tanks or leech fields (which hold refuse liquids and waste matter on-site).

Scenic Highway Corridor

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

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. "Granny flat" is one type of second unit intended for the elderly.

Seiche

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

Seismic

Caused by or subject to earthquakes or earth vibrations.

Seniors

Persons age 62 and older.

Senior Housing

See "Elderly Housing."

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.

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.

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.

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.

Special Use Parks or Facilities

Park-like places where a unique recreational activity is provided.

Specific Plan

A tool authorized by *Government Code* §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.

Sphere of Influence

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

Standards

(1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. *Government Code* §65302 requires that general plans spell out the objectives, principles, standards, and proposals of the general plan. Ex-



amples 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.

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, that can be separately conveyed by sale or lease, and that can be altered or developed. “Subdivision” includes a condominium project as defined in §1350 of the California *Civil Code* and a community apartment project as defined in §11004 of the *Business and Professions Code*.

Subdivision Map Act

Section 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.

Subregional

Pertaining to a portion of a region.



Subsidence

The sudden sinking or gradual downward settling and compaction of soil and other surface material with little or no horizontal motion. Subsidence may be caused by a variety of human and natural activity, including earthquakes.

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.

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).

Traffic Model

A mathematical representation of traffic movement within an area or region based on observed relationships between the kind of 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.

Transfer of Development Rights

Also known as “Transfer of Development Credits,” a program that can relocate potential development from areas where proposed land use or environmental impact 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.



Transit

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

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.”

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.

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.

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).

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.

Uniform Building Code (UBC)

A national, standard building code that sets forth minimum standards for construction.

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.” CEQA defines “urbanized area” as an area that has a popu-



lation density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile (*Public Resources Code* §21080.14(b)).

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 development and conservation goals (source: Greenbelt Alliance). (Also called Urban Limit Line)

Urban Land Use

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

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 (*Government Code* §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.

Utility Corridors

Rights-of-way or easements for utility lines on either publicly or privately owned property. (See “Right-of-Way” or “Easement.”)

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 30 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.

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 viewer’s attention.

View Park

Smaller passive parks designed to take advantage of a significant view.

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 the 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.”



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 man-made 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 animal and plant life.

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 ten-year contract between the city or the county and an owner of land whereby the land is taxed on the basis of its agricultural use rather than its market value. The land becomes subject to certain enforceable restrictions, and certain conditions need to be met prior to approval of an agreement.

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 on the regular zoning map. Combining zones are used for a variety of purposes, such as airport compatibility, floodplain 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, 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 a county by legislative regulations into areas – or zones – that specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that implements policies of the General Plan.

Zoning District

A designated section of a city or a 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.



