

Glossary of Key Planning Terms

Acre, Gross. Area of a site calculated to the centerline of bounding streets and other public rights-of-way.

Acre, Gross Developable. Area of a site, including proposed public streets and other proposed rights-of-way but excluding areas subject to physical or environmental constraints, which include creek corridors and floodways, and areas to be dedicated for greenways or habitat protection.

Acre, Net. Area of a site excluding land to be dedicated for required easements for vehicles and rights of way, either public or private; land dedicated to be hazardous and unbuildable; and land to be dedicated for schools and parks or other facilities dedicated for public use.

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

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.

Attainment Area. An area determined to have met federal or State air quality standards, as defined in the federal Clean Air Act or the California Clean Air Act. An area may be an attainment area for one pollutant and a non-attainment area for others.

Best Management Practices (BMP). The combination of standards, procedures, conservation measures, and management practices that reduces or avoids adverse impacts of development. BMPs most commonly refer to water supply and quality management, but may also refer to other resources or planning concerns, such as air quality, agriculture and soils, biological resources, etc.

Buffer Area. A landscape area, usually containing trees, shrubs, and other natural surfaces, used to protect a resource such as a waterway or agricultural land, or to increase the compatibility of adjacent land uses.

Buildout. That level of development characterized by full occupancy of all developable sites in accordance with the General Plan; the maximum probable level of development envisioned by the

General Plan under specified assumptions about densities and intensities. Buildout does not necessarily assume parcels are developed at maximum allowable intensities.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The multi-year scheduling of public physical improvements based on studies of fiscal resources available and the choice of specific improvements to be constructed.

Climate Action Plan (CAP). A plan to address community, agency, or business contributions to greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) and global climate change. A CAP usually consists of an existing GHG inventory, a projection of future emissions, a prioritized list of potential relevant actions the jurisdiction could take to reduce existing and future GHG emissions, some quantification of costs and benefits of each action, an estimate of the overall effect of plan implementation in terms of GHG reductions, and an implementation program including responsible parties, funding sources, and timelines for implementation.

CNEL (Community Noise Equivalent Level). The average equivalent A-weighted sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of five decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels in the night from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Compatible. Capable of existing together without conflict or ill effects.

Conservation. The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect.

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

Curb Cut. The opening along the curb line at which point vehicles or other wheeled forms of transportation may enter or leave the roadway. Curb cuts are essential at street corners for wheelchair users.

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

Decibel (dB). A unit of measurement used to express the relative intensity of sound as heard by the human ear describing the amplitude of sound, equal to 20 times the logarithm to the base 10 of the ratio of the pressure of the sound measured to the reference pressure, which is 20 micropascals (20 micronewtons per square meter).

Dedication. The commitment 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 required by the City as conditions of approval on a development.

Dedication, In lieu of. Cash payments which 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.

Density, Residential. The number of dwelling units per acre of land. Densities are usually expressed in units per gross developable acre. (See “Acres, Gross,” and “Acres, Gross Developable.”)

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 State Law, residential projects that provide affordable housing may be entitled to a 35 percent increase of the underlying zone district.

Detention Area. A detention area is an area in the natural environment where rainwater runoff and stormwater naturally collects during a rain and then is pumped to other areas. Human activity and construction of homes have the effect of changing the size and shape of a detention area.

Detention Basin/Pond. Facilities classified according to the broad function they serve, such as storage, diversion or detention. Detention facilities are constructed to retard flood runoff and minimize the effect of floods.

Developer. An individual who, or business which, prepares raw land for the construction of buildings or builds 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 but are not limited to: 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 vegetation cover (with the exception of agricultural activities). Routine repair and maintenance activities are not considered to be “development.”

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.

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. A right given by the owner of land to another party for specific limited use of that land. An easement may be acquired by a government through dedication when the purchase of an entire interest in the property may be too expensive or unnecessary; usually needed for utilities or shared parking.

Endangered Species, California. A native species or sub-species of a bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile, or plant, which is in serious danger of becoming extinct throughout all or a significant portion of its range, due to one or more factors, including loss in habitat, change in habitat, over-exploitation, predation, competition, or disease. The status is determined by the State Department of Fish and Game together with the State Fish and Game Commission.

Endangered Species, Federal. A species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range, other than the species of the Class Insect determined to constitute a pest whose protection under the provisions of the 1973 Endangered Species Act, as amended, would present an overwhelming and overriding risk to humans. The status is determined by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of the Interior.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR). An environmental assessment that fulfills the requirements of CEQA and is designed to inform decision-makers, responsible and trustee agencies, and the general public of a proposed action (project) and the range of potential environmental impacts of that action. An EIR recommends measures to mitigate significant adverse impacts identified in the analysis, and provides an opportunity to identify environmental benefits that might balance some potentially significant adverse environmental effects. An EIR also analyzes alternatives to the proposed project. EIRs are informational documents used in the review of a project prior to taking action on it.

Environmental Justice. Environmental Justice refers to the fair treatment of all people – regardless of race, income, and religion – when implementing policies that affect housing and the environment. The federal and State government have policies that require agencies to identify and avoid placing a disproportionately large number of minority and low-income populations in certain geographical locations.

Equivalent Noise Level (Leq). A single-number representation of the fluctuating sound level in decibels over a specified period of time. It is a sound-energy average of the fluctuating level.

Erosion. The process by which material is removed from the earth's surface (including weathering, dissolution, abrasion, and transportation), most commonly by wind or water.

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

Fault. A fracture in the earth's crust forming a boundary between rock masses that have shifted. An active fault is a fault that has moved recently and which is likely to again. An inactive fault is a fault which shows no evidence of movement in recent geologic time and little potential for movement.

Flood, 100-Year. That flood event that has a one-percent chance of occurrence in any one year.

Flood, 500-Year. The magnitude of a flood expected to occur on the average every 500 years, based on historical data. The 500-year flood has a 1/500, or 0.2 percent, chance of occurring in any given year.

Floodplain. An area adjacent to a lake, stream, ocean or other body of water lying outside the ordinary banks of the water body and periodically inundated by flood flows.

Flood Zone. The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream that is subject to flooding under a 100-year or a 500-year flood.

Floor Area, Gross. The total horizontal area in square feet of all floors within the exterior walls of a building, but not including the area of unroofed inner courts or shaft enclosures.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The ratio between gross floor area of structures on a site and gross site area. Thus, a building with a floor area of 100,000 square feet on a 50,000 square-foot lot will have a FAR of 2.0.

General Plan. A set of policies and programs that form a blueprint for long-term development of the community. It consists of written text and diagrams that express how a community should develop, and is a key tool for influencing the quality of life. The plan is a basis for decision-making on land use, services, and public works used by policymakers such as the Planning Commission and the City Council. All cities and counties in California are required by law to have general plans.

Global Climate Change. A change in the average air temperature that may be measured by wind patterns, storms, precipitation, and temperature. The rate of temperature change has typically been incremental, with warming and cooling occurring over the course of thousands of years. In the past 10,000 years the earth has experienced incremental warming as glaciers retreated across the globe. However, scientists have observed an unprecedented increase in the rate of warming over the past 150 years, roughly coinciding with the global industrial revolution.

Graywater. Usually defined as the wastewater produced from baths, showers, clothes washers, and bathroom sinks (though not kitchen sinks or toilets). Graywater may be recycled for irrigation, cooling, toilet-flushing, and certain other secondary uses without treatment.

Greenhouse Gases. Gases that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere. These gases play a critical role in determining the Earth's surface temperature. Six specific greenhouse gases are regulated in California, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride.

Green Building. A green building generally refers to one that is environmentally-friendly in terms of energy consumption, water conservation, or the waste produced during its entire life-cycle. A green building is intended to have less impact on the environment than a traditional structure. Green buildings are often designated with the use of rating systems.

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 (i.e. aquifers).

Habitat. The natural environmental of a plant or animal.

Hazardous Material. A material or form of energy that could cause injury or illness to persons, livestock, or the natural environment. Some examples from everyday life include, gasoline, fertilizers, detergent, used cooking oil, mineral spirits, batteries, and paint.

Hazardous Waste. Waste which requires special handling to avoid illness or injury to persons or damage to property. Includes, but is not limited to, inorganic mineral acids of sulfur, fluorine, chlorine, nitrogen, chromium, phosphorous, selenium and arsenic and their common salts; lead, nickel, and mercury and

their inorganic salts or metallo-organic derivatives; coal, tar acids such as phenol and cresols and their salts; and all radioactive materials.

Historic Resources. Standing structures of historic or aesthetic significance, with significance usually defined by state and federal agencies, but which may also be defined locally.

Household. The group of people occupying one housing unit. For purposes of planning, the number of households in a community equals the number of occupied housing units, which is usually less than the total number of available housing units.

Impervious Surface. Any material that reduces or prevents absorption of water into land.

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

Infill. The development of new housing or other buildings on scattered vacant lots in a predominantly developed area or on new building parcels created by permitted lot splits.

Infiltration. The introduction of underground water, such as groundwater, into wastewater collection systems. Infiltration results in increased wastewater flow levels.

Intersection Capacity. The maximum number of vehicles that has a reasonable expectation of passing through an intersection in one direction during a given time period under prevailing roadway and traffic conditions.

Infrastructure. Permanent utility installations, including roads, water supply lines, sewage collection pipes, and power and communications lines.

Jobs-Employed Residents Ratio. Total jobs divided by total employed residents (i.e. people who live in the area, but may work anywhere). A ratio of 1.0 typically indicates a balance. A ratio greater than 1.0 indicates a net in-commute; less than 1.0 indicates a net out-commute.

K Factor. Erosion factor K indicates the susceptibility of a soil to sheet and rill erosion by water. Factor K is one of six factors used in the Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE) and the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) to predict the average annual rate of soil loss by sheet and rill erosion in tons per acre per year. The estimates are based primarily on percentage of silt, sand, and organic matter and on soil structure and saturated hydraulic conductivity (K_{sat}). Values of K range from 0.02 to 0.69. Other factors being equal, the higher the value, the more susceptible the soil is to sheet and rill erosion by water.

L10. A statistical descriptor indicating 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.

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 (after 10 p.m. and before 7 a.m.). The Ldn is approximately numerically equal to the CNEL for most environmental settings.

Leq (Equivalent energy level). The sound level corresponding to a steady sound level containing the same total energy as a time varying signal over a given sample period. Leq is typically computed over 1, 2, and 8-hour sample periods. The Leq is a “dosage” type measure and is the basis for the descriptions used in current standards, such as the 24-hour CNEL used by the State of California.

LEED. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ is a nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings.

Level of Service, LOS (traffic). A qualitative measure describing operational conditions within a traffic stream and the perception of motorists and/or passengers regarding these conditions. A level of service definition generally describes these conditions in terms of such factors as traffic volumes, speed and travel time, delays at traffic signals, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, convenience, and safety.

Liquefaction. A sudden large decrease in the shearing resistance of a cohesion less soil, caused by a collapse of the structure by shock or strain, and associated with a sudden but temporary increase of the pore fluid pressure.

Mixed Use. A development project or a General Plan land use designation that includes two or more categories of land use, such as residential and commercial, or commercial and professional office.

Noise Attenuation. Reduction of the level of a noise source using a substance, material, or surface.

Noise Contours. Lines drawn about a noise source indicating equal levels of noise exposure. CNEL and Ldn are the metrics utilized herein to describe annoyance due to noise and to establish land use planning criteria for noise.

Open Space. Any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved. The General Plan designates privately-owned rural/grazing lands, and devoted open space areas as defined by California planning law.

Particulate Matter. Solid or liquid matter suspended in the atmosphere. Particulate matters can penetrate to the deeper portions of the lung, affecting sensitive population groups such as children and people with respiratory diseases.

Peak Hour. The busiest one-hour period for traffic during a 24-hour period. The PM peak hour is the busiest one hour period of traffic during the evening commute period. The AM peak hour is the busiest one hour period during the morning commute.

Pedestrian-oriented Development. Development designed with an emphasis on the street sidewalk and on pedestrian access to the building, rather than an auto access and parking areas.

Performance Standards. A statement representing a commitment by a public agency to attain a specified level or quality of performance through its programs and policies.

Planning Area. The land area addressed by a General Plan, including land within the city limits and land outside the city limits that bears a relation to the City’s planning.

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.

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

Retention Area. A pond, pool, lagoon, or basin used for the storage of water runoff, which is not pumped to another location, thereby holding an entire winter's storm capacity.

Right-of-Way. A continuous strip of land reserved for or actually occupied by a road, crosswalk, railroad, electric transmission lines, oil or gas pipeline, water line, sanitary storm sewer or other similar use.

Sensitive Receptors. Persons or land users that are most sensitive to negative effects of air pollutants. Persons who are sensitive receptors include children, the elderly, the acutely ill, and the chronically ill. The term "sensitive receptors" can also refer to the land use categories where these people live or spend a significant amount of time. Such areas include residences, schools, playgrounds, child-care centers, hospitals, retirement homes, and convalescent homes.

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. The process of silt deposition. Silt is a loose sedimentary material composed of finely divided particles of soil or rock, often carried in cloudy suspension in water.

Solid Waste. General category that includes organic wastes, paper products, metals, glass, plastics, cloth, brick, rock, soil, leather, rubber, yard wastes, and wood.

Sphere of Influence (SOI). The ultimate service area of an incorporated city, as established by the LAFCO.

Stationary Source. A source of air pollution that is not mobile, for instance, an exhaust pipe from a laboratory or a refinery.

Stormwater Runoff. Surplus surface water generated by rainfall that does not seep into the earth but flows overland to a watercourse.

Sustainability. A term used to address a wide range of issues that affect quality of life. In its most widely recognized definition, it means making choices today that will not limit our children's ability to have a high quality of life when they reach our age. Sustainability relates to many things we have heard about for years – having readily available and safe drinking water, having clean air that we can feel comfortable breathing, avoiding toxic wastes and hazardous material use in our communities, and reducing the amount of garbage we send to the landfill.

Threatened Species, California. A species of animal or plant is endangered when its survival and reproduction in the wild are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, over-exploitation, predation, competition, disease, or other factors; or when although not presently threatened with extinction, the species is existing in such small numbers that it may

become endangered if its environment worsens. A species of animal or plant shall be presumed to be rare or endangered as it is listed in Sections 670.2 or 670.5, Title 14, California Code of Regulations; or Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations Sections 17.11 or 17.12 pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act as rare, threatened, or endangered.

Threatened Species, Federal. A species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) Total dissolved solids comprise inorganic salts and small amounts of organic matter that are dissolved in water. The principal constituents are usually calcium, magnesium, sodium and potassium and the anions carbonate, bicarbonate, chloride, sulphate and, particularly in groundwater, nitrate (from agricultural use).

Transportation Demand Management. Measures to improve the movement of persons and goods through better and more efficient utilization of existing transportation systems (e.g., streets and roads, freeways and bus systems) and measures to reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles utilized for commute purposes.

Trip Generation. The number of vehicle trip ends associated with (i.e., produced by) a particular land use or traffic study site. A trip end is defined as a single vehicle movement. Roundtrips consist of two trip ends.

Urban Area Boundary (UAB). Established by the current General Plan, the UAB is a 90-square-mile area that is seen as the City's ultimate probably physical extent. It includes land not expected to develop within the 30 years of the General Plan's planning period (2020).

Urban Development Boundary (UDB). The current General Plan established a series of Urban Development Boundaries meant to accommodate growth in 10-year increments. The currently applicable UDB is also known as the "129,000 boundary," and is meant to accommodate a population of 129,000 by the year 2010.

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The UGB, also known as the "165,000 boundary," was established by the current General Plan to accommodate the projected growth through 2020.

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 as per the City's Zoning Ordinance and General Plan land use designation.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). A measure of both the volume and extent of motor vehicle operation; the total number of vehicle miles traveled within a specified geographical area (whether the entire country or a smaller area) over a given period of time.

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.).

Watershed. The total area above a given point on a watercourse which contributes water to the flow of the watercourse; the entire region drained by a watercourse.

Wetlands. Areas that are permanently wet or periodically covered with shallow water, such as saltwater and freshwater marshes, open or closed brackish marshes, swamps, mud flats, and fens.

Wildlife Corridors. A natural corridor, such as an undeveloped ravine, that is frequently used by wildlife to travel from one area to another.

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 an owner of land and (usually) a county 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.

Zoning Ordinance. A City ordinance that divides incorporated land into districts and establishes regulations governing the use, placement, spacing, and size of buildings, open spaces, and other facilities.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

af/y: acre feet per year

ADT: Average daily traffic

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

ALUC: Airport Land Use Commission

BACT: Best Available Control Technology

BMP: Best Management Practice

Caltrans: California Department of Transportation

CARB: California Air Resources Board

CDFG: California Department of Fish and Game

CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act

CFCs: Chlorofluorocarbons

c.f.s.: Cubic feet per second

CGS: California Geologic Survey

CIP: Capital Improvement Program

CMP: Congestion Management Program

CNDDDB: California Natural Diversity Database

CNEL: Community Noise Equivalent Level

dB: Decibel

dba: Decibel A-Weighted

DNL: Day-Night Average Noise Level

DOF: California Department of Finance

DU: Dwelling Unit

DWR: Department of Water Resources

EIR: Environmental Impact Report (CEQA)

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

FAR: Floor Area Ratio

FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Act

FMMP: Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

GCC: Global Climate Change

GEA: Grasslands Ecological Area

GHG: Greenhouse Gas

GIS: Geographic Information Systems

GMP: Growth Management Program

GPURC: General Plan Update Review Committee

HCD: California Department of Housing and Community Development

IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

LAFCO: Local Agency Formation Commission

LEED: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

Ldn: Day-Night Average Sound Level

LHMP: Local Hazards Mitigation Plan

LOS: Level of Service

LUST: Leaking Underground Storage Tank

MCL: Maximum Contaminant Level

MGD: Million gallons per day (water or wastewater)

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

MSA: Metropolitan Statistical Area

NAAQS: National Ambient Air Quality Standards

NPDES: National Pollution Discharge Elimination System

NFIP: National Flood Insurance Program

NWI: National Wetland Inventory

PGA: Peak Ground Acceleration

PM_{2.5}: Suspended particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter

PM₁₀: Suspended particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter

ppb: Parts per billion

ppm: Parts per million, by volume or weight

RTIP: Regional Transportation Improvement Plan

RTPC: Regional Transportation Planning Committee

SCS: Sustainable Communities Strategy

sf: Square Feet

SIP: State Implementation Plan (Air Pollution)

SOI: Sphere of Influence

SR: State Route

TAZ: Traffic Analysis Zone

TCAG: Tulare County Association of Governments

TCM: Transportation Control Measure

TDM: Transportation Demand Management

TDS: Total Dissolved Solids

TPM: Transportation Performance Monitoring

UAB: Urban Area Boundary

UDB: Urban Development Boundary

UGB: Urban Growth Boundary

USGS: United States Geologic Survey

UST: Underground Storage Tank

V/C: Volume to Capacity Ratio

Valley Air: San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

VMT: Vehicle Miles Traveled

VPD: Vehicles per day

WWTP: Waste Water Treatment Plant

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