

GENERAL PLAN DEFINITIONS

Acres, Gross: The entire acreage of a site. This may include acreage to the centerline of streets or to the edge of the right-of-way depending upon the deed.

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.

Arterial: Medium-speed (30-40 mph), medium-capacity (10,000 to 35,000 average daily trips) roadway that provides intra-community travel and access to the city-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.

Bicycle Lane (Class II Facility): A corridor expressly reserved for bicycles, existing on a street or roadway in addition to any lanes for use by motorized vehicles.

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

Bicycle Route (Class III Facility): A facility shared with motorists and identified only by signs, a bicycle route has no pavement markings or lane stripes.

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

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.

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 Improvements Program (CIP): A program established by the City and reviewed by the Planning Commission, which schedules permanent improvements, usually for a minimum of five years in the future, to fit the projected fiscal capability of the City. The Program generally is reviewed annually, for conformance to and consistency with the General Plan.

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

Community Facilities District: Under the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 (Section 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 (7p.m. to 10 p.m.) and nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) periods to allow for greater sensitivity to noise during these hours.

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

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

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 interchangeable with “conformity with”. The courts have held that the phrase “consistent with” means “agreement with; harmonious with.” The term “conformity” means in harmony therewith or agreeable to (*Sec 58 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen.21, 25[1975]*). California 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.

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

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 10dBA doubles the perceived loudness though the noise is actually ten times more intense.

Decibel (dB): A unit used to express the relative intensity of a sound as it is heard by the human ear.

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.

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

The Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This Act applies to impacts to federally listed species, or to habitat occupied by federally listed species. ESA Section 9 forbids specified acts that directly or indirectly harm listed species. Section 9 also prohibits “taking” any species of wildlife or fish listed as endangered. These restrictions apply to all Federal agencies and to all persons subject to United States jurisdiction.

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) is a State program similar in scope and nature to the federal ESA, but focused on plant and wildlife species identified as threatened and endangered within the State of California. The California Department of Fish and Game administers the CESA regulations.

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 impact 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. (See California Environmental Quality Act.)

Environmental Justice: The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies (Government Code Section 65040.12).

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

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

Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM): For each community, the official map on which the Federal Insurance Administration has delineated area of special flood hazard and the risk premium zones applicable to that community.

Flooding: A rise in the level of a water body or the rapid accumulation of runoff, including related mudslides and land subsidence, that results in the temporary inundation of land that is usually dry. Riverine flooding, coastal flooding, mud flows, lake flooding, alluvial fan flooding, flash flooding, levee failures, tsunamis, and fluvial stream flooding are among the many forms that flooding takes.

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.

Freeway: A high-speed, high-capacity, limited-access road serving regional and countywide travel. Such roads are free of tolls, as contrasted with turn-pikes or other toll roads. Freeways generally are used for long trips between major land use generators. At Level of Service E, they carry approximately 1,875 vehicles per lane per hour in both directions. Major streets cross at a different grade level.

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

Habitat: The natural environment of a plant or animal.

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. A Hazardous Material is an injurious substance, including pesticides, herbicides, toxic metals, and chemicals, liquefied natural gas, explosives, volatile chemicals and nuclear fuels.

Historic Preservation: The preservation of historically significant structures and neighborhoods in order to facilitate restoration and rehabilitation of the building(s) to a former condition.

Important Farmland Map: Maps maintained by the California Department of Conservations' Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program to show farmland and urban areas in California. These maps use the following classifications:

Prime Farmland (P): Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and

moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Statewide Importance (S): Farmland similar to Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Unique Farmland (U): Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated, but may include nonirrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the four years prior to the mapping date.

Farmland of Local Importance (L): Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee.

Grazing Land (G): Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock. This category was developed in cooperation with the California Cattlemen's Association, University of California Cooperative Extension, and other groups interested in the extent of grazing activities. The minimum mapping unit for Grazing Land is 40 acres.

Urban and Built-up Land (D): Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acres, or approximately 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administration, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.

Other Land (X): Land not included in any other mapping category. Common examples include low density rural developments; brush, timber, wetland, and riparian areas not suitable for livestock grazing; confined livestock, poultry or aquaculture facilities; strip mines, borrow pits;

and water bodies smaller than forty acres. Vacant and nonagricultural land surrounded on all sides by urban development and greater than 40 acres is mapped as Other Land.

Water (W): Perennial water bodies with an extent of at least 40 acres.

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 leftover properties) within areas that are already largely developed.

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).

Land Use Classification: A system for classifying and designating the appropriate use of properties.

Leapfrog Development; New development separated from existing development by substantial vacant land.

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 (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.

According to the Transportation Research Board's 1985 Highway Capacity Manual Special Report 209, level-of-service is a qualitative measure describing the efficiency of a traffic stream. It also describes the way such conditions are perceived by persons traveling in a traffic stream. Level-of-service measurements describe variables such as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, traveler comfort and convenience, and safety.

Measurements are graduated ranging from level-of-service A (representing free flow and excellent comfort for the motorist, passenger or pedestrian) to level-of-service F (reflecting highly congested traffic conditions where traffic volumes exceed the capacities of streets, sidewalks, etc.)

Levels-of-service can be determined for freeways, multi-lane highways, two-lane highways, signalized intersections, intersections that are not signalized, arterials, and transit and pedestrian facilities.

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 reasonable 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 will 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 change 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.

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 Street: A street providing direct access to properties and designed to discourage through-traffic.

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.

Manufactured Housing: Residential structures that are constructed entirely in the factory and that, since June 15, 1976, have been regulated by the Federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 under the administration of HUD. (See “Mobilehome”)

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

Mercalli Intensity Scale: A subjective measure of the observed effect (human reactions, structural damage, geologic effects) of an earthquake. The Mercalli Scale is expressed in Roman numerals from I to XII with XII being the worst earthquake and I being the mildest earthquake.

Minipark: A small neighborhood park of approximately one acre or less.

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.

Mobilehome: A structure, transportable in one or more sections built on a permanent chassis and designed for use as a single-family dwelling unit that (1) has a minimum of 400 square feet of living space; (2) has a minimum width in excess of 102 inches; (3) is connected to all available permanent utilities; and (4) is tied down (a) to a permanent foundation on a lot either owned or

leased by the homeowner or (b) is set on piers, with wheels removed and skirted, in a mobilehome park. (See “Manufactured Housing”).

Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC): The primary agency with regard to archaeological and cultural resource sites (including burials), land, and artifacts of Native American religious, historical, or cultural significance.

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

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

Old Town Core: This is the major commercial downtown center of the City. This may have been known in the past as the Central Business District (CBD). The guidelines for delineating a downtown area are defined by the U.S. Census of Retail trade, with specific boundaries being set by the City.

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.

Paratransit: Transportation systems such as jitneys, car pooling, van pooling, taxi service, and dial-a-ride arrangements.

Planning Area: The area directly addressed by the General Plan. The City's Planning Area encompasses the City Limits and potentially annexable land within the Sphere of Influence.

Planning Commission: A body, usually having five members, created by the City in compliance with California law (Section 65100 of the Government Code) which requires the assignment of the planning functions of the City of a planning department, planning commission, hearing officers, and/or the City Council itself, as deemed appropriate by the City Council.

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.

Public and Quasi-Public (Semi-Public) Facilities: Institutional, academic, governmental and community service uses, either owned publicly or operated by non-profit organizations, including private hospitals and cemeteries.

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.

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

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.

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 freshwater.

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

Seismic: Caused by or subject to earthquakes or earth vibrations.

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.

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

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

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

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

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.

Transit: The conveyance of person or goods from one place to another by means of a local public transportation system. Also, urban and suburban rail, bus systems, and ferryboats.

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, paratransit, 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): Moderate- to higher-density development, located within easy walk of a major transit stop, generally with a mix of residential, employment, and shopping opportunities designed for pedestrians without excluding the auto. TOD can be new construction or redevelopment of one or more building whose design and orientation facilitate transit use.

Transit, Public: A system of regularly-scheduled buses and/or trains available to the public on a fee-per-ride basis.

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.

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 service, 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 population density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile (Public Resources Code Section 21080.14(b)).

Urban Services: Utilities (such as water, gas, electricity, and sewer) and public services (such as police, fire protection, 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.

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.

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.”

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

Zoning: The division of a city 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 for which prescribed land use requirements and building and development standards are uniform.