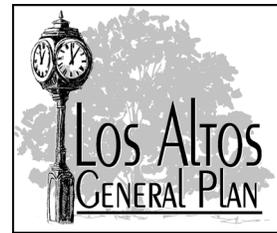


# GENERAL PLAN GLOSSARY

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The following terms are defined to improve understanding of the concepts discussed in the General Plan. They are general in nature and are not intended to provide definitions applicable to ordinances or policies otherwise adopted by the City Council of the City of Los Altos, including but not limited to the Zoning Code or the Subdivision Code. Please refer to the appropriate regulations or policies to determine the precise meanings of terms in those documents

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

**Access:** A way of approaching or entering a property, including ingress (the right to enter) and egress (the right to leave).

**ADT:** Average daily trips made by vehicles in a 24-hour period.

**Air Basin:** A geographical area in California defined as a distinct air basin for the purpose of managing the air resources of the State on a regional basis. An air basin generally has similar meteorological and geographic conditions throughout. The State is currently divided into 15 air basins.

**Air Pollution:** The presence of contaminants in the air in concentrations that exceed naturally occurring quantities and are undesirable or harmful.

**ABAG:** Association of Bay Area Governments.

**Ambient Noise Level:** The overall noise from all sources near and far. In this context, the ambient noise level constitutes the normal or existing level of environmental noise at a given location.

**Annexation:** The incorporation of a land area into an existing city with a resulting change in the boundaries of that city.

**Archaeological Site:** Land or water areas, which show evidence of human, plant or animal activity, usually dating from periods of which only vestiges remain.

**Architectural Control:** 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.

**Arterial:** A major street carrying the traffic of local and collector streets to and from freeways and other major streets, with controlled intersections and generally providing direct access to nonresidential properties.

**Assisted Housing:** Housing units whose construction, financing, sales prices, or rents have been subsidized by federal, state, or local housing programs.

**A-Weighted Decibel (dBA):** A numerical method of rating human judgment of loudness. The A-weighted scale reduces the effects of low and high frequencies in order to simulate human hearing.

**Automobile-Intensive Use:** A use of a retail area, which depends on exposure to continuous auto traffic.



**Base Flood Elevation:** The highest elevation, expressed in feet above sea level, of the level of flood waters expected to occur during a 100-year flood (i.e., a flood that has a one percent likelihood of occurring in any given year).

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

**Bike Path:** A paved route not on a street or roadway, and expressly reserved for bicycles. Bike paths may parallel roads but typically are separated from them by landscaping (Class I Bikeway).

**Bike Route:** A facility shared with motorists and identified only by signs. A bike route has no pavement markings or lane stripes (Class III Bikeway).

**Buffer:** An area of land or other provisions intended to enhance compatibility between one type of land use or structure and another. Where a commercial district abuts a residential district, for example, additional use, setback, height, or landscaping restrictions may be imposed to protect residential properties. The term may also be used to describe any zone that separates two unlike zones such as a multifamily housing zone between single-family housing and commercial uses.

**Building:** Any structure having a roof supported by columns or walls and intended for the shelter, housing, or enclosure of any individual, animal, process, equipment, goods, or materials of any kind or nature.

**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) may be required to 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 proposed timetable or schedule of all future capital improvements (government acquisition of real property, major construction project, or acquisition of long lasting, expensive equipment) to be carried out during a specific period and listed in order of priority, together with cost estimates and the anticipated means of financing each project. Capital improvement programs are usually projected five or six years in advance and should be updated annually.

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

**Central Business District (CBD):** General guidelines for delineating a downtown area as defined by the U.S. Census of Retail Trade, with specific boundaries being set by the local municipality. The Los Altos CBD boundaries are San Antonio Road, edge of South Parking Plaza, First Street, edge of North Parking Plaza, and West Edith Avenue.

**City:** City, with a capital "C," generally refers to the government or administration of the City of Los Altos. City, with a lower case "c" may mean any city.

**City Council:** The elected legislative body for the City of Los Altos.

**Collector:** A street for traffic moving between arterial and local streets, generally providing direct access to properties.

**Commercial:** Facilities for the buying and selling of commodities and services. This General Plan has three commercial categories – Downtown, Neighborhood, and Thoroughfare.



**Community Care Facility:** Any facility, place, or building which is maintained and operated to provide non-medical residential care, day treatment, adult day care, or foster family agency services for children, adults, or children and adults, including, but not limited to, the physically handicapped, mentally impaired, incompetent persons, and abused or neglected children, and includes residential facilities, adult day care facilities, day treatment facilities, foster family homes, small family homes, social rehabilitation facilities, community treatment facilities, and social day care facilities.

**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 Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL):** The average equivalent sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of five decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7 PM to 10 PM and after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels in the night after 10 PM, and before 7 AM. See also "A-Weighted Decibel."

**Compatibility:** The characteristics of different uses or activities that permit them to be located near each other in harmony and without conflict. The designation of permitted and conditionally permitted uses in zoning districts is intended to achieve compatibility within the district. Some elements affecting compatibility include: intensity of occupancy as measured by dwelling units per acre; pedestrian or vehicular traffic generated; volume of goods handled; and such environmental effects as noise, vibration, glare, air pollution, or the presence of hazardous materials. On the other hand, many aspects of compatibility are based on per-

sonal preference and are much harder to measure quantitatively, at least for regulatory purposes.

**Condominium:** A building, or group of buildings, in which units are owned individually, and the structure, common areas and facilities are owned by all the owners on a proportional, undivided basis.

**Congestion Management Plan (CMP):** A mechanism employing growth management techniques, including traffic level of service requirements, development mitigation programs, transportation systems management, and capital improvement programming, for the purpose of controlling and/or reducing the cumulative regional traffic impacts of development. AB 1791, effective August 1, 1990, requires all cities, and counties that include urbanized areas, to adopt and annually update a Congestion Management Plan.

**Congregate Care Housing:** Generally defined as age segregated housing built specifically for the elderly which provides services to its residents, the minimum of which is usually an on-site meal program, but which may also include housekeeping, social activities, counseling, and transportation. There is generally a minimum health requirement for acceptance into a congregate facility, as most do not offer supportive health care services, thus differing from a nursing home. Residents usually have their own bedrooms and share common areas such as living rooms, dining rooms, and kitchens; bathrooms may or may not be shared.

**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 or preferential. State law requires consistency between a general plan and implementation measures such as the zoning ordinance.



**Council of Governments (COG):** A regional planning and review authority whose membership includes representation from all communities in the designated region. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is an example of a COG for the San Francisco Bay area.

**Coverage:** The land area covered by all of the structures on a site.

**Critical Movement:** Any of the through or turning movements at an intersection that determine the allocation of green signal time.

**Day-Night Average Level (Ldn):** The average equivalent sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels in the night after 10 PM and before 7 AM See also "Community Noise Equivalent Level."

**Decibel (dB):** A unit for describing the amplitude of sound, as it is heard by the human ear. See also "A-Weighted Decibel," "Community Noise Equivalent Level," and "Day-Night Average Level."

**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.

**Density:** The number of dwelling units per unit of land; usually density is expressed "per gross acre" or "per net acre". Thus, the density of a development of 100 units occupying 20 acres is 5.0 units per gross acre.

**Density Bonus:** The allocation of development rights that allow a parcel to accommodate additional dwelling units beyond the maximum for which the parcel is zoned, in exchange for the provision of a certain percentage of those units as affordable.

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

**Development:** The division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels; the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation or enlargement of any structure; any mining, excavation, landfill or land disturbance, and any use or extension of the use of land.

**Development Impact Fees:** A fee or charge imposed on developers to pay for the costs to the City of providing services to a new development.

**Development Phasing Program:** A program which establishes the requirement that the issuance of building and grading permits shall be phased in a manner that assures implementation of required transportation or other improvements within the City. However, through the CEQA process, the City may tie the phasing of development to improvements outside of the City as mitigation measures/conditions of approval for project-generated traffic impact fees.

**Development Plan:** A plan, to scale, showing uses and structures proposed for a parcel or multiple parcels of land. It includes lot lines, streets, building sites, public open space, buildings, major landscape features and locations of proposed utility services.

**Development Rights:** The right to develop land by a land owner who maintains fee-simple ownership over the land or by a party other than the owner who has obtained the rights to develop. Such rights usually are expressed in terms of density allowed under existing zoning. For example, one development right may equal one unit of housing or may equal a specific number of square feet of gross floor area in one or more specified zone districts.



**Domestic water; potable water:** Water that has undergone adequate treatment and is considered suitable for human drinking and cooking uses.

**Dwelling:** A structure or portion of a structure designed, occupied, or intended for human habitation purposes.

**Dwelling, Multi-Family:** A building containing two or more dwelling units for the use of individual families maintaining households; an apartment or condominium building is an example of this dwelling unit type.

**Dwelling, Single-Family Attached:** A dwelling attached to one or more other dwellings by a common vertical wall; duplexes and townhomes are examples of this dwelling unit type.

**Dwelling, Single-Family Detached:** A dwelling, not attached to any other dwelling, which is designed for and occupied by not more than one household and is surrounded by open space or yards.

**Dwelling Unit:** One or more rooms designed, occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters, with cooking, sleeping and sanitary facilities provided within the unit.

**Easement:** A grant of one or more of the property rights by the property owner to and/or for use by the public, a corporation, or another person or entity.

**Economic Base:** The production, distribution and consumption of goods and services within a planning area.

**Element:** A division of the General Plan referring to a topic area for which goals, policies, and programs are defined (e.g., land use, housing, circulation).

**Endangered Species:** A species of animal or plant is considered to be endangered when its prospects for survival and repro-

duction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes.

**Environment:** The sum of all external conditions and influences affecting the life, development and, ultimately, the survival of an organism.

**Environmental Impact Report (EIR):** A report, as prescribed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), on the effect of a development proposal and other major actions that significantly affect the environment.

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

**Expressway:** A controlled access roadway, with no access to abutting properties, and access to major streets limited to grade level, signalized intersections or grade-separated interchanges. Foothill Expressway is the only expressway in Los Altos.

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

**Fault, Active:** A fault that has moved within the last 11,000 years and which is likely to move again within the next 100 years.

**Fault, Inactive:** A fault, which shows no evidence of movement in the last 11,000 years and no potential for movement in the relatively near future.

**Fault, Potentially Active:** A fault that last moved within the Quaternary Period (the last 2,000,000 to 11,000 years) before the Holocene Epoch (11,000 years to the present); or a fault which, because it is judged to be capable of ground rupture or shaking, poses an unacceptable risk for a proposed structure.



**FEMA:** Federal Emergency Management Agency.

**Fire Flow:** A rate of water flow that should be maintained to halt and reverse the spread of a fire.

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

**Flood Plain:** A lowland or relatively flat area adjoining the banks of a river or stream which is subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year (i.e., 100-year flood).

**Flood, Regulatory Base:** Flood having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year (100-year flood).

**Floodway:** The channel of a watercourse or river, and portions of the flood plain adjoining the channel, which are reasonably required to carry and discharge the base flood of the channel.

**Floor Area Ratio (FAR):** The ratio of the gross floor area of all buildings on a site divided by the site area; usually expressed as a numerical value (e.g., a building having 5,000 square feet of gross floor area located on a lot of 10,000 square feet in area has a floor area ratio of .5:1, sometimes also designated as a FAR of 0.5).

**Freeway:** High-speed, high-capacity, limited-access transportation facility serving regional and county-wide travel. Generally used for long trips between major land use generators. Major streets cross at a different grade-level. State Route 85 and Interstate 280 are freeways.

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

**General Plan:** A legal document which takes the form of a map and accompanying text adopted by the local legislative body. The plan is a compendium of policies regarding the long-term development of a jurisdiction. The state requires the preparation of seven elements or divisions as part of the plan: land use, housing, circulation, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Additional elements pertaining to the unique needs of an agency are permitted.

**Goal:** The ultimate purpose of an effort stated in a way that is general in nature and immeasurable; a broad statement of intended direction and purpose (e.g., "A balance of land use types within the city").

**Grade:** The degree of rise or descent of a sloping surface.

**Greenbelt:** An open area, which may be cultivated or maintained in a natural state surrounding development or used as a buffer between land uses or to mark the edge of an urban or developed area.

**Ground Failure:** Mudslide, landslide, liquefaction or the compaction of soils due to ground shaking from an earthquake.

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

**Groundwater:** The supply of fresh water under the ground surface in an aquifer or soil that forms a natural reservoir.

**Group Quarters:** A facility that houses groups of unrelated persons not living in households (U.S. Census definition). Examples of group quarters include institutions, dormitories, shelters, military quarters, assisted living facilities and other quarters, including single-room occupancy (SRO) housing, where 10 or more unrelated individuals are housed.



**Growth Management:** Techniques used by government to control the rate, amount and type of development.

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

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

**Hardscape:** Decorative elements that may be combined with landscaping. Hardscape elements include, but are not necessarily limited to, natural features such as rock and stone; and structural features such as fountains, reflecting pools, swimming pools, art works, screens, walls, fences, benches, and crushed granite.

**HCD:** State Department of Housing and Community Development.

**Hazardous Materials:** An injurious substance, including pesticides, herbicides, toxic metals and chemicals, liquefied natural gas, explosives, volatile chemicals and nuclear fuels.

**Historic Area:** A district, zone or site designated by local, state or federal authorities within which buildings, structures and places are of basic and vital importance due to their association with history, or their unique architectural style and scale, and therefore should be preserved and/or developed in accord with a fixed plan.

**Household:** According to the Census, a household is all persons living in a dwelling unit whether or not they are related. Both a single person living in an apartment and a family living in a house are considered households.

**Household Income:** The total income of all the people living in a household. Households are usually described as very low income, low income, moderate income, and upper income for that household size, based on their position relative to the county median income.

**Housing Affordability:** Based on State and Federal standards, housing is affordable when the housing costs are no more than 30 percent of household income.

**Housing Payment:** For ownership housing, this is defined as the mortgage payment, property taxes, and insurance and utilities. For rental housing this is defined as rent and utilities.

**HUD:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Human Services:** The programs which are provided by the local, state, or federal government to meet the health, welfare, recreational, cultural, educational, and other special needs of its residents.

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

**Implementation Program:** An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out General Plan policy.

**Income Categories:** Four categories for classifying households according to income based on the median income for each county. The categories are as follows: Very Low (0-50% of county median); Low (50-80% of county median); Moderate (80-120% of county median); and Upper (over 120% of county median).



**Infill Development:** Development of vacant land (usually individual lots or left-over properties) within areas, which are already largely developed.

**Infrastructure:** The physical systems and services which support development and population, such as roadways, railroads, water, sewer, natural gas, electrical generation and transmission, telephone, cable television, storm drainage, and others.

**Intensity:** A measure of the amount or level of development often expressed as the ratio of building floor area to lot area (floor area ratio) for commercial, business, and industrial development, or dwelling units per acre of land for residential development (density).

**Intersection:** Where two or more roads cross at grade.

**Issue:** A problem, constraint, or opportunity that becomes the basis for community action.

**Jobs/Housing Balance; Jobs/Housing Ratio:** The jobs/housing ratio divides the number of jobs in an area by the number of housing units. A ratio of 1:1 (1.0) means that a community has an equal number of jobs as housing. A ratio greater than 1.0 typically indicates a net in-commute of employed persons; less than 1.0 a net out-commute of employed persons. However, in communities with an average of more than one wage earner per household, a ratio of 1.5 or 1.75 may be considered balanced.

**Landscaping:** Planting, including, but not limited to, trees, shrubs, and ground covers, suitably designed, selected, installed, and maintained to enhance a site or right-of-way.

**Land Use:** A description of how land is occupied or used.

**Land Use Plan:** A plan showing the existing and proposed location, extent and intensity of development of land to be used in the future for varying types of residential, commercial, recreational and other public and private purposes or combination of purposes.

**Landslide:** A general term for a falling or sliding mass of soil or rocks.

**LIHPRHA:** Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Homeownership.

**Liquefaction:** A process by which water-saturated granular soils transform from a solid to a liquid state due to groundshaking. This phenomenon usually results from shaking from energy waves released in 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.

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

**Lot:** A parcel or area of land established by plat, subdivision, or as otherwise permitted by law, to be used, developed or built upon, including the building site and all required yards and open spaces.

**LOS:** Level of Service of roadway and intersection operations. Level of Service is rated on a scale of A (best) to F (worst), based on criteria such as percent of roadway capacity used and waiting times at intersections.



**Manufactured Housing:** Residential structures that are constructed entirely in the factory, and which since June 15, 1976, have been regulated by the federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 under the administration of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**Median Income:** The annual income for each household size that is defined annually by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Half of the households in the region have incomes above the median and half are below.

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

**Mixed Use:** Properties on which various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, and residential, are combined in a single building.

**Mobile Home:** A structure, transportable in one or more sections, at least eight feet in width and 32 feet in length, built on a permanent chassis, and designed to be used as a dwelling unit, with or without a permanent foundation when connected to the required utilities.

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

**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.

**Noise:** Any undesired audible sound.

**Noise Exposure Contours:** Lines drawn about a noise source indicating constant energy levels of noise exposure. CNEL and Ldn are the metrics utilized to describe community noise exposure.

**Non-Conforming Use:** A use that was valid when brought into existence, but which by subsequent regulation no longer conforms to the use regulations for the district in which such use is located. "Non-conforming use" is a generic term and may also include (1) non-conforming buildings (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 a piece of property that is inconsistent with a new or amended General Plan, and that is a violation of a zoning ordinance amendment subsequently adopted in conformance with the General Plan, will be a non-conforming use.

**Non-Domestic Water:** Water consisting of, but not limited to, a combination of treated wastewater and intercepted surface stream flow, supplemented by other waters including potable water.

**NPDES:** National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

**Open Space:** Any parcel or area of land or water essentially unimproved and set aside, designated, dedicated or reserved for public or private use or enjoyment.

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



**Overcrowding:** As defined by the Census, a household with greater than 1.01 persons per room, excluding bathrooms, kitchens, hallways, and porches.

**Parcel:** A lot or tract of land.

**Planning and Research, Office of (OPR):** A governmental division of the State of California which has among its responsibilities the preparation of a set of guidelines for use by local jurisdictions in drafting General Plans.

**Planning Area:** The planning area is the land area addressed by the General Plan. The planning area boundary may coincide with the Sphere of Influence, which encompasses land both within the City limits and potentially annexable land, or may encompass land both within the City limits and in the surrounding area that relates to the City's long-range planning.

**Planning Commission:** A body, usually having five or seven members, created by a city or county in compliance with California law (Section 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.

**Policy:** Statements guiding action and implying clear commitment found within each element of the General Plan (e.g., "Provide incentives to assist in the development of affordable housing").

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

**Program:** A coordinated set of specific measures and actions (e.g., zoning, subdivision procedures, and capital expenditures) the local government intends to use in carrying out the policies of the General Plan.

**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.

**Redevelopment:** A process in which existing development and use of land is replaced with newer development and/or use.

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

**Regulation:** A rule or order prescribed for managing government.

**Rehabilitation:** The upgrading of a building in previously dilapidated or substandard condition, for human habitation or use.

**Residential:** Land designated by the City's General Plan and zoning ordinance for buildings consisting only of dwelling units. May be vacant or unimproved.

**Restoration:** The replication or reconstruction of a building's original architectural features, usually describing the technique of preserving historic buildings.

**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.



**Right-of-Way:** A strip of land acquired by reservation, dedication, prescription or condemnation and intended to be occupied or currently occupied by a road, crosswalk, railroad, electric transmission lines, oil or gas pipeline, water line, sanitary or storm sewer, or other similar uses.

**Risk:** The danger or degree of hazard or potential loss.

**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.

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

**Sensitive Species:** Includes those plant and animal species considered threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the California Department of Fish and Game according to Section 3 of the Federal Endangered Species Act. Endangered - any species in danger of extinction throughout all, or a significant portion of, its range. Threatened - a species likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all, or a portion of, its range. These species are periodically listed in the Federal Register and are, therefore, referred to as "federally listed" species.

**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.

**Sewer:** Any pipe or conduit used to collect and carry away wastewater from the generating source to a treatment plant or discharge outfall.

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

**Site Area, Gross:** The total horizontal area within the property lines of a site.

**Site Area, Net:** The portion of a site that can potentially 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 easements.

**Site Plan:** The development plan for one or more lots on which is shown the existing and proposed conditions of the lot including: topography, vegetation, drainage, flood plains, marshes and waterways; open spaces, walkways, means of ingress and egress, utility services, landscaping, structures and signs, lighting, and screening devices; any other information that reasonably may be required in order that an informed decision can be made by the approving authority.

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

**Solar Access:** A property owner's right to have the sunlight shine on his/her land.

**Solid Waste:** Unwanted or discarded material, including garbage with insufficient liquid content to be free flowing, generally disposed of in landfills or incinerated.

**Special Needs Groups:** Those segments of the population which have a more difficult time finding decent affordable housing due to special circumstances. Under State planning law, these special needs groups consist of the elderly, handicapped, large families, single-parent households, farmworkers and the homeless.



**Specific Plan:** Under Article 8 of the Government Code (Section 65450 et seq), a legal tool for detailed design and implementation of a defined portion of the area covered by a General Plan. A specific plan may include all detailed regulations, conditions, programs, and/or proposed legislation, which may be necessary or convenient for the systematic implementation of any General Plan element(s).

**Sphere of Influence:** The probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local agency (city or district) as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of the County.

**Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA):** A county or group of contiguous counties which contains at least one city of 50,000 inhabitants or more, or twin cities of a combined population of at least 50,000.

**Standards:** (1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. The California Government Code (Section 65302) requires that General Plans describe "standards". Examples of standards might include the number of acres of parkland per 1,000 population that the community will attempt to acquire and improve. (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.

**Stationary Source:** A non-mobile emitter of pollution.

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

**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 lot, tract or parcel of land for the purpose of sale, whether immediate or in the future.

**Subdivision Map Act:** Division 2 (Sections 66410 et seq) of the California Government Code, which vests in local legislative bodies the regulation and control of the design and improvement of subdivisions, including the requirement for tentative and final maps. (See "Subdivision.")

**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 activities, 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.

**Traffic Calming:** Reducing motorist speed, decreasing vehicle volumes, and increasing safety for pedestrians and nonmotorized vehicles.

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



**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):** Individual actions or comprehensive plans to reduce the number of vehicular trips generated by or attracted to new or existing development. TSM measures attempt to reduce the number of vehicle trips by increasing bicycle or pedestrian trips or by expanding the use of bus, transit, carpool, vanpool, or other high occupancy vehicles.

**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 Rate:** The number of vehicle trips per acre, per 1,000 square feet of floor area, per housing unit or other unit of measure during a 24-hour period. Measured trip-generation rates are used to project the impact of development on the traffic-circulation system.

**Uniform Building Code (UBC):** A standard building code that sets forth minimum standards for construction.

**Units At-Risk of Conversion:** Housing units that are currently restricted to low-income housing use and will become unrestricted and possibly be lost as low-income housing.

**Water Course:** Any natural or artificial stream, river, creek, ditch, channel, canal, conduit, culvert, drain, waterway, gully, ravine or wash in which water flows in a definite channel, bed and banks, and includes any area adjacent thereto subject to inundation by reason of overflow or flood water.

**Wetland:** An area that is inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, commonly known as hydrophytic vegetation.

**Zoning:** A police power measure, enacted primarily by units of local government, in which the community is divided into districts or zones within which permitted and special uses are established as are regulations governing lot size, building bulk, placement, and other development standards. Requirements vary from district to district, but they must be uniform within the same district. The zoning ordinance consists of a map and text.

**Zoning District:** A geographical area of a city zoned with uniform regulations and requirements.

**Zoning Map:** The officially adopted zoning map of the city specifying the location of zoning districts within all geographic areas of the city.