



GLOSSARY OF PLANNING TERMS AND ACRONYMS

A

AB 32	California's Global Warming Solutions Act (2006) requiring reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
ABAG	Acronym for the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Council of Governments for the 9-county Bay Area.
Accessory Building/Use	An activity or structure on a property that is incidental and subordinate to the principle use of a site. Example: A retail establishment might have a small office area for administrative functions but still be classified as retail.
ADA	Acronym for the American with Disabilities Act requiring new or remodeled buildings and facilities open to the public be accessible to individuals with disabilities
Adverse Impact	A negative consequence for the physical environment resulting from an action or project.
ADT	Acronym for Average Daily Trips – a measurement of the average number of vehicle trips made on a roadway segment on a daily basis.
Affordable Housing	Housing capable of being purchased or rented by persons whose income level is categorized as very low (below 60% of county median), low (between 61% and 80% of county median) or moderate (between 81% and 120% of county median) within standards set by the California Dept. of Housing and Community Development or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development,
Amortization	The process by which nonconforming uses and structures must be discontinued or made to conform to requirements of the current zoning ordinance at the end of a specified period of time.
Annexation	The process of incorporating land area into an existing district or municipality, with a resulting change in the boundaries of the annexing jurisdiction.
Appeal	An application which may be filed when a person believes a land use decision was made in error so that a higher decision-making body can review the case.
Arterial	A roadway that provides intra-community travel and access to the countywide highway system, characterized by medium-speed (typ. 30-40 mph) and medium-capacity (typ. 10,000-35,000 average daily trips). Access to arterials is usually provided by collector roads or local streets, or by direct access from adjacent parcels.
Articulation	Variation in the depth of a building's façade, roof line or height that breaks up a plain, monotonous, planar area and creates patterns of light and shadow.
Assisted Housing	Generally multifamily rental housing who construction, financing, or rents have been subsidized by federal, state or local housing programs.

B

BANANA	Acronym for the term Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything
Base Flood Elevation	The height, in any given year, for the maximum water elevation for a 100-year flood event (having a 1% likelihood of occurring), and is a recognized standard of acceptable risk. Does not take into account potential storm surge caused by wind.
BAAQMD	Acronym for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the regional agency that regulates sources of air pollution within the Bay Area.
Bay Area Metro	The combined governance of MTC and ABAG
BCDC	Acronym for the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, a state planning and regulatory agency responsible for development along the shoreline of San Francisco Bay.
Below Market Rate (BMR) Unit	Any housing unit specifically priced and restricted by deed to be sold or rented to very low, low and/or moderate income households for an amount less than the fair-market value of the unit. Sales or rental rates are typically based on the maximum annual income level of a household occupying the unit, constituting no more than 30% of the household income.
Blight	A condition of a site, structure or area that may cause nearby buildings and/or areas to decline in attractiveness, utility and/or value. Formerly used as a criterion for the formation of a redevelopment project area.
Blueline Stream	A watercourse shown as a blue line on a U.S. Geologic Service topographic map.
Brown Act	California's open meeting law for local agencies. The Brown Act imposes certain requirements for posting of meeting agendas, p
Brownfield	An area or site with abandoned or under-used industrial or commercial facilities where redevelopment or reuse is complicated by environmental contamination.
Building Code	Standards adopted by the state governing the construction, alternation, demolition, occupancy or other use of buildings used for human habitation.
Building Coverage	The amount of a lot that may be covered by buildings, usually expressed as a percentage.
Building Envelope	The portion of a site available for structures after all required building setbacks, height limit and bulk requirements have been met.
Building Intensity	For non-residential uses, the actual or maximum permitted floor area ratio (FAR).
Building Official	The person responsible for the administration and enforcement of the building, housing, plumbing, electrical and related codes.
Build-to Line	A zoning requirement that sets a line that a building façade must be built to. The opposite of a setback. Usually required in order to maintain a continuous series of building facades along a streetscape.

Build-out	Development of land to its full potential and theoretical capacity as permitted under current or proposed planning or zoning designations.
Built Environment	Buildings, roads, parks and all other improvements constructed that form the physical character of a community, as opposed to the Natural Environment.
Bulk Regulations	Zoning or other regulations that control the height, mass, density and location of buildings. The purpose of bulk regulations is to provide proper light, air and open space and to reflect context-sensitive design.
Business Improvement Districts	Public-private partnerships among property owners and commercial tenants who collectively contribute to the maintenance, development and promotion of their commercial district.
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	Transit systems using buses that provide faster service than traditional bus routes, through improvements in infrastructure, vehicles and scheduling. Examples include dedicated busways, priority bus lanes, limited stop service and traffic signal pre-emption.
Busway	A vehicular right-of-way reserved exclusively for buses.

C

CARB	Acronym for the California Air Resources Board. State agency responsible for regulating air pollution, including emissions of greenhouse gases under AB 32.
CalTrans	California Department of Transportation, responsible for operation, maintenance and improvement of the state highway system.
Carbon Sequestration	The process of removing carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in a “carbon sink”, a fixed molecule in soil, oceans or plants.
Carrying Capacity	(1) The level of land use, human activity, or development for a specific area that can be accommodated permanently without an irreversible change in the quality of air, water, land, or plant and animal habitats. (2) The upper limits of development beyond which the quality of human life, health, welfare, safety, or community character within an area will be impaired.
CDBG	Acronym for the Community Block Grant, a grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on a formula basis for larger “entitlement” communities and by the California Department of Housing and Community Development for smaller “non-entitlement” jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development.
Census Tract	Small portions of populated areas in which data is collected for statistical purposes during a census.
Census	The nationwide population count conducted every 10 years by the U.S. Census Bureau.
Central Business District (CBD)	The major commercial downtown center of a community. General guidelines for delineating a downtown area are defined by the U.S. Census of Retail Trade, with specific boundaries being set by the local municipality.
CEQA	Acronym for the California Environmental Quality Act. State law requiring state and local agencies to analyze the potential impacts of their actions on the

	environment, disclose their findings to the public, and to mitigate impacts where feasible.
Certificate of Occupancy	An official certification that a building or place conforms to the provisions of the zoning and building codes, and therefore may be used or occupied. A structure cannot be occupied without a certificate of occupancy.
Charrette	A short-term intensive planning session where residents, designers, and others collaborate on a vision for development. The charrette workshop is designed to stimulate ideas and involve the public in the community planning and design process.
Charter City	A city that is incorporated under its own charter rather than the general laws of the state. Charter cities have broader powers than do general law cities in matters that are “municipal affairs” (as opposed to matters of “statewide concern”).
CIP	Acronym for a Capital Improvement Program. A program or plan adopted by a city or county government which schedules and funds permanent improvements to streets, sidewalks, parks and public facilities, usually for a minimum of five years in the future, to fit the projected fiscal capability of the local jurisdiction. The program generally is reviewed annually, for conformance to and consistency with the general plan.
Circulation Element	One of the seven state-mandated elements of a local general plan, it contains adopted goals, policies, and implementation programs for the planning and management of existing and proposed thoroughfares, transportation routes, and terminals, as well as local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the general plan
City Council	A city’s legislative body. The popularly elected city council is responsible for enacting ordinances, imposing taxes, making appropriations, establishing city policy, and hiring some city officials. The council adopts the general plan, zoning, and subdivision ordinance.
Climate Change	Climate change refers to any significant change in measures of climate (such as temperature, precipitation, or wind) lasting for an extended period (decades or longer). Climate change may result from: natural factors, such as changes in the sun’s intensity or slow changes in the earth’s orbit around the sun; natural processes within the climate system (such as changes in ocean circulation); and human activities that change the atmosphere’s composition (such as burning fossil fuels) and the land surface (such as deforestation, reforestation, urbanization or desertification.).
Clustered Development	Development in which a number of dwelling units are placed closer together than usual, or are attached, with the purpose of retaining an open space area.
Collector Street	A street that provides circulation within and between neighborhoods, characterized by relatively low speed (typ. 25-30 mph) and moderate volume (typ. 5,000-20,000 average daily trips). Collectors usually serve short trips and are intended for collecting trips from local streets and distributing them to the arterial network.
Commercial	A land use classification that permits facilities for the buying and selling of commodities and services

Common Open Space	Land within or related to a development, not individually owned or dedicated for public use that is designed and intended for the common use of the residents of the development.
Community Care Facility	Housing for the elderly licensed by the California Department of Social Services, typically for residents who are frail and need supervision. Services normally include meals, housekeeping, security and emergency response, a full activities program, supervision in the dispensing of medicine, personal services like assistance in grooming and bathing, but no nursing care. Sometimes referred to as residential care or personal care.
Community Character	The image of a community or area as defined by factors such as built environment, natural features and open space elements, type of housing, architectural style, infrastructure, and the type and quality of public facilities and services.
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 a zoning district is intended to achieve compatibility. 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 environmental effects like noise, vibration, glare, air pollution, or radiation
Complete Streets	Streets designed to accommodate all modes of travel and enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street.
Condemnation	The exercise by a public agency of the right of eminent domain.
Conditional Use Permit (CUP)	A discretionary permit issued by a hearing body to allow a conditional use that may or may not be allowable under the zoning code. If approval is granted, the developer must meet certain conditions to harmonize the project with its surroundings. Each application is considered on its individual merits. CUPs require a public hearing and, if approval is granted, are usually subject to the fulfillment of certain conditions by the developer. Approval of a CUP is not a change in zoning.
Conditional Use	A use that may locate within a zone only upon taking measures to address issues that may make the use detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare and will not impair the integrity and character of the zoned district.
Condominium	A structure of two or more units, the interior spaces of which are individually owned; the balance of the property (both land and building) is owned in common by the owners of the individual units.
Congestion Management Plan (CMP)	A plan controlling and/or reducing the cumulative regional traffic impacts of development through growth management techniques, including traffic level of service (LOS) requirements, standards for public transit, trip reduction programs, and capital improvement programs.
Conservation Easement	A tool for acquiring open space with less than full-fee purchase, whereby a public agency buys only certain specific rights from the land owner. These may be positive rights (providing the public with the opportunity to hunt, fish, hike,

or ride over the land) or they may be restrictive rights (limiting the uses to which the land owner may devote the land in the future).

Conservation Element	One of the seven state-mandated elements of a local general plan. It contains adopted goals, policies, and implementation programs for the conservation, development, and use of natural resources. These include water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources.
Council of Governments (COG)	A single or multi-county entity created by a joint powers agreement among the member agencies. COGs are responsible for determining the share of the regional need for housing for each of the counties and cities within the COG's region (the Regional Housing Needs Assessment). In most cases, the COG also serves as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) responsible for preparing regional transportation plans and expenditure programs. Each of California's 25 COGs is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of elected officials drawn from the cities and counties belonging to the COG.
Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs)	A term used to describe restrictive limitations— usually recorded as covenants—that may be placed on property and its use, and which usually are made a condition of holding title or lease. They are intended to preserve the physical nature and character of the development.
Cumulative Impact	As used in CEQA, the total impact resulting from the accumulated impacts of individual projects or programs over time.

D

Decibel (dB)	A unit of sound pressure (abbreviated as dB) that is used to express noise level. The reference level is a sound pressure of 20 micro newtons per square meter. Zero decibels, the starting point of the scale, is about the level of the weakest sound that can be heard by someone with very good hearing in an extremely quiet location. Typical examples of noise levels would be 50 decibels in an average residence; 90 decibels for someone standing 20 feet from a subway train; and 120 decibels if standing 200 feet from a jet.
Deed Restriction	A private legal restriction on the use of land recorded in the deed. The restriction burdens or limits the use of the property in some way.
Density	The number of housing units per acre permitted on a parcel under the applicable zoning. Gross density includes the area necessary for streets, schools and parks. Net density does not include land area for public facilities.
Density Bonus	An increase in the allowable number of residences granted by the city or county in return for the project's providing low- or moderate-income housing. A housing development that provides 20 percent of its units for lower-income households, ten percent of its units for very-low income households, or 50 percent of its units for seniors is entitled to a density bonus and other concessions.
Design Review	The comprehensive evaluation of a development and its impact on neighboring properties and the community as a whole, from the standpoint of site and landscape design, architecture, materials, colors, lighting, and signs, in accordance with a set of adopted criteria and standards, often by a specially established design review board or committee.

Development Agreement	A legislatively approved contract between a jurisdiction and a person having legal or equitable interest in real property within the jurisdiction that “freezes” certain rules, regulations, and policies applicable to development of a property for a specified period of time, usually in exchange for certain concessions by the owner.
Development Impact Fee	Fee or charge imposed on developers to pay for the costs to the community of providing services to a new development. Development fees must not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fee is charged. The most common are: (1) impact fees (such as parkland acquisition fees, school facilities fees, or street construction fees) related to funding public improvements which are necessitated in part or in whole by the development; (2) connection fees (such as water line fees) to cover the cost of installing public services to the development; (3) permit fees for the administrative costs of processing development plans (such as permits for building, grading, or signage); and (4) application fees for the administrative costs of reviewing and hearing development proposals.
Discretionary Decision	An action taken by a governmental agency that calls for the exercise of judgment in deciding whether to approve and/or how to carry out a project.
Down-Zoning	A change in the zoning classifications of land to a classification permitting development that is less intensive, dense or valuable, for example from multifamily residential to single-family residential or from commercial to residential.
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.

E

Easement	The right to use property owned by another for specific purposes or to gain access to another property. For example, utility companies often have easements on the private property of individuals to be able to install and maintain utility facilities.
Eminent Domain	The right of a public entity to acquire private property for public use upon the payment of just compensation.
Endangered Species	Animal or plant species designated as endangered under federal or state law, whose prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes.
Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	A report required by CEQA when an agency determines that a project may have a significant effect on the environment. An EIR evaluates a proposed project’s impacts on the environment, and recommends mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate those impacts. Decision makers use information in an EIR to help determine whether or not to approve a project.

F

Family	(1) Two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption (U.S. Bureau of the Census). (2) An individual or a group of persons living together who
--------	--

constitute a bona fide single-family housekeeping unit in a dwelling unit, not including a fraternity, sorority, club, or other group of persons occupying a hotel, lodging house or institution of any kind (California).

Finding	A determination or conclusion based on the evidence presented to a hearing body in support of its decision. When it presents its decision, the body is often required to demonstrate in writing that the facts presented in evidence support its decision in conformance with the law
Fiscal Impact Analysis	A projection of the direct public costs and revenues resulting from population or employment change to the local jurisdiction(s) in which the change is taking place. Enables local governments to evaluate the relative fiscal merits of general plans, specific plans, or projects.
Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)	For each community, the official map on which the Federal Insurance Administration has delineated areas of special flood hazard and the risk premium zones applicable to that community.
Floodplain	The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream or adjacent to a bay that is 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.
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	The gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the total net area of the site, expressed in decimals to one or two places. For example, on a site with 10,000 net square feet of land area, a floor area ratio of 1.0 will allow a maximum of 10,000 gross square feet of building floor area to be built. On the same site, an FAR of 1.5 would allow 15,000 square feet of floor area; an FAR of 2.0 would allow 20,000 square feet; and an FAR of 0.5 would allow only 5,000 square feet. Also commonly used in zoning, FARs are typically applied on a parcel-by-parcel basis as opposed to an average FAR for an entire land use or zoning district.
Form-Based Code	A method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form by controlling physical form primarily, with a lesser focus on land use. Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks.
Frontage	The frontage, or front, of a lot is usually defined as the side nearest the street.

G

Gateway	A point along a roadway where a motorist gains a sense of entering a city or county.
General Fund	Fund used to account for all financial resources except those required to be accounted for in another fund (like enterprise or grant funds). Usually, the general fund is the largest fund in an agency. Financial resources within the fund of a local agency may be discretionary or may be committed to or encumbered by programs mandated by the state or federal government.
General Law City	A city incorporated under and subject to the general laws of the state.

General Plan	The general plan is the foundation for local land use planning. The plan provides a vision for the foreseeable planning horizon – usually 10 to 20 years – and translates it into goals and policies for the physical development of the city or county. All other land use ordinances and policies flow from the general plan. The general plan covers all of the land within the jurisdiction and any additional land that, in the agency’s judgment, bears relation to its planning.
Greenfield	Farmland and open areas where the lack of prior industrial or commercial activity means that the threat of contamination is lower than in urbanized areas.
Greenhouse Gas (GHG)	Any gas that absorbs infrared radiation in the atmosphere. Types of greenhouse gases include water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO ₂), methane (CH ₄), nitrous oxide (N ₂ O), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), ozone (O ₃), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF ₆).
Greenway	Linear open spaces that link parks and neighborhoods within the community, such as paths or trails. Greenways provide public access to green spaces and opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to be physically active.
Group Home; Group Care Facility	Any facility used to provide non-medical residential care, day treatment, adult day care, or foster family agency services. Typically used to assist abused or neglected children or people who are physically disabled or mentally impaired or substance-dependent.
Growth Management	The use by a community of a wide range of techniques in combination to determine the amount, type, and rate of development desired by the community and to channel that growth into designated areas. Growth management policies can be implemented through public infrastructure ordinances (“concurrency”), urban limit lines, standards for levels of service, phasing, building caps and other programs.
Guidelines	General statements of policy direction around which specific details may be later established or which are not regulatory mandates.

H

Habitat	The physical location or type of environment in which an organism or biological population lives or occurs.
Hazardous Waste	By-products of society that can pose a substantial or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly managed. Possesses at least one of four characteristics (ignitable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic), or appears on special U.S. Environmental Protection Agency lists.
HCD	Acronym for the Department of Housing and Community Development, the state agency responsible for assessing, planning for, and assisting communities in meeting the needs of low- and moderate-income households. HCD also certifies housing elements of general plans for local jurisdictions.
Health Impact Assessment (HIA)	A combination of procedures, methods, and tools by which a policy, program, or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population. HIAs can be used to evaluate the potential health effects of a project or policy and to provide recommendations to increase positive health outcomes and

minimize adverse health outcomes. The HIA process brings public health issues to the attention of persons who make decisions about areas that fall outside of traditional public health arenas, such as transportation or land use.

Highest and Best Use	The use of a property that will bring the greatest profit to its owners. In theory, the economics of the real estate market establish a maximum value for each parcel of land at any given time. However, owners are not necessarily entitled to that use, particularly when that use may have negative effects on the use and enjoyment of neighboring properties.
Historic Preservation	The preservation of historically significant structures and neighborhoods to facilitate restoration and rehabilitation of the building(s) to a former condition.
Home Owner's Association (HOA)	A nonprofit organization operating under recorded legal agreements running with the land. Generally, each lot owner in a condominium or similar planned development becomes a member upon purchase. Each lot is subject to a charge for a proportionate share of the expenses for the organization's activities, like maintaining common areas, landscaping, recreation facilities and parking areas.
Household	All those persons, related or unrelated, who occupy a single housing unit.
Housing Element	One of the seven state-mandated elements of a local general plan. The Housing Element assesses the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community. It identifies potential sites adequate to provide the amount and kind of housing needed; and contains adopted goals, policies, and implementation programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing.

Impact	The effect of any direct human actions or the indirect repercussions of human actions on existing physical, social, or economic conditions.
Impervious Surface	A surface through which water cannot penetrate, like a roof, road, sidewalk, or paved parking lot. The amount of impervious surface increases with development and establishes the need for drainage facilities to carry the increased runoff.
Inclusionary Zoning	A locally adopted regulatory program requiring that a specific percentage of housing units in a project or development remain affordable for a specified period to households with incomes that are defined as moderate, low and/or very low. Often such regulations require a minimum percentage of housing for very-low, low- and moderate-income households in new housing developments and in conversions of apartments to condominiums.
Infill Development	Development of vacant or underutilized land (usually individual lots or leftover properties) within areas that are already largely developed.
Infrastructure	Public services and facilities like sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems, schools, roads, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and transit systems.
Initial Study	A preliminary analysis prepared by the lead agency of the potential environmental impacts of a proposed project. This process is used to

determine whether an Environmental Impact Report must be prepared, or a Negative Declaration will be sufficient.

In-Lieu Fee Cash payments that may be required of an owner or developer as a substitute for a dedication of land or construction of affordable housing units, usually calculated in dollars per lot, and referred to as in-lieu fees or in-lieu contributions.

Inverse Condemnation The illegal removal of property value through excessive government regulation. For example, a city may widen a street, taking the entire parking lot of a local store. The city may offer to pay for the lot, but the store may claim the market has lost all its business since no customers can park, and wants the value of the entire parcel, including the market building.

J

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

Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) A legal arrangement that enables two or more public agencies to jointly exercise common powers. A joint powers agreement may establish a separate agency or take the form of an operating agreement.

L

Land Use The occupation or use of land or water area for any human activity or any purpose defined in the general plan.

Land Use Element One of the seven state-mandated elements of a local general plan. The land use element uses text and maps to designate the future use or reuse of land within a given jurisdiction's planning area. The land use element serves as a guide to the structuring of zoning and subdivision controls, urban renewal and capital improvements programs, and official decisions regarding the distribution and intensity of development and the location of public facilities and open space.

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

LEED An acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. LEED is a voluntary, consensus based green building rating system developed and maintained by the U.S. Green Building Council to support and certify successful green building design, construction and operations.

Level of Service (LOS) A standard used by public agencies to measure the quality or effectiveness of a municipal service like police, fire, or library, or the performance of a facility, like a street or highway

Live-Work	Buildings or spaces within buildings that are used jointly for commercial and residential purposes where the residential use of the space is secondary or accessory to the primary use as a place of work.
Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)	Local Agency Formation Commissions in each county administer state law governing proposals for local agency incorporation, organization, and annexation. They review and evaluate all proposals for formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, adoption and amendment of spheres of influence, annexation of territory to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts, and merger of districts with cities.
Local Coastal Program (LCP)	A combination of a local agency's land use plans, zoning ordinances, zoning district maps, and (within sensitive coastal resources areas) other implementing actions that together meet the local requirements of, and implement the provisions and policies of, the California Coastal Act of 1976.
Lot Line Adjustment	The adjustment of a lot line between two or more existing parcels where land taken from one parcel is added to an adjacent parcel and where a greater number of parcels than originally existed are not thereby created.
Low Income Housing Tax Credits	Tax reductions provided by the federal and state governments for investors in housing for low-income households.
LULU	Locally Unwanted Land Use

M

Manufactured Housing	Residential structures that are constructed entirely in a factory. These are regulated under the federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
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 public agency. The bond proceeds can be used for public improvements and for a limited number of services
Ministerial Decision	An action taken by a public agency that follows established procedures and rules and does not call for the exercise of judgment in deciding whether to approve a project. Actions taken by planning department staff members that do not require planning commission action are ministerial decisions.
Minor Land Division	Contiguous property which is partitioned into four or fewer lots usually qualifies as a minor land division.
Mitigated Negative Declaration	A written statement by the lead agency that revisions to a project, agreed to by the applicant, would avoid potential significant adverse impacts, and there is no substantial evidence that the project, as revised, will have a significant effect on the environment.
Mitigation Measure	Measures that modify a project to reduce or eliminate a significant environmental impact
Mixed Use	Properties on which various uses like 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.

Moratorium	A zoning designation that temporarily reduces or freezes allowable development in an area until a permanent classification can be fixed; generally assigned during general plan preparation to provide a basis for permanent zoning.
MTC	Acronym for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the Bay Area’s regional transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency.
Multi-family Residential	A type of housing that has several residential units on a parcel or parcels of land, such as condominiums and apartments

N

NEPA	Acronym for the National Environmental Policy Act. An act passed in 1969 establishing federal legislation for national environmental policy, a council on environmental quality, and the requirements for environmental impact statements. Typically applicable to projects with federal funding or requiring permits from federal agencies.
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. Flood insurance is required based on the FIRM maps.
National Register of Historic Places	The official list of national historic sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the list is part of a program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources.
Negative Declaration	A written statement briefly describing the reasons why a proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and does not require an Environmental Impact Report.
New Urbanism	A design philosophy intended to create a strong sense of community by incorporating features of traditional small towns or urban neighborhoods. Compact, walkable neighborhoods with active streets are a key hallmark of new urbanism. The Congress for New Urbanism defines the philosophy according to these principles: “neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population; communities should be designed for the pedestrian and transit as well as the car; cities and towns should be shaped by physically defined and universally accessible public spaces and community institutions; urban places should be framed by architecture and landscape design that celebrate local history, climate, ecology, and building practice.”
Nexus	(1) In general, a minimum threshold of connection necessary within a taxing jurisdiction to allow taxing authority over out-of-state individuals or businesses. (2) A reasonable connection between required development impact fees and a development project subject to the fees.
NIMBY	An acronym for “Not-In-My-Backyard.” Used to characterize opponents of development projects, with the implication that the opposition is based on personal self-interest as opposed to the interests of the larger community. Local agencies’ alleged responsiveness to “NIMBY-ism” is one of the reasons

some advocate that state law preempt local agencies' authority over certain kinds of land use decisions

Noise Element	One of the seven state-mandated elements of a local general plan, it assesses noise levels of highways and freeways, local arterials, railroads, airports, local industrial plants, and other ground stationary sources, and adopts goals, policies, and implementation programs to reduce the community's exposure to noise.
Non-conforming Use	A use that was valid when brought into existence, but by subsequent regulation becomes no longer conforming. It is a generic term and includes (1) non-conforming structures (by virtue of size, type of construction, location on land, or proximity to other structures), (2) non-conforming use of a conforming building, (3) non-conforming use of a non-conforming building, and (4) non-conforming use of land. Thus, any use lawfully existing on any piece of property that is inconsistent with a new or amended general plan, and that in turn is a violation of a zoning ordinance amendment subsequently adopted in conformance with the general plan, will be a non-conforming use. Typically, non-conforming uses are permitted to continue for a designated period of time, subject to certain restrictions.
Nonpoint Source Pollution	Pollution affecting a water body from widely spread sources. Such sources range from runoff from agricultural areas draining into a river to wind-borne debris blowing out to sea. Nonpoint source pollution may also include urban runoff, such as contaminated storm water washed off of parking lots, roads and highways, and lawns (often containing fertilizers and pesticides). Nonpoint source pollution can be contrasted with point source pollution, where discharges occur to a body of water at a single location, such as discharges from a chemical factory, urban runoff from a roadway storm drain or from ships at sea. There is some debate about whether various forms of urban runoff should be considered point or nonpoint sources of pollution.
Notice of Determination (NOD)	A notice issued and properly filed by the lead agency upon its approval of a project subject to CEQA, and stating whether or not the project will have a significant effect on the environment. The notice must be filed within five working days of the action approving a project.
Notice of Preparation (NOP)	A brief notice issued by the lead agency stating it plans to prepare an Environmental Impact Report for a proposed project. The notice is sent to responsible and trustee agencies and other interested agencies. These parties are asked to comment on the scope of the Environmental Impact Report and potential impacts of the proposed project. These comments are then use to further define the scope of the Environmental Impact Report.

O

Office of Planning and Research (OPR)	A California state agency that has among its responsibilities the preparation of a set of guidelines for use by local jurisdictions in drafting general plans.
Off-site Improvements	Conditions that can be required of a project that involves the installation of streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street trees and other improvements that are located adjacent to the project on public property.

Open Space Element	One of the seven state-mandated elements of a local general plan, it contains an inventory of privately and publicly owned open space lands, and adopted goals, policies, and implementation programs for the preservation, protection, and management of open space lands.
Ordinance	A law or regulation adopted by a public agency, usually a city or county.
Overlay Zoning	A land use designation on the General Plan Land Use Map, or a zoning designation on a zoning map, that modifies the basic underlying designation in some specific manner. For example, overlay zones are often used to deal with areas with special characteristics, like flood zones or historical areas. Development of land subject to an overlay must comply with the regulations of both zones.

P

Parcel	A lot in single ownership or under single control usually considered a unit for purposes of development.
Parcel Map	A subdivision map that divides a parcel into four or fewer lots. A city or county can place conditions on the approval of parcel maps.
Parking Ratio	The number of parking spaces provided per 1,000 square feet of floor area, for example, 2.1 or “two per thousand.”
Particulate Matter (PM)	Very small pieces of solid or liquid matter such as particles of soot, dust, fumes, mists or aerosols that enter the atmosphere.
Peak Hour/Peak Period	For any given roadway, a daily period during which traffic volume is highest, usually occurring in the morning and evening commute periods. Where “F” levels of service are encountered, the “peak hour” may stretch into a “peak period” of several hours’ duration.
Pedestrian Friendly	A street, neighborhood, or agency that supports, through planning and zoning, the location of stores, offices, residences, schools, recreational areas, and other public facilities within walking distance of each other, and oriented to promote pedestrian access. Such areas also often feature narrow streets, street trees, awnings, covered transit shelters, benches, brick paving or other less conventional paving types, sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, and safe street crossings, among other elements.
Performance Standards	Zoning regulations that permit uses based on a particular set of standards of operation rather than on particular type of use. Performance standards may provide specific criteria to limit noise, air pollution, emissions, odors, vibration, dust, dirt, glare, heat, fire hazards, wastes, traffic impacts, or visual impact of a use.
Permit	A specific authorization from a planning body to engage in a particular type of development or activity.
Permitted Use	An authorized use within a zoning district.
Plan Bay Area	The Sustainable Communities Strategy adopted for the 9-county Bay Area by MTC and ABAG.

Planned Development (PD) or Planned Unit Development (PUD)	Land use zoning which allows the adoption of a set of development standards that are specific to a particular project. PD zones usually do not contain detailed development standards. Those are established during the process of considering proposals and adopted by ordinance upon project approval.
Planning Commission	A body, usually having five or seven members, created by a city or county. California law requires the assignment of the planning functions to a planning department, planning commission, hearing officers, and/or the legislative body itself, as deemed appropriate by the legislative body.
Police Power	The legal basis for all planning and land use regulation. This power emanates from the Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution and entitles states to take actions to protect the public's health, safety and welfare. In turn, the California Constitution grants the same power to cities and counties – but limits the grant to the extent that local regulations may not conflict with state law.
Policy	A statement of a public body that forms the basis for enacting legislation or making decisions.
Priority Development Area (PDA)	Places identified by jurisdictions as part of Plan Bay Area where new homes and job growth will be focused.
Priority Conservation Area (PCA)	Places identified by jurisdictions as part of Plan Bay Area for purchase as permanent open space.
Program	An action, activity, or strategy carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve a specific goal or objective.
Project	Under CEQA, the whole of an action that has a potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, and is an activity subject to one or more discretionary approvals by public agencies. A project may include construction activities, clearing or grading of land, improvements to existing structures, and activities or equipment involving the issuance of a permit. CEQA applies to projects undertaken by a public agency, funded by a public agency or that requires an issuance of a permit by a public agency.

R

Redevelop/Redevelopment	Building new construction on a site that has pre-existing uses or renovating existing uses on a site. Redevelopment generally is a strategy to rehabilitate blighted urban areas through renovation. In California, "Redevelopment" was a tool created by state law to assist local governments in eliminating blight from a designated area, as well as to achieve the goals of development, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of residential, commercial, industrial and retail districts. Cities and counties were able to establish redevelopment agencies which have special powers to achieve these goals. Existing redevelopment agencies were terminated by the state in 2012.
Referendum	A voter challenge to legislative action taken by a city council or county board of supervisors. When enough signatures are filed, the governing body must either rescind its decision or place the issue on the ballot for a vote.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment/Allocation (RHNA)	A determination of the existing and projected need for housing within a region, made by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on a state-wide basis, and by a council of governments (COG) for regional and local projected needs. The RHNA numerically allocates the future housing need by household income group for each locality within the region. This allocation must be reflected in the housing element of an agency's general plan.
Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)	A plan that, among other things, outlines transportation investments for a region. It is drafted by a metropolitan planning organization or regional transportation planning agency every four years (five years in regions that have attained federal air quality standards) and includes a 20-year outlook for likely growth in the region.
Regulatory Taking	A regulatory taking occurs when a regulation becomes so onerous that it has the practical effect of a physical appropriation of land. An extreme example would be zoning private land as a public park. Such a regulation does two things: 1) it prevents the owner from putting the land to any economic use, and 2) it prevents the owner from exercising one of the most fundamental characteristics of property ownership: the right to exclude others. Thus, the regulation would have a similar effect as if the public agency had condemned the land and built a park.
Rehabilitation	The repair, preservation, and/or improvement of existing structures, such as substandard housing.
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, like roads, railroads, and utility lines.
Riparian	Plant and wildlife areas adjacent to perennial and intermittent streams. Riparian areas are delineated by the existence of plant species normally found near freshwater.

S

Safety Element	One of the seven state-mandated elements of a local general plan. The safety element contains adopted goals, policies, and implementation programs for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with seismic and geologic hazards, flooding, and wildland and urban fires. At the discretion of the locality, many safety elements also incorporate a review of police, emergency services, or other public safety needs, objectives, facilities, and services.
SB 375	SB 375 directs the California Air Resources Board to set regional targets for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks. SB 375 aligns the regional allocation of housing needs and regional transportation planning in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicle trips.
Second Unit	A self-contained attached or detached living unit in addition to a primary residential unit on a single lot.

Section 8 Rental Assistance Program	A federal rent-subsidy program (administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) that is one of the main sources of federal housing assistance for low-income households. The program provides “housing assistance payments” to owners, developers, and public housing agencies to make up the difference between the “Fair Market Rent” of a unit (set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) and the household’s contribution toward the rent, which is calculated at 30 percent of the household’s adjusted gross monthly income (GMI). “Section 8” includes programs for new construction, existing housing, and substantial or moderate housing rehabilitation
Senior Housing	Typically one- and two-bedroom apartments or condominiums designed to meet the needs of and restricted to occupancy by persons 62 years of age and older or, if more than 150 units, persons 55 years of age and older.
Setback	The minimum distance required by zoning to be maintained between two structures or between a structure and a property line.
Significant Effect/Impact	Under CEQA, a “significant effect” is a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by a project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. Authority to determine whether or not a potential effect is significant rests with the lead agency for a project, and must be based on substantial evidence that the project may have a significant effect.
Smart Growth	A broad concept that describes the change in community design from post-World War II development principles to development that better serves the economic, environmental and social needs of communities. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency identified the following ten principles of smart growth. (1) Mix land uses (2) Take advantage of compact building design (3) Create a range of housing opportunities and choices (4) Create walkable neighborhoods (5) Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place (6) Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas (7) Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities (8) Provide a variety of transportation choices (9) Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective (10) Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.
Special District	A governmental entity formed to deliver a specific service, like fire protection, water service, recreation or the maintenance of open space. In Novato: Novato Fire Protection District, Novato Sanitary District, North Marin Water District, Marin County Open Space District and Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District.
Specific Plan	A plan that an agency may adopt to implement the general plan in all or part of the area covered by the general plan. A specific plan must specify in detail the land uses, public and private facilities needed to support the land uses, phasing of development, standards for the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, and a program of implementation measures, including financing measures.

Sphere of Influence	The probable future physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for the county within which the agency is located.
Spot Zoning	The awarding of a use classification to an isolated parcel of land that is detrimental or incompatible with the uses of the surrounding area, particularly when such an act favors a particular owner. A special circumstance like historical value, environmental importance, or scenic value could justify special zoning for a small area.
Sprawl	The spreading of a city and its suburbs over rural land at the fringe of an urban area. Characteristics of sprawl include single-use zoning that often separates housing from jobs and commercial centers; low-density land use focused on single-family homes; and automobile-dependent communities with extensive land devoted to parking that often require residents to commute and conduct errands by car. The term sprawl generally has negative connotations due to associated health and environmental issues.
Strip Development	Commercial and higher-density residential development located adjacent to major streets. This type of development is characterized by its shallow depth, street-oriented layout, and numerous points of automobile access.
Subdivision Map Act	State law that vests the regulation and control of the design and improvement of subdivisions in local legislative bodies, including the requirement for tentative and final subdivision maps.
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. The process often includes setting aside land for streets, sidewalks, parks, public areas, and other infrastructure needs, including the designation of the location of utilities.
Sustainability	Broadly, to keep up or keep going, to maintain an action or process. In the context of land use and environmental sustainability, there are many definitions and some debate about their merits. The U.S. National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 declared as its goal a national policy to “create and maintain conditions under which [humans] and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.”
Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)	A regional growth strategy required under SB 375 that, in combination with transportation policies and programs, strives to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and, if it is feasible, achieves regional GHG reduction targets set by the California Air Resources Board. The SCS is part of a Regional Transportation Plan; must comply with federal law; and must be based upon “current planning assumptions” that include the information in local general plans and sphere of influence boundaries.

T

Taking	A taking occurs when a public agency takes, occupies, or encroaches upon private land for its own proposed use, such as to build roads, create parks, or develop other public uses. These actions—called eminent domain or
--------	--

condemnation actions—are premised upon the payment of just compensation or fair market value for the property.

Temporary Use	A use established for a fixed period of time with the intent to discontinue such use upon the expiration of the time period.
Tentative Subdivision Map	A map showing the design of a proposed subdivision of five or more lots. It includes existing conditions in and around the subdivision. This is the stage when a city or county must place all the restrictions it deems necessary on the map. The term “tentative” is misleading, because additional conditions or substantive design changes cannot be required once a tentative subdivision map is approved.
Traffic Calming	A strategic set of physical changes to streets to reduce vehicle speeds and volumes. It refers to the use of street design techniques, such as curb extensions, widened sidewalks, traffic circles and speed humps, to slow and control the flow of automobile traffic.
Traffic Model	A computerized, mathematical representation of traffic movement within an area or region based on observed relationships between the kind and intensity of development in specific areas. Many traffic models operate on the theory that trips are produced in a predictable way by persons living in residential areas who are attracted by various non-residential land uses.
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	Also known as “Transfer of Development Credits,” a program that can relocate potential development from areas where proposed land uses or environmental impacts are considered undesirable (the “donor” site) to another (“receiver”) site chosen on the basis of its ability to accommodate additional units of development beyond that for which it was zoned, with minimal environmental, social, and aesthetic impacts.
Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)	Local tax on persons staying 30 days or less in a hotel, inn, motel, tourist home, non-membership campground or other lodging facility. Also called Transient Lodging Tax or Bed Tax.
Transit	The conveyance of persons or goods from one place to another by means of a local or regional public transportation system.
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 buildings whose design and orientation facilitate transit use.
Transitional Housing	Shelter provided to the homeless for an extended period, often as long as 18 months and generally integrated with other social services and counseling programs to assist in the transition to self-sufficiency through the acquisition of a stable income and permanent housing.
Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM)	Marin County’s transportation planning agency supported by a countywide sales tax. TAM is Marin’s state-required Congestion Management Agency.
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. For example, TDM attempts to reduce the number of persons who

drive alone during the commute period and to increase the number in carpools, vanpools, buses or trains, or walking or biking.

Trip A one-way journey that proceeds from an origin to a destination via a single mode of transportation; the smallest unit of movement considered in transportation studies. Each trip has one “production end,” (or origin—often from home, but not always), and one “attraction end” (destination).

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

U

Uniform Building Code (UBC) A national building code that sets minimum standards for construction.

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

Universal Design Design of buildings, products and environments that are usable and effective for everyone, not just people with disabilities. The Center for Universal Design identifies seven principles of universal design: 1) equitable use; 2) flexibility in use; 3) simple and intuitive; 4) perceptible information; 5) tolerance for error; 6) low physical effort; 7) size and space for approach and use.

Upzone The rezoning of land to a less restrictive zone (for example, from industrial to residential). Upzoning generally increases the economic value of land.

Urban Of, relating to, characteristic of, or constituting a city. Urban areas are generally characterized by moderate and higher density residential, commercial, and industrial development, and the availability of public services required for that development, specifically central water and sewer, an extensive road network, public transit, and other such services (for example, safety and emergency response). Development not providing such services may be “non-urban” or “rural.”

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

Urban Forestry Urban forestry is the careful care and management of urban forests. These are tree populations in urban settings maintained to improve the urban environment. Urban forestry advocates the role of trees as a critical part of the urban infrastructure. Trees cool cities and save energy; improve air quality; strengthen quality of place and local economies; reduce storm water runoff; improve social connections; complement smart growth; and create walkable communities.

Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)	An officially adopted and mapped line dividing land to be developed from land to be protected for natural or rural uses. Urban growth boundaries (also called urban limit lines) are regulatory tools, often designated for long periods of time (20 or more years) to provide greater certainty for both development and conservation goals.
Use Permit	Formal permission following a review by a public agency for a discretionary activity, function or operation on a site or in a building or facility. A use permit may be issued with various conditions of approval.
Use	The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, erected, moved, altered, and/or enlarged in accordance with the city or county zoning ordinance and general plan land use designations.

V

Variance	Relief from certain provisions of a zoning ordinance granted to a property owner when, because of the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical condition of the property, compliance would result in a particular hardship upon the owner, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience or a desire to make more money. A variance may be granted, for example, to reduce yard or setback requirements, or the number of parking or loading spaces.
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	One vehicle traveling the distance of one mile. Total vehicle miles is the aggregate mileage traveled by all vehicles. VMT is a key measure of overall street and highway use. Reducing VMT is often a major objective in efforts to reduce vehicular congestion and achieve air quality goals.
Vested Right	A right that has become absolute and fixed and cannot be denied by subsequent conditions or changes in regulations, unless it is taken and paid for. There is no vested right to an existing zoning classification.
View Corridor	The line of sight - identified as height, width, and distance - of an observer looking toward an object of significance to the community (like ridgelines, rivers and historic buildings, for example); the route that directs the viewer's attention.
Volume-to-Capacity Ratio (V/C)	A measure of the operating capacity of a roadway or intersection, in terms of the number of vehicles passing through, divided by the number of vehicles that theoretically could pass through when the roadway or intersection is operating at its designed capacity. Abbreviated as "V/C." At a V/C ratio of 1.0, the roadway or intersection is operating at capacity. If the ratio is less than 1.0, the traffic facility has additional capacity. Although ratios slightly greater than 1.0 are possible, it is more likely that the peak hour will elongate into a peak period.

W

Walkable Community	Communities where goods (such as housing, offices, and retail) and services (such as transportation, schools, and libraries) that a community resident or employee needs on a regular basis are located within an easy and safe walk. Walkable communities facilitate pedestrian activity, expanding transportation options, and creating a streetscape that better serves a range of users --
--------------------	--

pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and automobiles. To foster walkability, communities typically mix land uses and build compactly, and ensure safe and inviting pedestrian corridors.

Watercourse	Natural or once natural flowing water including perennial or intermittent rivers, streams, and creeks. Includes natural waterways that have been channelized, but does not include manmade channels, ditches, or underground drainage and sewage systems
Watershed	The total area above a given point on a watercourse that contributes water to its flow; the entire region drained by a waterway or watercourse that drains into a reservoir, lake, or sea.
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.”
Williamson Act	Known formally as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, it provides property owners a financial incentive to retain prime agricultural land and open space in agricultural use, thereby slowing its conversion to urban and suburban development. The program entails a ten-year contract between the city or county and an owner of land whereby the land is taxed on the basis of its agricultural use rather than its market value. The land becomes subject to certain enforceable restrictions, and certain conditions need to be met prior to approval of an agreement.

Y

Yard	The open space between a lot line and the buildable area within which no structure may be located, except as provided in the zoning ordinance. Also referred to as a setback.
------	---

Z

Zero Lot Line	A development approach in which a building is sited on one or more lot lines. The intent is to allow more flexibility in site design and to increase the amount of usable open space on the lot
Zoning	The division of a city or county by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, that specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that implements policies of the general plan.
Zoning Administrator	A planning department staff member responsible for hearing minor zoning permits. Typically, the zoning administrator considers variances and conditional use permits and may interpret the provisions of the zoning ordinance when questions arise. The decision may be appealed to the local legislative body.
Zoning Amendment	An amendment to make a change in the zoning ordinance or to the application of zoning to a particular parcel or area. Zoning amendments can take three forms: 1) a comprehensive revision or modification of the zoning text and map; 2) a text change in zoning requirements; and 3) a change in the zoning designation of a particular parcel or parcels of land.

Zoning District

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

Zoning Map

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