

# CHAPTER 11

## GENERAL PLAN GLOSSARY OF TERMS



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*The terms in this glossary are adapted from the California General Plan Glossary, 1997, published by the California Planning Roundtable, and excerpted from the 1998 General Plan Guidelines, published by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.*

### 1.0 ABBREVIATIONS

**ADA:** Americans with Disabilities Act  
**ADT:** Average daily trips made by vehicles or persons in a 24-hour period  
**ALUC:** Airport Land Use Commission  
**AQMP:** Air Quality Management Plan  
**BNSF:** Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad  
**CAA:** Clean Air Act Board  
**CARB:** California Air Resource Board  
**CCAA:** California Clean Air Act  
**CDBG:** Community Development Block Grant  
**CEQA:** California Environmental Quality Act  
**CHFA:** California Housing Finance Agency  
**CIP:** Capital Improvements Program  
**CMP:** Congestion Management Plan  
**CNEL:** Community Noise Equivalent Level  
**COG:** Council of Governments  
**CSUDH:** Cal State University Dominguez Hills  
**dB:** Decibel  
**DOHS:** Department of Health Services  
**EIR:** Environmental Impact Report (State)  
**EPA:** Environmental Protection Agency



**FAR:** Floor Area Ratio  
**FEMA:** Federal Emergency Management Agency  
**FIRM:** Flood Insurance Rate Map  
**HUD:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
**ISO:** Independent System Operator  
**LACDPW:** Los Angeles County Department of Public Works  
**Ldn:** day-night average level  
**LOS:** Level of Service  
**MWD:** Metropolitan Water District  
**NAAQS:** National Ambient Air Quality Standards  
**NPDES:** National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System  
**PPM:** Parts Per Million  
**PUC:** Public Utilities Commission  
**PX:** Power Exchange  
**RWQCB:** Regional Water Quality Control Board  
**SBCCOG:** South Bay Cities Council of Governments  
**SCAB:** South Coast Air Basin  
**SCAG:** Southern California Association of Governments  
**SCAQMD:** South Coast Air Quality Management District  
**SCE:** Southern California Edison  
**SCWD:** Southern California Water Company, Southwest District  
**SRO:** Single Room Occupancy  
**SRRE:** Source Reduction and Recycling Element  
**SWP:** State Water Project  
**TDM:** Transportation Demand Management  
**TDS:** Total Dissolved Solids  
**TSM:** Transportation Systems Management  
**UBC:** Uniform Building Code  
**UPRR:** Union Pacific Railroad  
**VMT:** Vehicle Miles Traveled  
**WBMWD:** West Basin Municipal Water District

## **2.0 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

**Acres, Gross:** The total area within the lot lines of a lot of land before public streets, easements or other areas to be dedicated or reserved for public use are deducted from such lot, and not including adjacent lands already dedicated for such purposes.

**Acres, Net:** The portion of a site that can actually be built upon. The following generally are not included in the net acreage of a site: public or private road rights-of-way, public open-space, and flood ways.

**Affordable Housing:** Housing capable of being purchased or rented by a household with very low, low, or moderate income, based on a household's ability to make monthly payments necessary to obtain housing. "Affordable to low-and moderate-income households" means that at least 20 percent of the units in a development will be sold or rented to lower income households, and the remaining units to either lower or moderate income households. Housing units for lower income households



must sell or rent for a monthly cost not greater than 30 percent of 60 percent of area median income as periodically established by Housing and Community Development Department of the State of California (HCD). Housing units for moderate income must sell or rent for a monthly cost not greater than 30 percent of area median income.

**Agriculture:** Use of land for the production of food and fiber, including the growing of crops and/or the grazing of animals on natural prime or improved pasture land.

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

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

**Aquifer:** An underground, water-bearing layer of earth, porous rock, sand, or gravel, through which water can seep or be held in natural storage. Aquifers generally hold sufficient water to be used as a water supply.

**Attainment:** Compliance with State and federal ambient air quality standards within an air basin. (See “Non-attainment.”)

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

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

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

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

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

**Biotic Community:** A group of living organisms characterized by a distinctive combination of both animal and plant species in a particular habitat.

**Blight:** A condition of a site, structure, or area that may cause nearby buildings and/or areas to decline in attractiveness and/or utility. The Community Redevelopment Law (Health and Safety Code, Sections 33031 and 33032) contains a definition of blight used to determine eligibility of proposed redevelopment project areas.

**Buffer Zone:** An area of land separating two distinct land uses that acts to soften or mitigate the effects of one land use on the other.



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

**Busway:** A vehicular right-of-way or portion thereof--often an exclusive lane--reserved exclusively for buses.

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):** A State law requiring State and local agencies to regulate activities with consideration for environmental protection. If a proposed activity has the potential for a significant adverse environmental impact, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared and certified as to its adequacy before taking action on the proposed project.

**California Housing Finance Agency (CHFA):** A State agency, established by the Housing and Home Finance Act of 1975, which is authorized to sell revenue bonds and generate funds for the development, rehabilitation, and conservation of low-and moderate-income housing.

**Caltrans:** California Department of Transportation.

**Capital Improvements Program (CIP):** A program established by a city or county government and reviewed by its planning commission, which schedules permanent improvements, usually for a minimum of five years in the future, to fit the projected fiscal capability of the local jurisdiction. The program generally is reviewed annually, for conformance to and consistency with the general plan.

**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):** A 24-hour energy equivalent level derived from a variety of single-noise events, with weighting factors of 5 and 10 dBA applied to the evening (7 PM to 10 PM) and nighttime (10 PM to 7 AM) periods, respectively, to allow for the greater sensitivity to noise during these hours.

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

**Congestion Management Plan (CMP):** A mechanism employing growth management techniques, including traffic level of service requirements, standards for public transit, trip reduction programs involving transportation systems management and jobs/housing balance strategies, and capital improvement programming, for the purpose of controlling and/or reducing the cumulative regional traffic impacts of development.



**Consistency; Consistent With:** Free from significant variation or contradiction. The various diagrams, text, goals, policies, and programs in the general plan must be consistent with each other, not contradictory or preferential. The term “consistent with” is used interchangeably with “conformity with.” The courts have held that the phrase “consistent with” means “agreement with; harmonious with.” Webster defines “conformity with” as meaning harmony, agreement when used with “with.” The term “conformity means in harmony therewith or agreeable to (Sec 58 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 21, 25 [1975]). California State law also requires that a general plan be internally consistent and also requires consistency between a general plan and implementation measures such as the zoning ordinance. As a general rule, an action program or project is consistent with the general plan if, considering all its aspects, it will further the objectives and policies of the general plan and not obstruct their attainment.

**Cul-de-Sac:** A short street or alley with only a single means of ingress and egress at one end and with a large turnaround at its other end.

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

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

**Density, Residential:** The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. Densities specified in the General Plan may be expressed in units per gross acre or per net developable acre. (See “Acres, Gross,” and “Developable Acres, Net.”)

**Density, Employment:** A measure of the number of employed persons per specific area (for example, employees/acre).

**Developable Acres, Net:** The portion of a site that can be used for density calculations. Some communities calculate density based on gross acreage. Public or private road rights-of-way are not included in the net developable acreage of a site.

**Developable Land:** Land that is suitable as a location for structures and that can be developed free of hazards to, and without disruption of, or significant impact on, natural resource areas.

**Development Agreement:** A legislatively-approved contract between a jurisdiction and a person having legal or equitable interest in real property within the jurisdiction (California Government Code §65865 et. seq.) that “freezes” certain rules, regulations, and policies applicable to development of a property for a specified period of time, usually in exchange for certain concessions by the owner.

**Dwelling Unit:** A room or group of rooms (including sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation facilities, but not more than one kitchen), that constitutes an independent



house-keeping unit, occupied or intended for occupancy by one household on a long-term basis.

**Easement:** Usually the right to use property owned by another for specific purposes or to gain access to another property. For example, utility companies often have easements on the private property of individuals to be able to install and maintain utility facilities.

**Elderly Housing:** Typically one- and two-bedroom apartments or condominiums designed to meet the needs of persons 62 years of age and older.

**Emergency Shelter:** A facility that provides immediate and short-term housing and supplemental services for the homeless. Supplemental services may include food, counseling, and access to other social programs.

**Emission Standard:** The maximum amount of pollutant legally permitted to be discharged from a single source, either mobile or stationary.

**Endangered Species:** A species of animal or plant is considered to be endangered when its prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes.

**Environment:** CEQA defines environment as “the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance.”

**Environmental Impact Report (EIR):** A report required pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act which assesses all the environmental characteristics of an area, determines what effects or impacts will result if the area is altered or disturbed by a proposed action, and identifies alternatives or other measures to avoid or reduce those impacts. (See “California Environmental Quality Act.”)

**Erosion:** (1) The loosening and transportation of rock and soil debris by wind, rain, or running water. (2) The gradual wearing away of the upper layers of earth.

**Expansive Soils:** Soils that swell when they absorb water and shrink as they dry.  
Family: One or more persons occupying one dwelling unit and living together as a single housekeeping unit.

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

**Flood, 100-Year:** The magnitude of a flood expected to occur on the average every 100 years, based on historical data. The 100-year flood has a 1/100, or one percent, chance of occurring in any given year.

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



**Floodplain:** The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream regularly subject to flooding. That part of the floodplain subject to a one percent chance of flooding in any given year is designated as an “area of special flood hazard” by the Federal Insurance Administration.

**Floodway:** The channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the “base flood” without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one foot. No development is allowed in floodways.

**Floor Area Ratio (FAR):** The gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the total net area of the site, expressed in decimals to one or two places. For example, on a site with 10,000 net sq. ft. of land area, a Floor Area Ratio of 1.0 will allow a maximum of 10,000 gross sq. ft. of building floor area to be built. On the same site, an FAR of 1.5 would allow 15,000 sq. ft. of floor area; an FAR of 2.0 would allow 20,000 sq. ft.; and an FAR of 0.5 would allow only 5,000 sq. ft. Also commonly used in zoning, FARs typically are applied on a parcel-by-parcel basis as opposed to an average FAR for an entire land use or zoning district.

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

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

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

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

**Growth Management:** The use by a community of a wide range of techniques in combination to determine the amount, type, and rate of development desired by the community and to channel that growth into designated areas. Growth management policies can be implemented through growth rates, zoning, capital improvement programs, public facilities ordinances, urban limit lines, standards for levels of service, and other programs. (See “Congestion Management Plan.”)

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

**Hazardous Material:** Any substance that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. The term includes, but is not limited to, hazardous substances and hazardous wastes.



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

**Household:** All those persons--related or unrelated—who occupy a single housing unit. (See “Family.”) **Households, Number of:** The count of all year-round housing units occupied by one or more persons. The concept of *household* is important because the formation of new households generates the demand for housing. Each new household formed creates the need for one additional housing unit or requires that one existing housing unit be shared by two households. Thus, household formation can continue to take place even without an increase in population, thereby increasing the demand for housing.

**Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of (HUD):** A cabinet-level department of the federal government that administers housing and community development programs.

**Housing Unit:** The place of permanent or customary abode of a person or family. A housing unit may be a single-family dwelling, a multi-family dwelling, a condominium, a modular home, a mobile home, a cooperative, or any other residential unit considered real property under State law. A housing unit has, at least, cooking facilities, a bathroom, and a place to sleep. It also is a dwelling that cannot be moved without substantial damage or unreasonable cost.

**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.

**Industrial:** The manufacture, production, and processing of consumer goods. Industrial is often divided into “heavy industrial” uses, such as construction yards, quarrying, and factories; and “light industrial” uses, such as research and development and less intensive warehousing and manufacturing.

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

**Infrastructure:** Public services and facilities, such as sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems, and roads.

**Institutional Uses:** (1) Publicly or privately owned and operated activities such as hospitals, convalescent hospitals, intermediate care facilities, nursing homes, museums, and schools and colleges; (2) churches and other religious organizations; and (3) other non-profit activities of a welfare, educational, or philanthropic nature that cannot be considered residential, commercial, or industrial. (See “Public and Quasi-public Facilities.”)



**Intensity, Building:** For residential uses, the actual number or the allowable range of dwelling units per net or gross acre. For non-residential uses, the actual or the maximum permitted floor area ratios (FARs).

**Issues:** Important unsettled community matters or problems that are identified in a community's general plan and dealt with by the plan's objectives, policies, plan proposals, and implementation programs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Level of Service (LOS) Standard:** A standard used by government agencies to measure the quality or effectiveness of a municipal service, such as police, fire, or library, or the performance of a facility, such as a street or highway.

**Level of Service (Traffic):** A scale that measures the amount of traffic that a roadway or intersection can accommodate, based on such factors as maneuverability, driver dissatisfaction, and delay.

*Level of Service A:* Indicates a relatively free flow of traffic, with little or no limitation on vehicle movement or speed.

*Level of Service B:* Describes a steady flow of traffic, with only slight delays in vehicle movement and speed. All queues clear in a single signal cycle.

*Level of Service C:* Denotes a reasonably steady, high-volume flow of traffic, with some limitations on movement and speed, and occasional backups on critical approaches.



**Level of Service D:** Designates the level where traffic nears an unstable flow. Intersections still function, but short queues develop and cars may have to wait through one cycle during short peaks.

**Level of Service E:** Represents traffic characterized by slow movement and frequent (although momentary) stoppages. This type of congestion is considered severe, but is not uncommon at peak traffic hours, with frequent stopping, long-standing queues, and blocked intersections.

**Level of Service F:** Describes unsatisfactory stop-and-go traffic characterized by “traffic jams” and stoppages of long duration. Vehicles at signalized intersections usually have to wait through one or more signal changes, and “upstream” intersections may be blocked by the long queues.

**Liquefaction:** The transformation of loose, wet soil from a solid to a liquid state, often as a result of ground shaking during an earthquake.

**Low-income Household:** A household with an annual income usually no greater than 80 percent of the area median family income adjusted by household size, as determined by a survey of incomes conducted by a city or a county, or in the absence of such a survey, based on the latest available eligibility limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program.

**Low-income Housing Tax Credits:** Tax reductions provided by the federal and State governments for investors in housing for low-income households.

**L10:** A statistical descriptor indicating peak noise levels—the sound level exceeded ten percent of the time. It is a commonly used descriptor of community noise, and has been used in Federal Highway Administration standards and the standards of some cities and counties.

**Mercalli Intensity Scale:** A subjective measure of the observed effects (human reactions, structural damage, geologic effects) of an earthquake. Expressed in Roman numerals from I to XII.

**Mineral Resource:** Land on which known deposits of commercially viable mineral or aggregate deposits exist. This designation is applied to sites determined by the State Division of Mines and Geology as being a resource of regional significance, and is intended to help maintain the quarrying operations and protect them from encroachment of incompatible land uses.

**Mixed-use:** Properties on which various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, and residential, are combined in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development project with significant functional interrelationships and a coherent physical design. A “single site” may include contiguous properties.

**Moderate-income Household:** A household with an annual income between the lower income eligibility limits and 120 percent of the area median family income



adjusted by household size, usually as established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program.

**National Ambient Air Quality Standards:** The prescribed level of pollutants in the outside air that cannot be exceeded legally during a specified time in a specified geographical area.

**National Flood Insurance Program:** A federal program that authorizes the sale of federally subsidized flood insurance in communities where such flood insurance is not available privately.

**National Historic Preservation Act:** A 1966 federal law that established a National Register of Historic Places and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and that authorized grants-in-aid for preserving historic properties.

**National Register of Historic Places:** The official list, established by the National Historic Preservation Act, of sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects significant in the nation's history or whose artistic or architectural value is unique.

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

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

**Noise:** Any sound that is undesirable because it interferes with speech and hearing, or is intense enough to damage hearing, or is otherwise annoying. Noise, simply, is "unwanted sound."

**Noise Attenuation:** Reduction of the level of a noise source using a substance, material, or surface, such as earth berms and/or solid concrete walls.

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

**Non-attainment:** The condition of not achieving a desired or required level of performance. Frequently used in reference to air quality. (See "Attainment.")

**Open Space:** An area that is intended to provide light and air, and is designed for either environmental, scenic or recreational purposes. Open space may include, but is not limited to, lawns, decorative planting, walkways, active and passive recreational areas, playgrounds, fountains, swimming pools, wooded areas; first floor decks; unenclosed patios with solid or lattice roofs; water courses; and surfaces covered by not more than 5 feet in depth by projections which are at least 8 feet above grade.



Open space shall not include the following: driveways; parking lots; other surfaces designed or intended for vehicular travel; and upper floor decks, balconies or areas under projections which are less than 8 feet above grade.

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

**Parks:** Open-space lands whose primary purpose is recreation.

**Performance Standards:** Zoning regulations that permit uses based on a particular set of standards of operation rather than on particular type of use. Performance standards provide specific criteria limiting noise, air pollution, emissions, odors, vibration, dust, dirt, glare, heat, fire hazards, wastes, traffic impacts, and visual impact of a use.

**Planning Area:** The area directly addressed by the general plan. A city's planning area typically encompasses the city limits and potentially annexable land within its sphere of influence.

**Pollution, Non-Point:** Sources for pollution that are less definable and usually cover broad areas of land, such as agricultural land with fertilizers that are carried from the land by runoff, or automobiles.

**Pollution, Point:** In reference to water quality, a discrete source from which pollution is generated before it enters receiving waters, such as a sewer outfall, a smokestack, or an industrial waste pipe.

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

**Redevelop:** To demolish existing buildings; or to increase the overall floor area existing on a property; or both; irrespective of whether a change occurs in land use.

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

**Regional Housing Needs Plan/Share:** A quantification by a COG or by HCD of existing and projected housing need, by household income group, for all localities within a region.

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

**Rezoning:** An amendment to the map and/or text of a zoning ordinance to effect a change in the nature, density, or intensity of uses allowed in a zoning district and/or on a designated parcel or land area.



**Richter Scale:** A measure of the size or energy release of an earthquake at its source. The scale is logarithmic; the wave amplitude of each number on the scale is 10 times greater than that of the previous whole number.

**Right-of-way:** A strip of lane occupied or intended to be occupied by certain transportation and public use facilities, such as roads, railroads, and utility lines.

**Sanitary Landfill:** The controlled placement of refuse within a limited area, followed by compaction and covering with a suitable thickness of earth and other containment material.

**Sanitary Sewer:** A system of subterranean conduits that carries refuse liquids or waste matter to a plant where the sewage is treated, as contrasted with storm drainage systems (that carry surface water) and septic tanks or leech fields (that hold refuse liquids and waste matter on-site).

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

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

**Single Room Occupancy (SRO):** A single room, typically with a sink and closet, but which requires the occupant to share a communal bathroom, shower, and kitchen.

**Solid Waste:** Any unwanted or discarded material that is not a liquid or gas. Includes organic wastes, paper products, metals, glass, plastics, cloth, brick, rock, soil, leather, rubber, yard wastes, and wood, but does not include sewage and hazardous materials. Organic wastes and paper products comprise about 75 percent of typical urban solid waste.

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

**Sphere of Influence:** The probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission of the County.

**Standards:** (1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. Government Code §65302 requires that general plans spell out the objectives, principles, "standards," and proposals of the general plan. Examples of standards might include the number of acres of park land per 1,000 population that the community will attempt to acquire and improve, or the "traffic Level of Service" (LOS) that the plan hopes to attain. (2) Requirements in a zoning ordinance that govern building and development as distinguished from use



restrictions--for example, site-design regulations such as lot area, height limit, frontage, landscaping, and floor area ratio.

**Structure:** Anything, including a building, located on the ground in a permanent location or attached to something having a permanent location on the ground.

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

**Subregional:** Pertaining to a portion of a region.

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

**Subsidize:** To assist by payment of a sum of money or by the granting of terms or favors that reduce the need for monetary expenditures. Housing subsidies may take the forms of mortgage interest deductions or tax credits from federal and/or state income taxes, sale or lease at less than market value of land to be used for the construction of housing, payments to supplement a minimum affordable rent, and the like.

**Substandard Housing:** Residential dwellings that, because of their physical condition, do not provide safe and sanitary housing.

**Sustainability:** Community use of natural resources in a way that does not jeopardize the ability of future generations to live and prosper.

**Sustainable Development:** Development that maintains or enhances economic opportunity and community well-being while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (*Source: Minnesota State Legislature*)

**Traffic Model:** A mathematical representation of traffic movement within an area or region based on observed relationships between the kind and intensity of development in specific areas. Many traffic models operate on the theory that trips are produced by persons living in residential areas and are attracted by various non-residential land uses.

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

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



**Transportation Demand Management (TDM):** A strategy for reducing demand on the road system by reducing the number of vehicles using the roadways and/or increasing the number of persons per vehicle. TDM attempts to reduce the number of persons who drive alone on the roadway during the commute period and to increase the number in carpools, vanpools, buses and trains, walking, and biking. TDM can be an element of TSM (see below).

**Transportation Systems Management (TSM):** A comprehensive strategy developed to address the problems caused by additional development, increasing trips, and a shortfall in transportation capacity. Transportation Systems Management focuses on more efficiently utilizing existing highway and transit systems rather than expanding them. TSM measures are characterized by their low cost and quick implementation time frame, such as computerized traffic signals, metered freeway ramps, and one-way streets.

**Trip:** A one-way vehicular journey either to or from a site, or totally within the site, i.e., internal trip. Each trip has two trip ends, one at the beginning and the other at the destination.

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

**Tsunami:** A large ocean wave generated by an earthquake in or near the ocean.

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

**Urban:** Of, relating to, characteristic of, or constituting a city. Urban areas are generally characterized by moderate and higher density residential development (*i.e.*, three or more dwelling units per acre), commercial development, and industrial development, and the availability of public services required for that development, specifically central water and sewer, an extensive road network, public transit, and other such services (*e.g.*, safety and emergency response). Development not providing such services may be “non-urban” or “rural.” (See “Urban Land Use.”) CEQA defines “urbanized area” as an area that has a population density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile - (Public Resources Code 21080.14(b)).

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

**Vehicle-Miles Traveled (VMT):** A key measure of overall street and highway use. Reducing VMT is often a major objective in efforts to reduce vehicular congestion and achieve regional air quality goals.



**Very-Low Income Household:** A household with an annual income usually no greater than 50 percent of the area median family income adjusted by household size, as determined by a survey of incomes conducted by a city or a county, or in the absence of such a survey, based on the latest available eligibility limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program.

**Volume-to-Capacity Ratio:** A measure of the operating capacity of a roadway or intersection, in terms of the number of vehicles passing through, divided by the number of vehicles that theoretically could pass through when the roadway or intersection is operating at its designed capacity. Abbreviated as “V/C”. At a V/C ratio of 1.0, the roadway or intersection is operating at capacity. If the ratio is less than 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.”

**Wetlands:** Transitional areas between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is covered by shallow water. Under a “unified” methodology now used by all federal agencies, wetlands are defined as “those areas meeting certain criteria for hydrology, vegetation, and soils.”

**Wildlife Refuge:** An area maintained in a natural state for the preservation of both animal and plant life.

**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.