

## **Appendix 1 Glossary**

*This glossary is based on one created by the California Planning Roundtable, whose many wonderful resources were invaluable in developing this toolkit.*

### **Accessory use**

An activity or structure that is incidental to the main use of a site. For example, a small business office within a store might be considered an *accessory use*, and might not be counted in the calculation of the size of the store for zoning purposes.

### **Adverse impact**

A negative consequence for the physical, social, or economic environment resulting from an action or project.

### **Affordable housing**

Housing that can be purchased or rented by a household with moderate, low, or very low income, based on a household's ability to make monthly payments necessary to obtain housing. Housing is considered affordable when a household pays less than 30 percent of its gross monthly income (GMI) for housing, including utilities.

### **Air rights**

The right granted by a property owner to a buyer to use space above an existing right-of-way or other site, usually for development.

### **Amortization of nonconforming uses**

A method of eliminating nonconforming uses by requiring the termination of the nonconforming use after a specified period of time. Generally based on the rate of economic depreciation of the use or structure.

### **Annex (v.)**

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

### **Architectural control; Architectural review**

Regulations and procedures requiring the exterior design of structures to be suitable, harmonious, and in keeping with the general appearance,

historic character, and/or style of surrounding areas. A process used to exercise control over the design of buildings and their settings. (See *Design review*.)

**Arterial**

A major street normally controlled by traffic signs and signals, which provides intracommunity travel and access to the countywide highway system. Arterials are usually medium-speed (30–40 mph), medium-capacity (10,000–35,000 average daily trips) roadways. Access to community arterials should be provided at collector roads and local streets, but direct access from parcels to existing arterials is common.

**Articulation**

Variation in the depth of the building plane, roof line, or height of a structure that breaks up plain, monotonous areas and creates patterns of light and shadow.

**As-of-right use**

A use of land that is permitted as a principal use in a zoning district.

**Assessment district**

See *Benefit assessment district*.

**Automobile-intensive use**

A use of a retail area that depends on exposure to continuous auto traffic.

**BANANA (See also LULU, NIMBY, NIABY, and NIMTOO)**

Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything.

**Benefit assessment district**

An area within a public agency’s boundaries that receives a special benefit from the construction of one or more public facilities. A *benefit assessment district* has no legal life of its own and cannot act by itself. It is strictly a financing mechanism for providing public infrastructure as allowed under the Streets and Highways Code. Bonds may be issued to finance the improvements, subject to repayment by assessments charged against the benefiting properties. Creation of a benefit assessment district enables property owners in a specific area to cause the construction of public facilities or to maintain them (for example, a downtown, or the grounds and landscaping of a specific area) by contributing their fair share of the construction and/or installation and operating costs.

**Bicycle lane (class II facility)**

A corridor expressly reserved for bicycles, existing on a street or roadway in addition to any lanes for use by motorized vehicles.

**Bicycle path (class I facility)**

A paved route, not on a street or roadway, expressly reserved for bicycles traversing an otherwise unpaved area. Bicycle paths may parallel roads but typically are separated from them by landscaping.

**Bicycle route (class III facility)**

A facility shared with motorists and identified only by signs. A bicycle route has no pavement markings or lane stripes.

**Bikeways**

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

**Blight**

Physical and economic conditions within an area that cause a reduction of or lack of full utilization of that area. A blighted area is one that has deteriorated or has been arrested in its development by physical, economic, or social forces. Blight spreads; a blighted condition at a site, structure, or area 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.

**Board of appeals**

An appointed board that hears appeals on variances and exceptions.

**Board of supervisors**

A county's legislative body. Board members are elected by popular vote and are responsible for enacting ordinances, imposing taxes, making appropriations, and establishing county policy. The board adopts the general plan, zoning, and subdivision regulations.

**Brownfield**

Abandoned industrial site likely to have groundwater or soil pollution that is a deterrent to redevelopment. (See *Greenfield*.)

**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 – for example, a screen of planting or fencing to insulate the surroundings from the noise, smoke, or visual aspects of an industrial zone or junkyard.

**Building envelope**

The space remaining on a site in which structures may be built after all building setbacks, height limits, and bulk requirements have been met.

**Buildout (also build-out)**

Development of land to its full potential or theoretical capacity as permitted under current or proposed planning or zoning designations. (See *Carrying capacity (3)*.)

**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. Some bulk regulations also are intended to reflect context-sensitive design.

**Busway**

A vehicular right-of-way or portion thereof – often an exclusive lane – reserved exclusively for buses. Getting public transit out of traffic speeds it up, making it a more attractive option.

**Built environment**

All aspects of our surroundings that are constructed by people: buildings, roads, parks, and so on.

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

A state law requiring state and local agencies to regulate activities with consideration for environmental protection. In general, CEQA requires that all private and public projects be reviewed prior to approval for their potential adverse effects upon the environment. 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 action is taken on the proposed project. General plans require the preparation of a “program EIR.”

**Caltrans**

California Department of Transportation.

**Capital improvements program (CIP)**

A program, administered 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 conformity to and consistency with the general plan.

**Carrying capacity**

Used in determining the potential of an area to absorb development:

(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.

(3) The maximum level of development allowable under current zoning.

(See *Buildout*.)

### **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.

### **Channelization**

At the intersection of roadways, the directional separation of traffic lanes through the use of curbs or raised islands that limit the paths that vehicles may take through the intersection.

### **Charrette**

An intensive planning session where citizens, designers, and others collaborate on a vision for development. It provides a forum for ideas and offers the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to the designers. More important, it allows everyone who participates to be a mutual author of the plan. The charrette workshop is designed to stimulate ideas and involve the public in the community planning/design process. It is a valuable tool for laying the foundation for the development of a more formal plan (such as a comprehensive plan, master plan, or strategic plan). It is most effective as a component of the formal planning and design process.

### **Charter city**

A city that has been incorporated under its own charter rather than under the general laws of the state. Charter cities have broader powers to enact land use regulations than do general law cities.

### **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.

**Clustered development**

Development in which a number of dwelling units are attached or placed in closer proximity than usual, with the purpose of retaining an open space area. Clustered development is more efficient because it requires building fewer streets and utility lines.

**Collector**

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

**Commercial**

A land use classification that permits facilities for the buying and selling of commodities and services.

**Community benefits**

In planning and land use, this refers to developer exactions that are required as a condition of development. The benefits contained in a community benefits agreement (CBA) may be provided by the developer or by other parties benefiting from the development subsidies, such as the stores that rent space in a subsidized retail development. Some benefits can be built into the project itself, such as the inclusion of a childcare center in the project or the use of environmentally sensitive design elements, such as white roofs that help avoid the “heat island” effect. Some benefits will affect project operations, such as wage requirements or traffic management rules. Other benefits will be completely separate from the project, such as money devoted to a public art fund, or support for existing job-training centers.

**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 facilities district**

Under the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 (Government Code section 53311 *et seq.*), a legislative body may create within its jurisdiction a special district that can issue tax-exempt bonds for the planning, design, acquisition, construction, and/or operation of public facilities, as well as provide public services to district residents. Special tax assessments levied by the district are used to repay the bonds.

**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.

**Community plan**

A portion of the local general plan that focuses on a particular area or community within the city or county. Community plans supplement the policies of the general plan.

**Community redevelopment agency (CRA)**

A local agency created under California Community Redevelopment Law, or a local legislative body that has elected to exercise the powers granted to such an agency, for the purpose of planning, developing, re-planning, redesigning, clearing, reconstructing, and/or rehabilitating all or part of a specified area with residential, commercial, industrial, and/or public (including recreational) structures and facilities. The redevelopment agency's plans must be compatible with adopted community general plans.

**Community service area**

A geographic sub-area of a city or county used for the planning and delivery of parks, recreation, and other human services based on an assessment of the service needs of the population in that sub-area.

**Commute shed**

The area from which people do or might commute from their homes to a specific workplace destination, given specific assumptions about maximum travel time or distance.

**Concurrency**

Installation and operation of facilities and services needed to meet the demands of new development simultaneous with the development.

**Conditional use permit**

Pursuant to the zoning ordinance, a conditional use permit (CUP) may authorize uses not routinely allowed on a particular site. 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.

**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. (See *Townhouse*.)

**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. All cities, and counties that include urbanized areas, must adopt and annually update a congestion management plan.

**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, including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources.

**Consistency requirement**

Programs in the general plan are to be consistent, not contradictory or preferential. State law requires consistency between a general plan and implementation measures such as the zoning ordinance.

**Cordon count**

A measurement of all travel (usually vehicle trips, but sometimes person trips) in and out of a defined area (around which a *cordon* is drawn).

**Council of Governments (COG)**

Regional agencies made up of elected officials from member cities and counties. Concerned primarily with transportation planning and housing, they do not directly regulate land use, though they may exert influence and act in an advisory capacity. There are 25 COGs in California.

**County**

A political subdivision of the state.

**Covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs)**

A term used to describe restrictive limitations that may be placed on property and its use, which usually are made a condition of holding title or lease.

**Criterion**

A standard upon which a judgment or decision may be based. (See *Standards*.)

**Cross-acceptance**

The review by two or more jurisdictions of each other's plans. Each jurisdiction determines whether the plans submitted are consistent or can be made compatible with its own. The process provides for communication and negotiation between the affected jurisdictions.

**Cumulative impact**

As used in CEQA, the total impact resulting from the accumulated impacts of individual projects or programs over time.

**Dedication**

The transfer of property from private to public ownership. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses often are made conditions for approval of a development by a city or county.

**Dedication, In lieu of**

Cash payments that may be required of an owner or developer as a substitute for a dedication of land, usually calculated in dollars per lot, and referred to as *in lieu fees* or *in lieu contributions*.

**Defensible space**

(1) In firefighting and fire prevention: a 30-foot area of noncombustible surfaces separating urban and wildland areas. (2) In urban areas: open spaces, entry points, and pathways configured to provide maximum opportunities to rightful users and/or residents to defend themselves against intruders and criminal activity.

**Density**

The amount of development per acre permitted on a parcel under the applicable zoning.

**Density bonus**

The allocation of development rights that allow a parcel to accommodate additional square footage or additional residential units beyond the maximum for which the parcel is zoned, usually in exchange for the provision or preservation of an amenity at the same site or at another location. Under California law, a housing development that provides 20 percent of its units for lower income households, or 10 percent of its units for very low-income households, or 50 percent of its units for seniors, is entitled to a density bonus. (See *Development rights, Transfer of*.)

**Density, Control of**

A limitation on the occupancy of land. Density can be controlled through zoning in the following ways: use restrictions, minimum lot-size requirements, floor area ratios, land use-intensity ratios, setback and yard requirements, minimum house-size requirements, ratios comparing number and types of housing units to land area, limits on units per acre, and other means. Allowable density often serves as the major distinction between residential districts.

**Density, Employment**

A measure of the number of employed persons per specific area (for example, employees per acre).

**Density, Residential**

The average number of households, persons, or 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.

**Density transfer (or averaging)**

A way of retaining open space by concentrating densities – usually in compact areas adjacent to existing urbanization and utilities – while leaving historic, sensitive, or hazardous areas unchanged. In some jurisdictions, for example, developers can buy development rights of properties targeted for public open space and transfer the additional density to the base number of units permitted in the zone in which they propose to develop.

**Design review; Design control**

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. Design control requires that certain specific things be done and that other things not be done. Design control language is most often found within a zoning ordinance. *Design review* usually refers to a system set up outside of the zoning ordinance, whereby projects are reviewed against certain standards and criteria by a specially established design review board or committee. (See *Architectural control*.)

**Design review board/committee**

A group appointed by the city council to consider the design and aesthetics of development within design review zoning districts. Not all communities have design review boards or committees.

**Detachment**

Withdrawal of territory from a special district or city.

**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 fee**

See *Impact fee*.

**Development rights**

The right to develop land by a landowner who maintains fee-simple ownership over the land or by a party other than the owner who has obtained the rights to develop. Such rights usually are expressed in terms of density allowed under existing zoning. See *Interest, Fee*; *Interest, Less-than-fee*; and *Development rights, Transfer of (TDR)*.

**Development rights, Transfer of (TDR)**

A program that can relocate potential development from areas where proposed land use 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. Also known as *transfer of development credits*. (See *Development rights*.)

**Discretionary decision**

As used in CEQA, 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.

**Discretionary review**

A special power of a planning commission, outside the normal building permit application approval process, through which the commission can modify or disallow a proposed, zoning-compliant project when exceptional and extraordinary circumstances associated with a proposed project exist. These exceptional and extraordinary circumstances often involve conflicts with a jurisdiction’s general plan or other policies. For example, if zoning permits a four-story building on a parcel but every building in the neighborhood is two stories tall, the planning commission may exercise its power and deny a permit for a larger building because of general plan language requiring that new buildings reflect the existing character of a neighborhood.

**District**

- (1) An area of a city or county that has a unique character identifiable as different from surrounding areas because of distinctive architecture, streets, geographic features, culture, landmarks, activities, or land uses.
- (2) A portion of the territory of a city or county within which uniform zoning regulations and requirements apply; a zone.

**Downzone**

This term refers to the rezoning of land to a more restrictive zone (for example, from multi-family residential to single-family residential or from residential to agricultural). Downzoning generally reduces the economic value of land, though it may serve a public benefit.

**Dwelling unit**

A room or group of rooms (including sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation facilities, but not more than one kitchen), which constitutes an independent housekeeping unit, occupied or intended for occupancy by one household on a long-term basis.

**Easement**

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.

**Easement, Conservation**

A tool for acquiring open space with less than full-fee purchase, whereby a public agency buys only certain specific rights from the landowner. 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).

**Economic development commission (EDC)**

An agency charged with seeking economic development projects and economic expansion at higher employment densities. A possible ally for bringing in businesses such as grocery stores to underserved areas.

**Eminent domain**

The right of government to acquire private property for public use upon the payment of just compensation to the owner. This is also called condemnation. (Condemnation can also mean the closing of an unsafe structure by a public agency to protect the community's safety.) See also *Inverse condemnation*; *Regulatory taking*.

**Environment**

The California Environmental Quality Act (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 of general plans by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and which assesses all the environmental characteristics of an area and determines what effects or impacts will result if the area is altered or disturbed by a proposed action. It must assess potential adverse impacts upon the environment, measures that may avoid or reduce these impacts (mitigation measures), and alternatives to the plan. (See *California Environmental Quality Act*.) An EIR is also conducted for proposed projects.

**Environmental impact statement (EIS)**

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, a statement on the effect of development proposals and other major actions that significantly affect the environment. In California this term is used less frequently than EIR, as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and its EIRs play a much bigger role in development in California than does NEPA and its EISes.

**Exaction**

A fee or dedication required as a condition of development permit approval. Exactions may be incorporated into a community's zoning code or negotiated on a project-by-project basis.

**Expressway**

A divided multilane major arterial street for through traffic with partial control of access and with grade separations at major intersections.

**Exurb**

Communities located beyond the suburbs.

**Fast food restaurant**

Any retail establishment intended primarily to provide short-order food services for on-site dining and/or take-out, including self-serve restaurants (excluding cafeterias where food is consumed on the premises), drive-in restaurants, and formula restaurants required by contract or other arrangement to offer standardized menus, ingredients, and fast food preparation.

**Final map subdivision**

Land divisions that create five or more lots. Also called *tract maps* or *major subdivisions*, they must be consistent with the general plan and are generally subject to stricter requirements than parcel maps. Such requirements may include installing road improvements, the construction of drainage and sewer facilities, parkland dedications, and more.

**Finding(s)**

The result(s) of an investigation and the basis upon which decisions are made. Findings are used by government agents and bodies to justify action taken by the entity. Sometimes described as the legal "footprints" an agency must leave to bridge the analytical gap between the raw data considered by the agency and its ultimate decision. Findings are supposed to document the agency's mode of analysis of facts, regulations and policies.

**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 relative fiscal merits of general plans, specific plans, or projects.

**Fiscal impact report (FIR)**

A report projecting the public costs and revenues that will result from a proposed program or development. (See *Fiscal impact analysis*.)

**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 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 are typically applied on a parcel-by-parcel basis as opposed to an average FAR for an entire land use or zoning district.

**Footprint; Building footprint**

The outline of a building at all of the points where it meets the ground.

**Freeway**

A high-speed, high-capacity, limited-access transportation facility serving regional and county-wide travel. Such roads are free of tolls, as contrasted with “turnpikes” or other “toll roads” that are 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.

**Friction factor**

Constraint applied in a traffic model to introduce an approximation of conditions that exist on streets in a city or county. These conditions reduce the speed of traffic and the desirability of specific links in the network upon which the traffic model distributes trips. Examples are frequency of low-speed curves, frequency of driveways, narrowness of lanes, and lack of turning lanes at intersections.

**Gateway**

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

**General law city**

A city incorporated under and subject to the general laws of the state.

**General plan**

A statement of policies, including text and diagrams setting forth objectives, principles, standards and plan proposals, for the long-term future physical development of the city or county. The general plan is a legal document required of each local jurisdiction by the State of California Government

Code section 65301 and adopted by the city council or board of supervisors. In California, the general plan has seven mandatory elements (circulation, conservation, housing, land use, noise, open space, safety and seismic safety) and may include any number of optional elements (such as air quality, economic development, hazardous waste, and parks and recreation). The general plan may also be called a *city plan*, *comprehensive plan*, or *master plan*.

**Geographic information system (GIS)**

Computer mapping system that produces multiple “layers” (coverages) of graphic information about a community or region. For example, one layer might show the parcels, another layer might show key habitat areas, another layer might show school sites, and so on. It may be composed of maps, databases, and point information. It can be considered a tool for analysis and decision making.

**Greenbelt**

A band of countryside surrounding a city or urbanized area on which building is generally prohibited.

**Greenfield**

Farmland and open areas where there has been no prior industrial or commercial activity, and therefore where the threat of contamination is lower than in urbanized areas. (See *Brownfield*.)

**Greyfield**

A blighted area, often a failed shopping center, that is ripe for redevelopment.

**Growth management**

A local program limiting the rate of community growth. Communities use a wide range of techniques 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. Examples include an annual cap on the number of building permits issued, tying new development intensity to infrastructure capacity, or limiting the location of new development. (See *Congestion management plan*.)

**Guidelines**

General statements of policy direction around which specific details may be later established.

**Guideway**

A roadway system that guides the vehicles using it as well as supporting them. The “monorail” is one such system. The most familiar and still most used guideway is the railroad. Most guideway transit systems make use of wayside electrical power for propulsion.

**High-occupancy vehicle (HOV)**

Any vehicle other than a driver-only automobile (e.g., a vanpool, a bus, or two or more persons to a car).

**Highway**

High-speed, high-capacity, limited-access transportation facility serving regional and county-wide travel. Highways may cross at a different grade level.

**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 Community Development Department of the State of California (HCD)**

The state agency that has principal responsibility for assessing, planning for, and assisting communities to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income households. HCD also certifies housing elements of general plans for local jurisdictions.

**Housing element**

One of the seven state-mandated elements of a local general plan, it assesses the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community; 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. Under state law, housing elements must be updated every five years.

**Impact**

The effect of any direct human actions or the indirect repercussions of human actions on existing physical, social, or economic conditions.

**Impact fee**

A fee, also called a development fee, levied on the developer of a project by a city, county, or other public agency as compensation for otherwise-unmitigated impacts the project will produce. California Government Code section 66000 *et seq.* specifies that development fees shall not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fee is charged. To lawfully impose a development fee, the public agency must verify its method of calculation and document proper restrictions on use of the fund. (See *Nexus*.) 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 (such as building permits, grading permits, sign permits) for the administrative costs of processing development plans; and (4) application fees (rezoning, CUP variance, etc.) for the administrative costs of reviewing and hearing development proposals.

**Impacted areas**

Census tracts where more than 50 percent of the dwelling units house low- and very low-income households. Often correlated to food and park deserts, so can be helpful for researching food and park access.

**Improved land**

Raw land to which has been added basic utilities such as roads, sewers, water lines, and other public infrastructure facilities. Can also mean structures/buildings have been erected on the land.

**Industrial**

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

**Infill development**

Development of vacant land (usually individual lots or leftover properties) within areas that are already largely developed.

**Infrastructure**

A general term for public (and quasi-public) services and facilities, such as sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems, and roads.

**Intensity**

The degree to which land is used. Often used interchangeably with *density*, *intensity* has a broader – though less clear – meaning, referring to levels of concentration or activity in uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreation or parking.

**Initial study**

Pursuant to CEQA, an analysis of a project’s potential environmental effects and their relative significance. An initial study is preliminary to deciding whether to prepare a negative declaration or an EIR.

**In lieu fee**

See *Dedication, In lieu of*.

**Institutional use**

(1) Publicly or privately owned and operated activities that are institutional in nature, such as hospitals, museums, and schools; (2) churches and other religious organizations; and (3) other nonprofit activities of a welfare, educational, or philanthropic nature that can not be considered a residential, commercial, or industrial activity.

**Intensity, Building**

For residential uses, the actual number or the allowable range of dwelling units per net or gross acre. For nonresidential uses, the actual or the maximum permitted floor area ratios (FARs).

**Interest, Fee**

Entitles a landowner to exercise complete control over use of land, subject only to government land use regulations.

**Interest, Less-than-fee**

The purchase of interest in land rather than outright ownership; includes the purchase of development rights via conservation, open space, or scenic easements. (See *Development rights; Lease; and Leasehold interest*.)

**Inverse condemnation**

A governmental agency’s taking of property, which greatly restricts the use of a parcel of real property and is comparable to the condemnation of the entire property. As a result, the owner claims entitlement to payment for the property loss under the constitutional right to compensation for property that was condemned under the government’s right of eminent domain. For example: a city widens a street, taking the entire parking lot of a local store. The city offers to pay for the lot, but the store claims the market has lost all its business since no one can park, and wants the value of the entire parcel, including the market building. (See also *Eminent domain* and *Regulatory taking*.)

**Issues**

Important unsettled community matters or problems that are identified in a community's general plan and dealt with by the plan's goals, 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 1.0 indicates a net out-commute.

**Joint powers authority (JPA)**

A legal arrangement that enables two or more units of government to share authority in order to plan and carry out a specific program or set of programs that serves both units.

**Land banking**

The purchase of land by a local government for use or resale at a later date. "Banked lands" have been used for development of low- and moderate-income housing, expansion of parks, and development of industrial and commercial centers. Federal rail-banking law allows railroads to bank unused rail corridors for future rail use while allowing interim use as trails.

**Land use**

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

**Land use classification**

A system for classifying and designating the appropriate use of properties.

**Land use element**

A required element of the general plan that 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. (See *Mandatory element*.)

**Land use regulation**

A term encompassing the regulation of land in general and often used to mean those regulations incorporated in the general plan, as distinct from zoning regulations (which are more specific).

**Leapfrog development**

New development separated from existing development by substantial vacant land. The development pattern so created is sometimes referred to as *sprawl*.

**Lease**

A contractual agreement by which an owner of real property (the lessor) gives the right of possession to another (a lessee) for a specified period of time (term) and for a specified consideration (rent).

**Leasehold interest**

(1) The interest that the lessee has in the value of the lease itself in condemnation award determination. (2) The difference between the total remaining rent under the lease and the rent the lessee would currently pay for similar space for the same time period.

**Level of service (LOS)**

(1) A scale that measures the traffic capacity of a roadway or at the intersection of roadways. Levels range from A to F, with A representing the highest level of service, as follows:

**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**

Denotes 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**

Describes 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.

(2) Some communities in California are developing standards for levels of service relating to municipal functions such as police, fire, and library service. These standards are incorporated in the general plan or in separate level of service plans.

**Life-cycle costing**

A method of evaluating a capital investment that takes into account the sum total of all costs associated with the investment over the lifetime of the project.

**Light (duty) rail transit (LRT)**

Streetcars or trolley cars that typically operate entirely or substantially in mixed traffic and in nonexclusive, at-grade rights-of-way. Passengers typically board vehicles from the street level (as opposed to a platform that is level with the train), and the driver may collect fares. Vehicles are each electrically self-propelled and usually operate in one- or two-car trains.

**Linkage**

With respect to jobs/housing balance, a program designed to offset the impact of employment on housing need within a community, whereby project approval is conditioned on the provision of housing units or the payment of an equivalent in-lieu fee. The linkage program must establish the cause-and-effect relationship between a new commercial or industrial development and the increased demand for housing.

**Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)**

A five- or seven-member commission within each county that reviews and evaluates all proposals for formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts, and merger of districts with cities. Each county’s LAFCO is empowered to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve such proposals. The five LAFCO members generally include two county supervisors, two city council members, and one member representing the general public. Some LAFCOs include two representatives of special districts.

**Lot**

See *Site*.

**Lot of record**

A lot that is part of a recorded subdivision or a parcel of land that has been recorded at the county recorder’s office containing property tax records.

**LULU (See also BANANA, NIMBY, NIABY, and NIMTOO)**

Locally Unwanted Land Use.

**Mandatory element**

A component of the general plan mandated by state law. California state law requires that a general plan include elements dealing with seven subjects – circulation, conservation, housing, land use, noise, open space and safety – and specifies to various degrees the information to be incorporated in each element.

**Master environmental assessment**

An inventory or database for use with later environmental impact reports, a master environmental assessment (MEA) can assist a city or county in formulating a general plan or any element thereof by identifying environmental characteristics and constraints required to be addressed in the general plan. Relevant portions of the MEA can be referenced and summarized in preparing later EIRs and negative declarations.

**Master EIR (MEIR)**

Section 21156 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code authorizes preparation of a “master environmental impact report” for specific kinds of projects involving broad policy decisions, specifically including general plans. The MEIR is designed to allow an agency to eliminate or reduce the scope of the environmental review of subsequent discretionary activities or projects that follow the expected course of action whose environmental effects are addressed in the MEIR.

**Mello-Roos bonds**

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

**Merger (district)**

Elimination of a special district by transferring its service responsibilities to a city government. The merging district’s territory must be totally included inside the city.

**Minipark**

Small neighborhood park of approximately one acre or less.

**Ministerial (administrative) decision**

An action taken by a governmental 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.

**Mitigation measure**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that when an environmental impact or potential impact is identified, measures must be proposed that will eliminate, avoid, rectify, compensate for or reduce those environmental effects to the extent feasible.

**Mixed-use**

Zoning which permits various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, light industrial and residential, to be combined in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development project. A street with shops at street level and dwelling units above is an example of mixed use.

**Moratorium**

A halt to new development or the issuance of permits. Moratoria are often imposed while a new general plan or zoning ordinance is written or when infrastructure (water, sewer) facilities are inadequate to accommodate additional growth.

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

An act passed in 1974 establishing federal legislation for national environmental policy, a council on environmental quality, and the requirements for environmental impact statements.

**Need**

A condition requiring supply or relief. The city or county may act upon findings of need within or on behalf of the community. A lack of access to healthy food could be identified as a need.

**Negative declaration**

When a project is not exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and will not have a significant effect upon the environment, a negative declaration must be written. The negative declaration is an informational document that describes the reasons why the project will not have a significant effect and proposes measures to mitigate or avoid any possible effects.

**Neighborhood**

A residential area within a governmental unit that has some distinct identity to its inhabitants and observers. Though neighborhoods are not legal designations, they are among the most commonly recognized and understood land use designations.

**Neighborhood completeness**

A land use indicator that attempts to define how well a neighborhood is served by specific land uses (e.g., affordable housing, fire/police station, grocery store, parks, library, school, post office).

**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.

**Neighborhood unit**

According to one widely accepted concept of planning, the neighborhood unit should be the basic building block of the city. It is based on the elementary school, with other community facilities located at its center and arterial streets at its perimeter. The distance from the school to the perimeter should be a comfortable walking distance for a school-age child; there would be no through traffic uses. Limited industrial or commercial would occur on the perimeter where arterials intersect. This was the model for American suburban development after World War II.

**New urbanism**

A design philosophy intended to create a strong sense of community by incorporating features of traditional small towns. Compact, walkable neighborhoods with active streets are a few of the hallmarks of new urbanism.

**Nexus requirement**

In order to impose a fee, there must be a rational relationship between the cost of the service paid for by the fee and/or the cost of mitigating the circumstance to which the fee is related. A study proving the relationship and valuing the cost is required prior to adoption of the fee.

**NIABY (See also BANANA, LULU, NIMBY, and NIMTOO)**

Not In Anyone's Back Yard.

**NIMBY (See also BANANA, LULU, NIABY, and NIMTOO)**

Not In My Back Yard.

**NIMTOO (See also BANANA, LULU, NIMBY and NIABY)**

Not In My Term Of Office.

**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.

**Nonconforming use**

A use that was valid when brought into existence but does not meet current zoning requirements. 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 nonconforming use. Typically, nonconforming uses are permitted to continue, but may not be expanded or enlarged.

**Notice (of hearing)**

A legal document announcing the opportunity for the public to present their views to an official representative or board of a public agency concerning an official action pending before the agency.

**Objective**

A specific statement of desired future condition toward which the city or county will expend effort in the context of striving to achieve a broader goal. An objective should be achievable and, where possible, should be measurable and time-specific. The State Government Code section 65302 requires that general plans spell out the “objectives,” principles, standards, and proposals of the general plan. “The addition of 100 units of affordable housing by 1995” is an example of an objective.

**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.

**Open space land**

Any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purposes of (1) the preservation of natural resources, (2) the managed production of resources, (3) outdoor recreation, or (4) public health and safety.

**Overlay**

A set of zoning requirements that is superimposed upon a base zone.

Overlay zones are generally used when a particular area requires special protection (as in an historic preservation district) or has a special problem (such as steep slopes, flooding or earthquake faults). Development of land subject to overlay zoning requires compliance with the regulations of both the base and overlay zones.

**Parcel**

A lot, or contiguous group of lots, in single ownership or under single control, usually considered a unit for purposes of development.

**Parcel map**

A minor subdivision resulting in fewer than five lots. The city or county may approve a parcel map when it meets the requirements of the general plan and all applicable ordinances. The regulations governing the filing and processing of parcel maps are found in the state Subdivision Map Act and the local subdivision ordinance.

**Parking management**

An evolving TDM technique designed to obtain maximum utilization from a limited number of parking spaces. Can involve pricing and preferential treatment for HOVs, non-peak period users, and short-term users. (See *High-occupancy vehicle* and *Transportation demand management*.)

**Parking ratio**

The number of parking spaces provided per unit of housing or 1,000 square feet of floor area, e.g., 2:1 or “two per thousand.”

**Parks**

Open space lands whose primary purpose is recreation. (See *Open space land*; *Community park*; and *Neighborhood park*.)

**Parkway**

An expressway or freeway designed for noncommercial traffic only; usually located within a strip of landscaped park or natural vegetation.

**Parkway strip**

A piece of land located between the rear of a curb and the front of a sidewalk, usually used for planting low ground cover and/or street trees, also known as “planter strip.”

**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.

**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.

**Physical diversity**

A quality of a site, city, or region in which a variety of architectural styles, natural landscapes, and/or land uses are found.

**Plan line**

A precise line that establishes future rights-of-way along any portion of an existing or proposed street or highway, one that is depicted on a map showing the streets and lot line or lines and the proposed right-of-way lines, and the distance thereof from the established centerline of the street or highway, or from existing or established property lines.

**Planned community**

A large-scale development whose essential features are a definable boundary; a consistent but not necessarily uniform character; overall control during the development process by a single development entity; private ownership of recreation amenities; and enforcement of covenants, conditions, and restrictions by a master community association.

**Planned unit development (PUD)**

Land use zoning that allows the adoption of a set of development standards that are specific to the particular project being proposed. PUD zones usually do not contain detailed development standards; these are established during the process of considering the proposals and adopted by ordinance if the project is approved.

**Planning and Research, Office of (OPR)**

A governmental division of the state of California that has among its responsibilities the preparation of a set of guidelines for use by local jurisdictions in drafting general plans.

**Planning area**

The planning area is the land area addressed by the general plan. For a city, the planning area boundary typically coincides with the sphere of influence that encompasses land both within the city limits and potentially annexable land.

**Planning commission**

A body, usually having five or seven members, made up of residents appointed by the city council, the mayor, or the board of supervisors to consider land use matters. The commission's duties and powers are established by the local legislative body and might include hearing proposals to amend the general plan or rezone land, initiating planning studies (road alignments, identification of seismic hazards, and so on), and taking action on proposed specific projects and subdivisions. Planning commissions have broad discretionary power; their decisions can be appealed to the legislative body within the jurisdiction (the city council or board of supervisors).

**Plat map**

A map of a lot, parcel, subdivision, or development area where the lines of each land division are shown by accurate distances and bearings.

**Police power**

Broad power held by government to legislate for the purpose of preserving the public's health, safety, morals, and general welfare. The authority that localities have to adopt zoning and land use regulations and general plans is derived from the police power.

**Policy**

A specific statement of principle or of guiding actions that implies clear commitment but is not mandatory. A general direction that a governmental agency sets to follow, in order to meet its goals and objectives before undertaking an action program. (See *Program*.)

**Principle**

An assumption, fundamental rule, or doctrine that will guide general plan policies, proposals, standards, and implementation measures. The State Government Code (section 65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, "principles," standards, and proposals of the general plan. "Adjacent land uses should be compatible with one another" is an example of a principle.

**Program**

An action, activity, or strategy carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve a specific goal or objective. Policies and programs establish the who, how, and when for carrying out the what and where of goals and objectives.

**Pro rata**

Refers to the proportionate distribution of the cost of something to something else or to some group, such as the cost of infrastructure improvements associated with new development apportioned to the users of the infrastructure on the basis of projected use.

**Recreation, Active**

A type of recreation or activity that requires the use of organized play areas including but not limited to softball, baseball, football and soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts, and various forms of children's play equipment.

**Redevelop**

To demolish existing buildings, 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**

A quantification by a COG or by HCD of existing and projected housing need, by household income group, for all localities within a region. The identified housing need is one of the bases for development of a jurisdiction's housing element.

**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.

**Regulation**

A rule or order prescribed for managing government.

**Regulatory taking**

A taking of private property for a public purpose that results from extensive regulation of land.

**Residential**

Land designated in the city or county general plan and zoning ordinance for buildings consisting only of dwelling units. May be improved, vacant, or unimproved. (See *Dwelling unit*.)

**Rezoning**

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

**Right-of-way**

A strip of land occupied or intended to be occupied by certain transportation and public use facilities, such as roadways, railroads, and utility lines.

**Safety element**

One of the seven state-mandated elements of a local general plan, it 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. Many safety elements also incorporate a review of police needs, objectives, facilities, and services.

**Setback**

A minimum distance required by zoning to be maintained between two structures or between a structure and property lines.

**Significant effect**

A beneficial or detrimental impact on the environment. May include but is not limited to significant changes in an area's air, water, and land resources.

**Site**

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

**Smart growth**

A broad concept that describes a series of principles that encourage development that better serves the economic, environmental and social needs of communities than do many of the principles that have guided development in the post-World War II period. 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

**Specific plan**

A plan addressing land use distribution, open space availability, infrastructure and infrastructure financing for a portion of the community. Specific plans put the provisions of the local general plan into action.

**Speed, Average**

The sum of the speeds of the cars observed divided by the number of cars observed.

**Speed, Critical**

The speed that is not exceeded by 85 percent of the cars observed.

**Sphere of influence**

A planning area usually larger than, although sometimes contiguous with, a city's municipal limits. Spheres of influence are assigned by each county's local agency formation commission (LAFCO) and typically indicate the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a city.

**Spot zoning**

Rezoning of a lot or parcel of land to permit a use incompatible with surrounding zoning and land uses. Spot zoning confers special privileges and benefits upon the owner of the rezoned parcel, and is inconsistent with comprehensive planning and with zoning. Because zoning must be consistent with a community's general plan, spot zoning is legally vulnerable.

**Sprawl**

The process in which the spread of development across the landscape far outpaces population growth. The landscape sprawl creates has four characteristics: a population that is widely dispersed in low-density development; rigid separation of uses, so that homes, commerce and workplaces are segregated from one another; a network of roads laid out to separate land into huge blocks and offering poor access; and a lack of well-defined, thriving activity centers, such as downtowns and town centers. Most of the other features usually associated with sprawl – a lack of transportation choices, relative uniformity of housing options, and difficulty walking from place to place – result from these conditions.

**Standards**

(1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. The State Government Code (section 65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, principles, "standards," and proposals of the general plan. Examples of standards might include the number of acres of parkland per 1,000 residents 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.

**Street furniture**

Features associated with a street that are intended to enhance its physical character and use by pedestrians, such as benches, trash receptacles, kiosks, lights, and newspaper racks.

**Street tree plan**

A comprehensive plan for all trees on public streets that sets goals for solar access, and standards for species selection, maintenance, and replacement criteria, and for planting trees in patterns that will define neighborhood character while avoiding monotony or maintenance problems.

**Streets, Local**

See *Streets, Minor*.

**Streets, Major**

The transportation network that includes a hierarchy of freeways, arterials, and collectors to service through traffic.

**Streets, Minor**

Local streets not shown on the circulation plan, map, or diagram, whose primary intended purpose is to provide access to fronting properties.

**Streets, Through**

Streets that extend continuously between other major streets in the community.

**Strip development**

Commercial and high-density residential development located adjacent to major streets. Characteristics include shallow depth, street-oriented layout, lack of unified design theme, and numerous points of street access. It impedes smooth traffic flow.

**Structure**

Anything constructed or erected that requires location on the ground (excluding swimming pools, fences, and walls used as fences).

**Subdivision**

The division of a tract of land into defined lots, either improved or unimproved, which can be separately sold or leased, and which can be altered or developed.

**Subdivision Map Act**

Division 2 (sections 66410 *et seq.*) of the California Government Code, this act vests in local legislative bodies the regulation and control of the design and improvement of subdivisions, including the requirement for tentative and final maps. (See *Subdivision*.)

**Subregional**

Pertaining to a portion of a region.

**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 confers well-being while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies rely. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Taking**

A real estate term traditionally used to mean acquisition by eminent domain but broadened by the U.S. Supreme Court to mean any government action that denies economically viable use of property. More recent federal and state legislative proposals would consider any government program causing a “substantial” reduction in property values to be a taking.

**Target areas**

Specifically designated sections of the community where loans and grants are made to bring about a specific outcome, such as the rehabilitation of housing affordable by very low-and low-income households.

**Tax increment**

Additional tax revenues that result from increases in property values within are development area. State law permits the tax increment to be earmarked for redevelopment purposes but requires at least 20 percent to be used to increase and improve the community’s supply of very low-and low-income housing.

**Tax increment financing**

A redevelopment agency’s powerful tool to issue bonds against the anticipated additional revenue of the tax increment.

**Tentative map**

The map or drawing illustrating a subdivision proposal. The city or county will approve or deny the proposed subdivision based upon the design depicted by the tentative map. A subdivision is not complete until the conditions of approval imposed upon the tentative map have been satisfied, and a final map has been certified by the city or county and recorded with the county recorder.

**Tract map**

See *Final map subdivision*.

**Traffic calming**

The process of increasing pedestrian safety by decreasing automobile traffic speed and volume.

**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 nonresidential land uses. See *Trip*.

**Transfer of development rights (TDR)**

See *Development rights, Transfer of*.

**Transit-dependent**

Refers to persons unable to operate automobiles or other motorized vehicles, or those who do not own motorized vehicles. Transit-dependent residents must rely on transit, paratransit, or owners of private vehicles for transportation. Transit-dependent residents include the young, the handicapped, the elderly, the poor, and those with prior violations in motor vehicle laws, as well as those who choose not to drive.

**Transit-oriented development (TOD)**

Moderate or high-density housing concentrated in mixed use developments with convenient access to, or centered around, public transportation.

**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. TSM coordinates many forms of transportation (car, bus, carpool, rapid transit, bicycle, walking, etc.) in order to distribute the traffic impacts of new development. Rather than emphasizing road expansion or construction, TSM examines methods of increasing the efficiency of road use. 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.

**Trees, Street**

Trees strategically planted – usually in parkway strips, medians, or along streets – to enhance the visual quality of a street.

**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). (See *Traffic model*.)

**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.

**Underutilized parcel**

A parcel that is not developed to its full zoning potential.

**Undevelopable**

Specific areas where topographic, geologic, and/or surficial soil conditions indicate a significant danger to future occupants and a liability to the city or county are designated as “undevelopable” by the city or county.

**Undue**

Improper, or more than necessary.

**Uniform building code (UBC)**

A national, standard building code that sets forth 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 which provide for the conservation and rehabilitation of housing in accordance with the uniform building code (UBC).

**Universal design**

There are seven generally acknowledged basic principles of universal design:

1. Equitable use (design it fair)
2. Flexibility in use (design it adjustable)
3. Simple and intuitive use (design it elegant)
4. Perceptible information (design it obvious)
5. Tolerance for error (design it safe)
6. Low physical effort (design it easy)
7. Size and space for approach and use (design it reasonable)

**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 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 limit line**

A boundary, sometimes parcel-specific, located to mark the outer limit beyond which urban development will not be allowed. It has the aim of discouraging urban sprawl by containing urban development during a specified period, and its location may be modified over time.

**Urban service area**

An area designated by a county's local agency formation commission (LAFCo) as eligible to receive urban infrastructure (sewer and/or water service) in the short term.

**Urban sprawl**

Haphazard growth or outward extension of a city resulting from uncontrolled or poorly managed development.

**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.

**Use, Nonconforming**

See *Nonconforming use*.

**Use permit**

The discretionary and conditional review of an activity or function or operation on a site or in a building or facility.

**Vacant**

Lands or buildings that are not actively used for any purpose.

**Variance**

A departure from any provision of the zoning requirements for a specific parcel, except use, without changing the zoning ordinance or the underlying zoning of the parcel. Variances are granted as limited waivers from the requirements of the zoning ordinance. Variances may only be granted under special circumstances, usually upon demonstration of hardship based on the peculiarity of the property in relation to other properties in the same zone district. They require a public hearing, usually before a zoning administrator or board of zoning adjustment.

**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.

**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." (See *Peak hour* and *Level of service*.)

**Williamson Act**

Known formally as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, it was designed as an incentive to retain prime agricultural land and open space in agricultural use, thereby slowing its conversion to urban and suburban development. The program entails a ten-year contract between the city or county and an owner of land whereby the land is taxed on the basis of its agricultural use rather than the market value. The land becomes subject to certain enforceable restrictions, and certain conditions need to be met prior to approval of an agreement.

**Zero lot line**

A detached single family unit distinguished by the location of one exterior wall on a side property line.

**Zone, Interim**

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.

**Zone, Study**

See *Zone, Interim*.

**Zone, Traffic**

In a mathematical traffic model the area to be studied is divided into zones, with each zone treated as producing and attracting trips. The production of trips by a zone is based on the number of trips to or from work or shopping, or other trips produced per dwelling unit.

**Zoning**

The division of a city or county by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that implements policies of the general plan.

**Zoning adjustment board**

A body appointed by the local legislative body to consider minor zoning adjustments such as conditional use permits and variances. It is empowered to conduct public hearings and to impose conditions of approval. Its decision may be appealed to the local legislative body. Not all jurisdictions utilize this model.

**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. His/her decision may be appealed to the local legislative body.

**Zoning bonus**

See *Zoning, Incentive*.

**Zoning district**

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

**Zoning, Exclusionary**

Development regulations that result in the exclusion of low- and moderate-income and/or minority families from a community.

**Zoning, Incentive**

The awarding of bonus credits to a development in the form of allowing more intensive use of land if public benefits – such as preservation of greater than the minimum required open space, provision for low- and moderate-income housing, or plans for public plazas and courts at ground level – are included in a project.

**Zoning, Inclusionary**

Regulations that increase housing choice by providing the opportunity to construct more diverse and economical housing to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income families. Often such regulations require a minimum percentage of housing for low- and moderate-income households in new housing developments and in conversions of apartments to condominiums.

**Zoning map**

Government Code section 65851 permits a legislative body to 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*.