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Glossary



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100-year Flood. The 100-year flooding event is a flood event where the elevation of the flood has a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in magnitude in any given year. Contrary to popular belief, it is not a flood occurring once every 100 years. The 100-year floodplain is the area adjoining a river, stream, or watercourse covered by water in the event of a 100-year flood.

200-year Flood. The 200-year flooding event is a flood event where the elevation of the flood has a 0.5 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in magnitude in any given year.

Area Median Income (AMI). The midpoint of household income distribution within a metropolitan area or a county, calculated each year by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32). Assembly Bill 32 is one of California's major initiatives for reducing climate change or greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that was signed into law in 2006. This effort aims to reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

Avenue. An "Avenue" is a Street Type used in the Mobility Element and is defined as a secondary street. Avenues carry primarily local traffic and also some through traffic. They serve shorter trips and provide access to adjacent land uses. They are local transit corridors, and are the primary bicycle routes and pedestrian routes in the City. Avenues are functionally equivalent to a Secondary Arterial.

Blight. Blight describes a condition of deterioration that is sufficiently severe that it materially impedes the continued prosperity or redevelopment of an area. The condition may describe both economic and physical characteristics and often encompasses a range of problems including excessive supplies of vacant and underutilized land and businesses, poor aesthetic conditions, structural deficiencies in a large number of buildings.

Boulevard. A "Boulevard" is a Street Type used in the Mobility Element and is defined as a major street that carries both local and through traffic and is expected to carry the highest volumes of traffic in the City. Boulevards provide limited access to adjacent land uses. Boulevards are multi-modal streets that serve as key transit corridors, emergency response routes, and may also serve as truck routes. Boulevards are functionally equivalent to a Primary Arterial.

Built Environment. All man-made components of a city or town, including streets, sidewalks, buildings, parks, open space, and infrastructure.

Carbon Dioxide Equivalent. A metric measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases based upon their global warming potential (GWP). Carbon dioxide equivalents are commonly expressed as “million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (MMTCDE).” The carbon dioxide equivalent for a gas is derived by multiplying the tonnes of the gas by the associated GWP. $MMTCDE = (\text{million metric tonnes of a gas}) * (\text{GWP of the gas})$. For example, the GWP for methane is 21 and for nitrous oxide it is 310. This means that emissions of 1 million metric tonnes of methane and nitrous oxide respectively is equivalent to emissions of 21 and 310 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide. (EEA, based on: IPCC Third Assessment Report, 2001)

Childcare Center. Childcare provided in a facility other than the provider’s home. Most centers have structured hours of operation. Additionally, childcare centers typically serve larger numbers of children than a family childcare home.

Civic Use. A use dedicated to public services, education, cultural performance, gatherings and displays administered by the City, other government entities, or non-profit cultural, educational, or religious organizations. Civic uses are comprised of public facilities, such as City Hall, libraries and community facilities.

Class I Bicycle Lane. This is a separate right-of-way designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians. Cross-flows with motorized vehicles are minimized. While a bike path or trail may be located adjacent to a city street, it will typically be located away from city streets in a separate right-of-way. A bike path is paved while a bike trail is usually an unpaved surface.

Class II Bicycle Lane. This is a restricted area at the edge of a street designated for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles where through travel by motorized vehicles is prohibited. Cross-flows by motorized vehicles and pedestrians are permitted.

Class III Bicycle Lane. This is a signed street providing for shared use of a street by motor vehicles and bicyclists. While bicyclists have no exclusive use or priority, the signage (both by the side of the street and stenciled on the roadway surface) warns motorists of bicyclists sharing the roadway space. These streets are called “Bike Streets.”

Climate Change. This is a change in the average state or variability of the climate that can be identified using statistical tests, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades. Some changes can be due to natural internal processes, while others are caused by human-induced changes.

Commercial Use. Commercial use covers a broad spectrum of uses generally considered to be business-related, including retail, office, and service commercial.

Corridor. A Corridor is a term used in the Community Design Element that describes an area of the City that connects Districts and Neighborhoods. Corridors are often both transportation thoroughfares and the site of commercial and residential use. In this General Plan, a Corridor is a regulatory geography. Each Corridor identifies one or more allowable “Place Type,” which in turn has density requirements and policy guidance for the character of development.

Corridor Transition Overlay. The Corridor Transition Overlay demarcates parcels adjacent to Corridors in South Gate which are subject to the Corridor Transition Overlay regulations, as illustrated in Figure CD 8. These overlay areas allow for parcels that are not fronting Corridors to be developed as part of a project on the Corridor. It is a strategy to overcome the issues of parcels that lack sufficient depth for conventional development projects.

Density. Density is the ratio of housing units per net acre of land. Net acres are calculated as the total/gross site area minus the amount of land set aside for streets, easements or required open space.

Density Bonus. An incentive in specified areas that permits developers to build at a higher density than normally allowed.

District. Districts are more intense areas of activity in the City, often with a specific character or focus. In this General Plan, a District is a regulatory geography, and each different District identifies one or more allowable “Place Type,” which in turn has density requirements and policy guidance for the character of development.

Diversion Rate (Solid Waste measurement). As defined by the California Integrated Waste Management Board, this is the percentage of total waste that a jurisdiction diverts from landfill through any combination of source reduction (waste prevention), recycling, reuse and/or composting.

Easement. A piece or strip of land where the public in general has the right to pass or access, including but not limited to public streets, right-of-ways, and infrastructure or utility easements.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR). A state-mandated written assessment of the positive and negative environmental effects of a development project, required pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Extremely Low Income Housing. For planning purposes and qualification for housing programs, the State Department of Housing and Community (HCD) defines household income as “Extremely Low” when it falls below 30 percent of County Median Family Income (MFI).

Family Childcare. Childcare provided in a private home. Family childcare homes can be licensed as small or large depending on the number and ages of children served. The maximum number of children that can be served is 14.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The total gross area of all structures on a lot, excluding accessory buildings, divided by the gross area of the lot.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

FEMA coordinates the federal government’s role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made.

Floodplain. The drainage basin on either side of a river channel that is prone to flooding based on a river’s fluctuating water volume and velocity.

Forecourt. A forecourt is a portion of the building façade that is close to the front property line and has its central portion set back. The forecourt may be suitable for vehicular drop-offs or landscaped courtyards in multi-family or office uses.

Goal. When used as part of the Goals, Objectives and Policies sections of the General Plan elements, a Goal is a general direction setter. It is a long-term vision that may or may not be realized.

Government Code. California Law consists of 29 codes, covering various subject areas, the State Constitution and Statutes. Information presented reflects laws currently in effect. Government Code is one of those 29 codes. It governs Local Government planning among other subject areas.

Greenhouse Gases. Naturally occurring or human-produced gases, including carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, methane, and ozone, that allow sunlight to pass through but trap heat radiated from the earth’s surface. The accumulation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is a cause of global climate change.

Guiding Principle. A statement that articulates a shared value and strategy for the City and serves as a basis for integrated decision making. Guiding Principles constitute the rules, constraints, overriding criteria, and behaviors by which the City abides in its daily activities in the long term.

Housing, Above Moderate Income. For planning purposes and qualification for housing programs, the State Department of Housing and Community (HCD) defines household income as “Above Moderate” when it is above 120 percent of County Median Family Income (MFI).

Housing, Low Income. For planning purposes and qualification for housing programs, the State Department of Housing and Community (HCD) defines household income as “Low” when it falls between 51 and 80 percent of County Median Family Income (MFI).

Housing, Moderate Income. For planning purposes and qualification for housing programs, the State Department of Housing and Community (HCD) defines household income as “Moderate” when it falls between 81 and 120 percent of County Median Family Income (MFI).

Housing, Very Low Income. For planning purposes and qualification for housing programs, the State Department of Housing and Community (HCD) defines household income as “Very Low” when it falls between 31 and 50 percent of County Median Family Income (MFI).

Implementation Action. An Implementation Action is a specific task the City will undertake to carry out an Objective or Policy. Implementation Actions include details about how the action is to be undertaken.

Industrial Use. Industrial uses encompass a wide variety of commercial concerns typically related to manufacturing and large scale concerns that are not compatible with residential or other sensitive development types. Industrial uses may include heavy manufacturing, light industrial, warehouse and distribution among other classifications.

Infill. A site with a perimeter that completely or mostly borders previously developed sites.

Institutional Use. Institutional uses are identified as public or private operations with a social purpose, such as education, medical or mental health, com-

munity building or cultural/civic spaces. Institutional uses must be open to the public at large, although they may be targeted to a specific population and be privately owned or operated.

Land Use Designation. See Place Type Designation.

Level of Service (LOS). A measure of the efficiency of a section of roadway, expressed by a letter designation (A through F). LOS A represents the most unimpeded flow of vehicles along a roadway, while LOS F represents the most congested flow of vehicles.

Local Road. A “Local Road,” as defined in the Mobility Element, serves local land uses, typically residential but can also serve industrial and/or commercial uses. Local roads carry low traffic volumes that are exclusively locally-oriented.

May. When used in a Policy or Implementation Action in the General Plan, “may” indicates that the City may use its discretion about applying the policy or action.

Mixed Use. A building or site that contains multiple land uses, often residential units with retail, office, or light industrial space within the same building.

Mult-Family Housing. Residential buildings designed for occupation by more than one family.

Neighborhood. Neighborhood is a concept which describes a basic unit of the City that is unique and identifiable and contains a neighborhood center with a pedestrian-friendly mix of uses and a range of housing types for people in all stages of life. Neighborhoods are often defined as the area within a quarter mile walking distance from the center to the edge, within which most residents can walk to meet their daily needs. Neighborhoods are also often bounded by physical characteristics, such as major roadways or railroads. It is common for neighborhoods to have overlapping boundaries, especially as these boundaries are perceived by residents. Thus, specific boundaries for individual neighborhoods are not identified in this General Plan.

Objective. When used as part of the Goals, Objectives and Policies sections of the General Plan elements, an Objective indicates a specific end or condition – ideally, measurable and time-specific – that will bring about a Goal.

Open Space. A broad category of land uses that includes parks, and other open space areas such as rivers, trails, and other undeveloped lands.

Park. When used as a Place Type category, park refers to all park and recreational facilities open to the public, including athletic fields, play equipment, picnic areas, grassy open spaces, plazas and bicycle lanes.

Particulate Matter (PM10 or PM2.5). Solid particles smaller than 10 microns (PM10) or 2.5 microns (PM2.5) that are small enough to enter deep into the lungs. Particulate matter can cause cancer, exacerbate asthma, and cause other respiratory problems.

Place Type Designation. Place Type designations replace typical land use designations in this General Plan. In addition to use and intensity of development, Place Types regulate and address the desired form and character of development. That is, they also identify a third dimension to the built environment. Place Types are applied to the Neighborhoods, Districts and Corridors in the City and more than one Place Type may be allowed in some areas. Additionally, in each area, Place Types are identified as “Highly Desired,” “Desired” or “Allowed” thus presenting a hierarchy places that the City desires to create in each District, Corridor or Neighborhood.

Policy. When used as part of the Goals, Objectives and Policies sections of the General Plan elements, a Policy seeks to bring about Objectives by mandating, encouraging, or permitting certain actions.

Porch and Yard. A building façade type that is set back from the front property line with a landscaped yard separating the building from the sidewalk.

Public Works Use. Publicly owned and operated infrastructure, building or lot dedicated to the operation or maintenance of the City, such as publically-owned maintenance yards, sewer or water treatment facilities.

Quimby Act. A state law passed in 1975 allowing cities to pass ordinances requiring that developers set aside land, donate conservation easements, or pay fees for park improvements.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) is mandated by State Housing Law as part of the periodic process of updating local housing elements of the General Plan. The RHNA quantifies the need for housing within each jurisdiction during specified planning periods.

School. School is a Place Type designation reserved for land reserved for public school facilities including, elementary, middle, high and adult education campuses.

Senate Bill (SB 375). Multi-faceted legislation signed into law in 2008 that offers CEQA streamlining to qualifying transit-oriented and VMT-reducing projects, and ties transportation funding to a region’s efforts to meet greenhouse gas reduction goals. SB 375 is intended to help curb sprawl and implement AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act.

Sensitive Receptor. Sensitive receptors are land uses with inhabitants that would experience disproportionately negative impacts from air pollution. They include residences, schools, churches, hospitals, and child and elder care facilities.

Shopfront. A building facade type that is aligned close to the property line with the primary building entrance at sidewalk grade. This type is conventional for retail use. It requires a substantial glazing area at the sidewalk level, and an awning that may overlap the sidewalk to the maximum extent possible.

Should. When used in a Policy or Implementation Action in the General Plan, “should” indicates that a Policy or Action is strongly encouraged by the City, but not mandatory. Although compliance is voluntary, the particular Policy or Action is a recommendation about how to meet the Goals and Objectives of the General Plan.

Street. A “Street,” as defined as a Street Type in the Mobility Element, connects neighborhoods to each other and to commercial and other districts. It also connects Boulevards and Avenues to Local Roads. Within the General Plan’s Mobility Element, Streets are functionally equivalent to Collector Streets.

Streetscape. The character and appearance of a street and its landscaping, buildings and other features.

Stoop. A type of building façade that is located close to the front property line with the first story elevated above the sidewalk sufficiently to provide privacy for the windows. The entrance is usually an exterior stair and landing. This type is recommended for ground-floor residential use.

Public Transit. Buses, streetcars, trains, and other publicly-provided transportation systems for moving passengers.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). Development – usually residential or commercial – that capitalizes on its location near public transit, offering the amenities of public transit to building users and supporting the transit system with a compact pool of potential transit users.

Vacant. Land that could be improved or developed but that currently contains no structures.

Vision Statement. A mission statement, developed with the community and adopted by the City Council, in which the community’s intentions for the future are stated.

Water Body. The surface of a creek, stream, river, lake, estuary, bay or ocean.

Wayfinding. Signs, graphics, and elements of design that help people find their way to a given destination.

Will. When used in a Policy or Implementation Action in the General Plan, “will” indicates that compliance with the policy or action is mandatory.