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GLOSSARY

This glossary defines acronyms and abbreviations used in the General Plan and explains the technical terms used. Definitions come from several sources, including the California Office of Planning and Research; the California Institute for Local Government; and the American Planning Association Glossary of Zoning, Development, and Planning Terms.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAA:	Area Agency on Aging (Contra Costa County)
AARP:	American Association of Retired Persons
AB:	Assembly Bill
ABAG:	Association of Bay Area Governments
ADA:	Americans with Disabilities Act
ALUC:	Airport Land Use Commission (Contra Costa County)
ALUCP:	Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (Contra Costa County)
AQI:	Air Quality Index
ARPD:	Ambrose Recreation and Park District
BAAQMD:	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
BART:	Bay Area Rapid Transit
BBID:	Byron-Bethany Irrigation District

BIPOC:	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
BOS:	Board of Supervisors
BSD:	Byron Sanitary District
BUSD:	Byron Union School District
CAL FIRE:	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CAL OES:	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
CAO:	County Administrator's Office
CAP:	Climate Action Plan
CARB:	California Air Resources Board
CARE:	Community Air Risk Evaluation
CCCCD:	Contra Costa Community College District
CCCOE:	Contra Costa County Office of Education
CCCSD:	Central Contra Costa Sanitary District
CCCSO:	Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office
CCCWA:	Contra Costa County Water Agency
CCCFCWCD:	Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
CCCSPD:	Contra Costa County Fire Protection District



CCFPD:	Crockett-Carquinez Fire Protection District	DPC:	Delta Protection Commission
CCHS:	Contra Costa Health Services Department	DTSC:	Department of Toxic Substances Control (State)
CCHSHMP:	Contra Costa Health Services – Hazardous Materials Program	du:	Dwelling Unit
CCRCD:	Contra Costa Resource Conservation District	du/acre:	Dwelling Units Per Acre
CCWD:	Contra Costa Water District	DWD:	Diablo Water District
CDPR:	California Department of Parks and Recreation	DWR:	Department of Water Resources (State)
CEQA:	California Environmental Quality Act	EBMUD:	East Bay Municipal Utility District
CERT:	Community Emergency Response Team	EBRPD:	East Bay Regional Park District
CHP:	California Highway Patrol	ECCID:	East Contra Costa Irrigation District
CIP:	Capital Improvement Program	EIR:	Environmental Impact Report
CNEL:	Community Noise Equivalent Level	EMS:	Emergency Medical Service
CoC:	Continuum of Care	EOC:	Emergency Operations Center (Contra Costa County)
CRCWD:	Castle Rock County Water District	EOP:	Emergency Operations Plan (Contra Costa County)
CSA:	County Service Area or Community-Supported Agriculture	EPA:	Environmental Protection Agency (US)
CSD:	Community Services District or Canyon School District	EV:	Electric Vehicle
CUPA:	Certified Unified Program Agency		
		FAR:	Floor-Area Ratio
dB:	Decibel	FEMA:	Federal Emergency Management Agency
dba:	A-Weighted Sound Level	FHSZ:	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
DCD:	Department of Conservation and Development (Contra Costa County)	FIRM:	Flood Insurance Rate Map
DNL:	Day/Night Average Sound Level	FMMP:	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
DOC:	Department of Conservation (State)		



GHG:	Greenhouse Gas	Leq:	Equivalent Sound Level
GPA:	General Plan Amendment	LHMP:	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
GSA:	Groundwater Sustainability Agency	LOS:	Level of Service
GSP:	Groundwater Sustainability Plan	LUHSD:	Liberty Union High School District
HCP/NCCP:	East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan	MAC:	Municipal Advisory Council
HHW:	Household Hazardous Waste	MDUSD:	Mt. Diablo Unified School District
HOV:	High-Occupancy Vehicle	MOA:	Military Operations Area
HUB Zone:	Historically Underutilized Business Zone	MOFD:	Moraga-Orinda Fire District
I-:	Interstate	MOTCO:	Military Ocean Terminal Concord
IPM:	Integrated Pest Management	MOU:	Memorandum of Understanding
ISD:	Ironhouse Sanitary District	MRA:	Mineral Resource Area
JSUSD:	John Swett Unified School District	MTC:	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
KESD:	Knightsen Elementary School District	MVSD:	Mt. View Sanitary District
KFPD:	Kensington Fire Protection District	NAHC:	Native American Heritage Commission
LAFCO:	Local Agency Formation Commission	NFIP:	National Flood Insurance Program
LEED:	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design	NHA:	National Heritage Area
		NPDES:	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
		NZE:	Near-Zero Emissions
		OES:	Office of Emergency Services (Contra Costa County)
		OSHA:	Occupational Safety and Health Administration (US)



PCA: Priority Conservation Area

PDA: Priority Development Area

PG&E: Pacific Gas and Electric Company

RHNA: Regional Housing Needs Allocation

RHFPD: Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District

RSD: Rodeo Sanitary District

RTP: Regional Transportation Plan

RWQCB: Regional Water Quality Control Board

SB: Senate Bill

SMARA: Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (State)

SMGB: State Mining and Geology Board

SOI: Sphere of Influence

SR-: State Route

SRVFPD: San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District

SSD: Stege Sanitary District

SWRCB: State Water Resources Control Board

TAC: Toxic Air Contaminant

TDM: Transportation Demand Management

ULL: Urban Limit Line

USDA: United States Department of Agriculture

USFWS: United States Fish and Wildlife Service

USGS: United States Geological Survey

VMT: Vehicle Miles Traveled

WCCUSD: West Contra Costa Unified School District

WCWD: West County Wastewater District

ZEV: Zero-Emissions Vehicle

TERMINOLOGY

Acceptable Risk. A hazard that is deemed a tolerable exposure to danger given the expected benefits. The level of loss, injury, or destruction below which no specific action by local government is deemed necessary other than making the risk known. Different levels of acceptable risk may be assigned according to the potential danger and the critical nature of the threatened structure. The levels may range from “near zero” for nuclear plants and natural gas transmission lines to “moderate” for farm structures and low-intensity warehouse uses.

Acreage, Gross. The land area that exists prior to any dedications for public use, health, and safety purposes.



Acreeage, Net. The portion of a site that can actually be built upon, which is the land area remaining after dedication of ultimate rights-of-way and utility easements for:

- Exterior boundary streets
- Floodways
- Public parks and other open space developed to meet minimum standards required by County ordinance

Action. A measure, procedure, or technique that helps the County achieve a specific goal. An action is something concrete that can and will be completed. (see “Goal”)

Active Transportation Plan. A plan to enhance safety and mode share for active transportation, which comprises any self-propelled, human-powered travel, such as walking and bicycling.

Adaptation. Making changes in response to current or future conditions (such as the increased frequency and intensity of climate-related hazards), usually to reduce harm and take advantage of new opportunities.

Adapting to Rising Tides. A program of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission to “provide staff support, guidance, tools, and information to help agencies and organizations understand, communicate, and begin to resolve complex climate change issues.”¹

Adaptive Capacity. The “combination of the strengths, attributes, and resources available to an individual, community, society, or organization that

can be used to prepare for and undertake actions to reduce adverse impacts, moderate harm, or exploit beneficial opportunities.”²

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

Agricultural Tourism. Tourism that involves guests visiting working farms and ranches to observe and learn about farming practices and purchase locally grown products.

Air Quality Index. An index used by the US Environmental Protection Agency to report daily air quality for five major air pollutants regulated by the Clean Air Act: ground-level ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide.

Archaeological Resource. Material evidence of past human activity found below the surface of ground or water, portions of which may be visible above the surface.

Asset. A valued feature of a community that may be harmed by climate change. Assets may include buildings, infrastructure, community services, ecosystems, and economic drivers.

Benefit Assessment District. A financing mechanism established to provide public infrastructure to a defined area. Property owners within the district (i.e., the area that receives the benefit) pay an assessment to cover the cost of constructing or maintaining the public facility.

¹ Adapting to Rising Tides, “About Us,” <https://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/about/>, accessed June 15, 2023.

² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, “Annex II: Glossary,” ed. K. J. Mach, S. Planton, and C. von Stechow, in Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report, ed. Core Writing Team, R. K. Pachauri, and L. A. Meyer (Geneva, Switzerland: IPCC, 2014), p. 117–130, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/syr/>.



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

Bike 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 be parallel to roads but are typically separated from them by landscaping.

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

Bikeway. A term that encompasses “bike lanes,” “bike paths,” “bike routes,” and “separated bikeways.”

Buffer. An area established between potentially conflicting land uses, which, depending on the potential impact, may use landscaping or structural barriers such as setbacks or roads.

Building. A habitable structure. (see “Structure”)

Building Code. Standards adopted by the State governing the construction, alteration, demolition, occupancy, or other use of buildings used for human habitation. The State regulations are substantially the same as those contained in the most recent editions of the Uniform Building Code, Uniform Housing Code, Uniform Plumbing Code, Uniform Mechanical Code, and the National Electric Code. Local governments may have stricter standards under certain circumstances.

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

California Environmental Quality Act. Legislation and corresponding procedural components established in 1970 by the State of California to require environmental review for projects anticipated to result in adverse impacts to the environment. (see “Environmental Impact Report”)


Capital Improvement Program. A program that schedules permanent improvements, usually for a minimum of five years in the future, that fits the projected fiscal capability of the local jurisdiction. The program generally is reviewed on an annual basis for conformance to and consistency with the General Plan.

Carbon Neutral. Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to zero, either by entirely eliminating all GHG emissions or by balancing out all remaining GHG emissions through carbon removal practices so that the “net” emissions are zero.

Carbon Sequestration. The process of storing carbon dioxide in locations other than the atmosphere, where it cannot contribute to climate change or ocean acidification. For the purposes of this plan, carbon sequestration refers to the storage of atmospheric carbon in vegetation, soils, woody products, and aquatic environments.

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 permanently accommodated 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”)

Class 1 Soil: Soil with slight limitations that restrict its use for agriculture, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Land Use Capability Classification. This ranking represents both irrigated and nonirrigated land, unless otherwise specified as such in the ranking.



Class 2 Soil: Soil with moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices for agriculture, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Land Use Capability Classification. This ranking represents both irrigated and nonirrigated land, unless otherwise specified as such in the ranking.

Clean Air Refuge. A building with efficient air filtration and improved air quality that is opened to community members during poor air quality days.

Climate Change. A change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. In the context of this plan, this term refers to changes brought on by human activities.

Climate Justice. The concept that no group of people should disproportionately bear the burden of climate impacts or the costs of mitigation and adaptation.

Community Facilities District. A special district established by a local agency to finance tax-exempt bonds for public services or the planning, design, acquisition, construction, or operation of public facilities. Special taxes levied within the district are used to repay the bonds.

Community Noise Equivalent Level. A 24-hour energy equivalent level derived from a variety of single-noise events, with weighting factors of 5 and 10 A-weighted decibels (dBA) applied to the evening (7 p.m. to 10 p.m.) and nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.) periods, respectively, to allow for the greater sensitivity to noise during these hours.

Community Resource Centers. Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) facilities that are open to the public during Public Safety Power Shutoff events, offering air-conditioning or heating, ice, restrooms and hand-washing stations, medical equipment charging, device charging, Wi-Fi, bottled water, and snacks.

Community-Supported Agriculture. A community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or cooperatively, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production. Typically, members or "share-holders" of the farm or garden pledge in advance to cover the anticipated costs of the farm operation and farmer's salary.

Compatible. Capable of existing together without significant conflict or ill effects.

Complete Street. A transportation facility that is planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to provide comfortable and convenient mobility, and improve accessibility and connectivity to essential community destinations for all users and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation riders, or drivers. Complete streets are especially attuned to the needs of people walking, using assistive mobility devices, rolling, biking, and riding transit.

Conservation. The management and use of natural resources in a sustainable manner. Conservation results in land and water areas that are durably protected and managed to sustain functional ecosystems, both intact and restored, and the diversity of life they support.

Conserve. To manage natural resources sustainably.

County Service Area. A special district in an unincorporated area formed to fund a public service that the County would not otherwise be able to fund through traditional sources, like property or sales tax. County Service Areas are governed by the County Board of Supervisors and funded by a direct assessment paid by property owners who benefit from the services provided.



Critical Facility. A facility whose continued functioning is necessary to maintain public health and safety following a disaster, and where damage or failure could pose hazards to life and property well beyond their immediate vicinity.

Cultural Resource. A historic, archaeological, tribal, or paleontological resource or human remains. Cultural resources include tribal cultural resources, as defined in California Public Resources Code Section 21074, regardless of whether a tribe is federally recognized.

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

Decibel. A unit used to express the relative intensity of a sound as it is heard by the human ear. The lowest volume a normal ear can detect under laboratory conditions is 0 decibel (dB), the threshold of human hearing. Since the decibel scale is logarithmic, 10 decibels are 10 times more intense and 20 decibels are 100 times more intense than 1 db.

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

Dedication. The turning over by an owner or developer of private land for public use, and the acceptance of land for such use by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses are often required by a city or county as conditions for approval of a development. (see “In-Lieu Fee”)

Density. The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land (du/acre). Densities specified in this General Plan are expressed in dwelling

units per net acreage, which excludes any land dedications, and not per gross acre. (see “Acreage, Gross” and “Acreage, Net”)

Development Review; Design Review. The comprehensive evaluation of a development and its impact on neighboring properties and the community as a whole, from the standpoint of site and landscape design, architecture, materials, colors, lighting, and signs, in accordance with a set of adopted criteria and standards.


Development. The physical extension and/or construction of non-farm land uses. Development activities include subdivision of land; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities, and other facilities; installation of septic systems; grading; deposit of refuse, debris, or fill materials; and clearing of natural vegetative cover (with the exception of agricultural activities). The construction of a single-family home on an existing lot, and routine repair and maintenance activities, are not considered development.

Disabled Person. A person determined to have a physical impairment or mental disorder, which is expected to be of a long, continued, or indefinite duration and is of such a nature that the person’s ability to live independently could be improved by more suitable housing conditions.

Duplex. A free-standing house divided into two separate living units or residences, usually having separate entrances.

Dwelling Unit. The place of customary abode of a person or household, which is either considered to be real property under State law or cannot be easily moved.

Ecologically Significant Resource Area. Land containing unique, representative, and/or sensitive habitats, communities, or ecological processes.



Ecosystem. An interacting system formed by a biotic community and its physical environment.

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

Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts. An economic development district that uses local property taxes to fund public and private projects that provide a benefit to the district. The district obtains funding for community projects through incremental tax. Tax increment financing works by “freezing tax revenues from a tax rate area in the interim base year and diverting forecasted tax revenue in future years (known as increment) to pay for improvements and/or pay back bonds.”³

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

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG). The implementation of a governance structure and reporting system that evaluates a company's performance related to environmental and social factors that go beyond the company's duty to maximize profits. Environmental metrics may include how well a company performs related to conserving energy, water, and other natural resources; protecting ecosystems and biodiversity; reducing carbon emissions; mitigating climate change; and promoting resilience. Social metrics include factors such as whether a company is union-friendly,

provides fair pay and leave, prioritizes worker health and safety, and proactively seeks a diverse workforce. Governance refers to how the company manages both the environmental and social aspects of its policies, programs, and reporting.

Equity. The state in which each individual or group is allocated the resources needed to reach an equal outcome.

Evacuation Route. A roadway designated in the General Plan as a potential recommended route to travel when evacuating from a hazardous condition.

Explosive. Any substance or combination of substances, the primary purpose of which is detonation or rapid combustion. (California Health and Safety Code)

Exposure. The presence of people, infrastructure, natural systems, and economic, cultural, and social resources in areas that are subject to harm.

Extreme Event. When a weather or climate variable exceeds the upper or lower thresholds of its observed range.

Extreme Heat. Temperatures that are hotter than 98 percent of the historical high temperatures for the area, as measured between the months of April and October during the period between 1961 and 1990. Across Contra Costa County, the extreme heat threshold is 96.6 degrees Fahrenheit (°F), although it varies from 87.1°F in Kensington to 102.4°F in Byron.

Farmers Market. A mobile or non-mobile market: (1) operated by a local government agency, one or more certified producers, or a nonprofit organization; (2) certified by and operating in a location approved by the County Agricultural Commissioner; and (3) where farmers sell directly to

³ State of California, “Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFDs),” <https://opzones.ca.gov/enhanced-infrastructure-financing-districts-eifds/>, accessed June 15, 2023.



consumers agricultural products or processed products made from agricultural products that the farmers grow themselves.

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

Fire Hazard Severity Zone. An area of significant fire hazard based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant hazards.

Flood, 100-Year. In any given year, a flood that has a 1 percent likelihood (a 1 in 100 chance) of occurring, and is recognized as a standard for acceptable risk. Also known as the "base flood."

Flood, 200-Year. In any given year, a flood that has a 0.5 percent likelihood (a 1 in 200 chance) of occurring. Senate Bill 5 requires a 200-year level of flood protection for urban communities in the Central Valley.

Flood, 500-Year. In any given year, a flood that has a 0.2 percent likelihood (a 1 in 500 chance) of occurring.

Floodplain. The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream regularly subject to flooding.

Floodway. The part of the floodplain capable of conveying the 100-year flood with no more than a 1-foot rise in water. The floodway includes the river channel itself and adjacent land areas.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The gross floor area of a building in square feet divided by gross land area, expressed as a decimal number. For example, a 60,000-square-foot building on a 120,000-square-foot parcel would have a floor area ratio of 0.50. The FAR is used in calculating the building intensity of nonresidential development.

Garden, Demonstration or Educational. Gardens operated by community organizations or educational institutions to serve an educational function,

such as teaching school children about vegetables or agriculture, or assisting property owners with drought-tolerant or fire-resistant landscaping choices.

Gateway. A unique transition point in topography or land use that serves as an entrance to a region of the county.

General Plan. A compendium of County policies regarding its long-term development, in the form of maps and accompanying text. The General Plan is a legal document required of each local agency by the State of California Government Code Section 65301 and adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory. A quantified list of a community's GHG emissions and sources.


Gleaning. Food recovery through collecting or harvesting of otherwise unused food for distribution to those in need.

Goal. A description of the general desired result sought by the County. Each goal has one or more policies and/or actions associated with the goal. (see "Policy" and "Action")

Graywater. Untreated wastewater that has not been affected by infectious, contaminated, or unhealthy bodily wastes and does not present a threat from contamination by unhealthful processing, manufacturing, or operating wastes.

Green Benefit District. A special district that provides additional maintenance and capital improvements for a variety of neighborhood enhancements, such as parks and open space, beautification, and sidewalks, beyond what is already provided by the local agency. Green Benefit Districts are funded by a direct assessment paid by property owners who benefit from the services provided.

Green Infrastructure. Stormwater management systems that filter and absorb stormwater where it falls. These systems use plants, soil, and



stormwater capture and reuse to store, infiltrate, or evapotranspire stormwater and reduce flows to wastewater systems or surface waters.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG). A gas that allows sunlight to pass through but reflect heat radiated from the earth's surface, trapping heat in the lower atmosphere. Common GHGs include water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O). They may be emitted by natural or human processes.

Groundwater. Water that exists beneath the earth's surface, typically found between saturated soils and rock, and is used to supply wells and springs.

Growth Management. Ensuring that future residential, business, and commercial growth pays for the facilities required to meet the demands resulting from that growth.

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

Hazard. An event or physical condition that has the potential to cause fatalities, injuries, property damage, infrastructure damage, agricultural losses, damage to the environment, interruption of business, or other types of harm or loss.

Hazard Mitigation. Sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property through actions that reduce hazard, exposure, and vulnerability.

Hazardous Material, Hazardous Waste: A substance or waste that, because of its physical, chemical, or other characteristics, may pose a risk of

endangering human health or safety or of degrading the environment. This does not include household hazardous waste, universal waste, or electronic waste, as they do not contain the quantity, concentration, and/or types of products significant enough to pose a substantial risk to human health and safety or to the environment.

Hazardous Waste Facility. All contiguous land and structures, or other appurtenances, and improvements on land used for the treatment, transfer, storage, resource recovery, disposal, or recycling of hazardous waste that require a Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) permit for treatment, storage, and disposal facilities (i.e., treatment, storage, and disposal facility [TSDF] permit).

Health Equity. The state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health.⁴

Heat Wave. An event with five extreme heat days in a row.

Household. All persons occupying one dwelling unit.

HUB Zone. A program that helps small businesses gain preferential access to federal supportive services and opportunities.

Impact, Climate. The effects (especially the negative effects) of a hazard or other condition associated with climate change.

Impact Fee. A fee charged to a developer by a jurisdiction according to the proposed development project, typically by number of units, square footage, or acreage. The fee is often used to offset costs incurred by the municipality

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Health Equity," <https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/whatis/index.html#:~:text=Health%20equity%20is%20the%20state.health%20and%20health%20care%3B%20and>, accessed June 15, 2023.



for services and infrastructure such as schools, roads, police and fire services, and parks.

Impacted Community. An area, typically low-income, that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation. This is the term Contra Costa County uses in place of “disadvantaged communities,” as named in Senate Bill (SB) 1000. SB 1000 defines disadvantaged communities per Health and Safety Code Section 39711, specifying CalEnviroScreen as the primary screening method for identifying these communities. In this General Plan, Census tracts with a cumulative CalEnviroScreen score of 72 or higher are considered to be Impacted Communities.

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

Implementation. Actions, procedures, programs, or techniques that carry out a plan.

Infill Development. Development that occurs on vacant or underutilized land within areas that are already largely developed.

In-Lieu Fee. Cash payments that may be required of an owner or developer as a substitute for a dedication of land for public use, usually calculated in dollars per lot, and referred to as in-lieu fees or in-lieu contributions. (see “Dedication”)

Land Use. The occupation or use of an area of land for any human activity or purpose.

Land Use Designation. One particular category in a classification series of appropriate use of properties established by the General Plan Land Use Element.

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

Landslide. Movement of soil and/or rock down a slope, which typically occurs during an earthquake or following heavy rainfall.


Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). A voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing and rating high-performance, sustainable “green” buildings. LEED provides a complete framework for assessing building performance and meeting sustainability goals, such as water savings, energy-efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. LEED standards are currently available or under development for new commercial construction and major renovation projects, existing building operations, commercial interiors projects, core and shell projects, and homes.

Leq, Equivalent Sound Level. The average of sound energy occurring over a specified period. The Leq is equivalent to the same average acoustical energy as the time-varying sound that actually occurs during a specified period.

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

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

Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). A five- or seven-member commission within each county that reviews and evaluates all proposals for



formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts, and merger of districts with cities. Each county's LAFCO is empowered to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve such proposals.

Major Project. A General Plan amendment, rezoning, major subdivision, or nonresidential development of 25,000 square feet or more. (see "Subdivision, Major")

Micromobility/Microtransit. Transportation via small, lightweight vehicles operated by the driver, such as electric scooters and bicycles. Vehicles typically do not exceed 15 miles per hour and are often available for rent for short-range travel within a defined area.

Military Operations Areas. A three-dimensional airspace designated for military training and transport activities that have a defined floor (minimum altitude) and ceiling (maximum altitude).

Mitigation. Modification to avoid, reduce, minimize, or eliminate a negative impact. There are various types of mitigation, including environmental impact mitigation, hazard mitigation, GHG emissions mitigation, and more.

Mixed Use. Any mixture of land uses, including mixtures of residences with commercial, offices with retail, or visitor accommodation with offices and retail. As distinguished from a single-use land use designation or zone, mixed use refers to an authorized variety of uses for buildings and structures in a particular area.

Mobile Home. A structure, transportable in one or more sections, built on a permanent chassis and designed for use as a single-family dwelling unit and which: (1) has a minimum of 400 square feet of living space; (2) has a minimum width in excess of 102 inches; (3) is connected to all available permanent utilities; and (4) is tied down (a) to a permanent foundation on a

lot either owned or leased by the homeowner or (b) is set on piers, with wheels removed and skirted, in a mobile home park.

Mobile Home Park. A parcel of land under one owner that has been planned and improved for the placement of two or more mobile homes for rental purposes for nontransient use.

Mode Share. The percentage of travelers using a certain type of transportation, such as walking, biking, taking transit, or driving a vehicle.

Municipality. An incorporated city or town.

Natural and Working Lands. Lands not covered by buildings or structures, including forests, grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, rangelands, farmlands, wetlands, coastal areas, and the green spaces in urban and built environments. These lands provide food and fiber, clean air, water, and other resources and benefits.

Near Zero-Emissions Vehicle. A vehicle that uses zero-emission technologies, enables technologies that provide a pathway to zero-emissions operations, or incorporates other technologies that significantly reduce criteria pollutants, toxic air contaminants, and GHG emissions. (California Health and Safety Code Section 44258(c))

Neighborhood. Relatively large residential areas that have some common characteristics, such as a common history, common physical characteristics (e.g., architectural style), a common meeting place, or more intangible characteristics (e.g., a psychological sense of cohesion), or clear physical boundaries (e.g., waterways or major roads).

Neighborhood Kitchen. A shared, commercial-scale kitchen space that is organized by a neighborhood or community group to facilitate safe food production by community members, such as for soup kitchens, community events, or small-scale cottage food industry operations.



Neighborhood-Serving Retail Use. A small-scale business providing goods and services necessary for the day-to-day maintenance of a household (e.g., butchers or bakers).

Noise Contour. A line connecting points of equal noise level as measured on the same scale.

Noise-Sensitive Use. A location where people reside or where the presence of unwanted sound could adversely affect the use of land, such as residences, schools, and hospitals.

Non-Conforming Use. A use that was valid when brought into existence, but no longer permitted by later regulation. “Non-conforming use” is a generic term and includes: (1) non-conforming structures (because their size, type of construction, location on land, or proximity to other structures is no longer permitted); (2) non-conforming use of a conforming building; (3) non-conforming use of a non-conforming building; and (4) non-conforming use of land. Any use lawfully existing on any piece of property that is inconsistent with a new or amended General Plan, and that in turn is a violation of a Zoning Ordinance amendment subsequently adopted in conformance with the General Plan, will be a non-conforming use. Typically, non-conforming uses are permitted to continue, subject to certain restrictions.

Non-Essential Idling. Operation of a vehicle while it is stationary when none of the following circumstances are met: the vehicle is stuck in traffic; idling is necessary to inspect or service the vehicle; the vehicle is transferring power via a power-takeoff device; the vehicle can't move due to adverse weather conditions or mechanical failure; the vehicle is a bus with passengers on board. See California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Section 2485 for a full definition.

On-Site Wastewater Treatment System. A multi-stage system that collects, treats, and disperses wastewater generated on an individual site. On-site

wastewater treatment systems typically include a septic tank and disposal field.

Opportunity Zone. Economically distressed communities that have experienced a lack of investment for decades, defined by the federal government by Census tract. These areas may qualify for preferential tax treatment on new investments to incentivize investment in the community.

Overlay. A land use or zoning designation that modifies the basic underlying designation or designations in some specific manner.

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


Planned Unit Development. A description of a proposed unified development, consisting at a minimum of a map and adopted ordinance setting forth the governing regulations, and the location and phasing of all proposed uses and improvements to be included in the development.

Pocket Park. A small park, typically less than a quarter acre in size.

Policy. A specific statement that guides decision making as the County works to achieve a goal. Policies represent statements of County regulation and set the standards used by decision makers when considering proposed development and actions. A policy is ongoing and requires no further action (see “Goal”).

Protected Open Space. Natural habitat and other open space areas that are protected from development by ownership, deed restrictions, conservation easements, land dedications, and/or other techniques.

Reach Code. A local municipal code that exceeds the State Building Code requirements. A reach code must be at least as stringent as the State Code, cost-effective, approved by the California Energy Commission, and updated and re-approved with each State Energy Code update.



Remediation. Restoration of contaminated areas to protect human health and the environment.

Resilience. The capacity of any entity—an individual, community, organization, or natural system—to prepare for disruptions, recover from shocks and stresses, and adapt and grow from a disruptive experience. Community resilience is the ability of communities to withstand, recover, and learn from past disasters to strengthen future response and recovery efforts.

Resilience Center. A well-used community-serving facility with year-round programming that also provides local communities with shelter, water, and electricity during hazardous events or disasters.

Riparian. A habitat and vegetation zone that is associated with the banks and floodplains of a river, stream, or lake. Riparian trees and shrubs are typically phreatophytes, plants whose root systems are in constant contact with groundwater.

Risk. The potential for damage or loss created by the interaction of hazards with assets such as buildings, infrastructure, or natural and cultural resources.

Safe Routes to Schools. Pedestrian and bicycling routes that provide safe access to and from schools.

Scenic Corridor. Land that is visible from, adjacent to, and outside a roadway right-of-way, and is made up primarily of scenic and natural features. Topography, vegetation, viewing distance, and/or jurisdictional lines determine the corridor boundaries.

Sea-Level Rise. The worldwide average rise in mean sea level, which may be due to a number of different causes, such as the thermal expansion of sea

water and the addition of water to the oceans from the melting of glaciers, ice caps, and ice sheets.

Seniors. People 65 years of age or older.

Sensitive Receptor. A use that is highly sensitive to impacts from other uses, including homes, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, childcare centers, senior centers, hospitals, and long-term health care facilities.

Sensitivity. The level to which a species, natural system, community, or government would be affected by changing climate conditions.

Separated Bikeway (Class IV facility). A bikeway for the exclusive use of bicycles that are physically separated from vehicle traffic. (Also called cycle tracks and protected bikeways.) (see also “Bikeway”)

Severe Ground Shaking. Intense ground movement resulting from the transmission of seismic waves during an earthquake.

Social Vulnerability. The susceptibility of a given population to harm from exposure to a hazard, directly affecting its ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover.

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

Sphere of Influence. The probable physical boundaries and service area of a municipality or special district, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission of the county.



State Responsibility Area. The area where the State of California has primary financial responsibility for the prevention and response to wildland fires.

Strip commercial. A linear pattern of retail businesses along a major roadway, usually characterized by single-story buildings with prominent parking lots visible from the roadway, multiple driveways, large signs, and a dependency on automobiles for access and circulation.

Structure. Anything constructed or erected on and permanently attached to land and with a roof supported by columns or walls, except buildings intended for human occupancy. (see “Building”)

Subdivision. The division of any unit or units of improved or unimproved land for the purpose of sale, lease, or financing. Major subdivisions yield five or more lots, while minor subdivisions yield four lots or fewer.

Substandard. A housing condition that endangers the life, limb, property, safety, or welfare of the occupants or general public.

Sustainability. Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Sustainable Streets. “Multimodal rights-of-way designed and operated to create benefits relating to movement, ecology, and community that together support a broad sustainability agenda embracing the three Es: environment, equity, and economy.”⁵

Townhouse/Townhome. A series of residences, often two to three stories in height, that are connected side by side in a row, each having a separate street-level entrance.

Toxic Air Contaminant. An air pollutant that may cause or contribute to an increase in serious illness, or that may pose a present or potential hazard to human health, according to California Health and Safety Code Section 39655.

Traffic Calming. Measures designed to reduce motor vehicle speeds and to encourage pedestrian use, including narrow streets, tight turning radii, sidewalk bulbouts, parking bays, textured paving at intersections, and parkways between sidewalks and streets.

Triplex. A free-standing house divided into three separate living units or residences, usually having separate entrances.

Unincorporated Area. Encompasses properties that are outside of municipalities. Development in the unincorporated area is subject to County jurisdiction.


Universal Waste. Hazardous substances that are widely produced by households and many different types of businesses, including batteries, pesticides, mercury-containing equipment, lamps, and aerosol cans.

Unstable Slope. A very steep hillside that does not have a substantial root system and/or soil type to prevent landslides or other geologic hazards.

Urban Agriculture. The practice of growing and processing fresh food in an urban area.

Urban Heat Island. The phenomenon in which large urban areas experience higher temperatures, greater pollution, and more negative health impacts during hot months due to a combination of heat-absorptive surfaces, heat-generating activities, and the absence of vegetation.

⁵ Greenberg, Ellen J., “Sustainable Streets: Foundations for an Emerging Practice,” 2009, Washington, DC: Transportation Research Board 88th Annual Meeting.



Urban Limit Line. A political boundary approved by Contra Costa County voters to limit urban development to defined areas of the county while preserving farmland, watersheds, and open space outside those areas.

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 County Zoning Ordinance and General Plan land use designations.

Utility Corridor. Rights-of-way or easements for utility lines on either publicly or privately owned property.

Vertiport. A facility or area designated for use by electric, hydrogen, or hybrid vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft.

Vulnerability. The degree to which natural, built, and human systems are susceptible “...to harm from exposure to stresses associated with environmental and social change and from the absence of capacity to adapt.”⁶

Vulnerability Assessment. An analysis of how a changing climate may harm a community and which elements—people, buildings and structures, resources, and other assets—are most vulnerable to its effects based on an assessment of exposure, sensitivity, the potential impact(s), and the community’s adaptive capacity.

Wastewater. Water that contains other elements, such as excess water from drainage or piping systems, small pathogens, organic matter, and inorganic contaminants. This term is also used to refer to water generated in industrial plants and commercial activity.

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

Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). An area that includes houses and wildland vegetation, creating a significant threat to human life or property from wildfires. The WUI is comprised of three distinct zones:

1. The **intermix zone** contains housing development or improved parcels interspersed in an area dominated by wildland vegetation subject to wildfire.
2. The **interface zone** contains dense housing next to vegetation that can burn in a wildfire, but is not dominated by wildland vegetation.
3. The **influence zone** contains wildfire-susceptible vegetation within 1.5 miles from the intermix and interface zones.

Xeriscape. Landscaping with an emphasis on water conservation and efficiency.

Zero Emission Vehicle. A vehicle that does not produce emissions when in operation, including battery-electric vehicles and hydrogen fuel-cell electric vehicles.

Zoning. The division of a county by ordinance or other legislative regulation into districts or zones that specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings constructed in these areas. Zoning implements the land use policies of the General Plan.

⁶ Neil Adger, “Vulnerability,” *Global Environmental Change* 16 (2006): 268–281, https://www.geos.ed.ac.uk/~nabo/meetings/glthec/materials/simpson/GEC_sdarticle2.pdf



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