A glossary is “a collection of ... terms limited to a special area of knowledge or usage.” This glossary, taken from The California General Plan Glossary (California Planning Roundtable, 1990, 1997, 2001), defines over 400 terms used in preparing and writing general plans in California, as adapted to Walnut Creek.

For some, the expressions and terms used in the planning process are new; others know what they mean, but interpret them with variations. Because the General Plan is such a comprehensive and overriding policy document, it is critical that all participants in the planning process, and all those who will use the Plan, have a common understanding of what the more frequently used terms mean. The job of the glossary is to ensure that every user understands the Plan and interprets it in the same way.

### ABBREVIATIONS

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABAG</td>
<td>Association of Bay Area Governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Americans with Disabilities Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADT</td>
<td>Average daily trips made by vehicles or persons in a 24-hour period</td>
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<td>BART</td>
<td>Bay Area Rapid Transit District</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMR</td>
<td>Below-market-rate dwelling unit</td>
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<td>CCTA</td>
<td>Contra Costa Transportation Authority</td>
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<td>CCCTA</td>
<td>Central Contra Costa Transit Authority</td>
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<td>California Environmental Quality Act</td>
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<td>Capital Improvements Program</td>
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<td>Community Noise Equivalent Level</td>
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<td>CMP</td>
<td>Congestion Management Plan</td>
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<td>dB</td>
<td>Decibel</td>
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<td>dBA</td>
<td>“A-weighted” decibel</td>
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<td>EIR</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Report</td>
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<td>FAR</td>
<td>Floor Area Ratio</td>
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<td>FEMA</td>
<td>Federal Emergency Management Agency</td>
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<td>FIRM</td>
<td>Flood Insurance Rate Map</td>
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<td>HCD</td>
<td>Housing and Community Development Department of the State of California</td>
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<td>High Occupancy Vehicle</td>
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<td>LAFCO</td>
<td>Local Agency Formation Commission</td>
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<td>$L_{dn}$</td>
<td>Day and Night Average Sound Level</td>
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<td>$L_{eq}$</td>
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<td>LOS</td>
<td>Level of Service</td>
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<td>MTC</td>
<td>Metropolitan Transportation Commission</td>
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<td>NEPA</td>
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<td>Office of Planning and Research, State of California</td>
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<td>PUD</td>
<td>Planned Unit Development</td>
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<td>SOI</td>
<td>Sphere of Influence</td>
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<td>SRO</td>
<td>Single Room Occupancy</td>
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<td>TDM</td>
<td>Transportation Demand Management</td>
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<td>TDR</td>
<td>Transfer of Development Rights</td>
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<td>TSM</td>
<td>Transportation Systems Management</td>
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<td>UBC</td>
<td>Uniform Building Code</td>
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<td>UHC</td>
<td>Uniform Housing Code</td>
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<td>VMT</td>
<td>Vehicle Miles Traveled</td>
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<td>WCMC</td>
<td>Walnut Creek Municipal Code</td>
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* Not adopted as part of General Plan 2025
DEFINITIONS

511 Contra Costa
A comprehensive transportation demand management program for Contra Costa County, which promotes alternatives to the single occupant vehicle.

Action
An action, activity, or strategy carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve a particular goal or objective.

Active Recreation
(See “Recreation, Active.”)

Agricultural Preserve
Land designated for agriculture or conservation.
(See “Williamson Act.”)

Alluvial
Soils deposited by stream action.

Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Act, Earthquake Fault Zone
A state designated seismic hazard zone along traces of potentially and recently active faults, in which specialized geologic investigations must be prepared before approval of certain types of new development.

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

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

Archaeological
Relating to the material remains of past human life, culture, or activities.

Areas of Interest
Lands or areas having a direct physical and social influence on a city’s planning area but not appropriate for annexation.

Arterial
A street, two to six lanes wide, which serves as the network for through traffic flow. Arterials are intended to carry high volumes of traffic and provide a means to divert traffic from local streets. (WCMC, §10-2.1.303, No. 142c.)

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.

Assessment District; 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 financing mechanism for providing public infrastructure as allowed under the Streets and Highways Code.

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 and 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.

Buildout; 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).”)

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

Caltrans
California Department of Transportation.
Appendix A, Glossary

Capital Improvements Program (CIP)
A program, administered by a city or county and reviewed by its Planning Commission. The CIP schedules permanent improvements, usually for a minimum of five years in the future, to fit the projected fiscal capability of the local jurisdiction. The CIP generally is reviewed annually (every two years in some cities) for conformance 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.”)

Census
The official decennial enumeration of the population conducted by the federal government.

Channelization
(1) The straightening and/or deepening of a watercourse for purposes of storm-runoff control or ease of navigation. Channelization often includes lining of stream banks with a retaining material such as concrete. (2) At the intersection of roadways, the directional separation of traffic lanes with curbs or raised islands that limit the paths that vehicles may take through the intersection.

Chaparral
An ecological community of shrubby plants.

Character
Special physical characteristics of a structure or area that set it apart from its surroundings and contribute to its individuality. (See “Identity.”)

Circulation Element
One of the seven State-mandated elements of a local general plan, it contains adopted goals, policies, and action 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
City with a capital “C” generally refers to the government or administration of a city. City with a lower case “c” may mean any city or may refer to the geographical area of a city (e.g., the city bikeway system.)

Clustered Development
Development in which a number of dwelling units are placed in closer proximity than usual, or are attached, with the purpose of retaining an open space area.

Collector
A road designed to move traffic between arterials and local streets. For the most part, collectors are two-lane streets with wider rights-of-way than local residential or business streets. In some cases, especially in commercial areas, collector streets may provide four travel lanes. (WMC, §10-2.1.303, No. 142d.)

Commercial
Generally, a land use classification that allows facilities for the buying and selling of commodities and services. (See detailed land use descriptions in Chapter 4, Built Environment.)

Community
An interacting population living and/or working in a common location; broadly, the area itself.

Community Center
A public facility in which educational, therapeutic, and/or recreational programs are provided.

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

Compatible
Capable of existing together without conflict or ill effects.

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. AB 1791, effective August 1, 1990, requires all cities to adopt and annually update a Congestion Management Plan.

Conservation
The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect. The state mandates that a Conservation Element be included in the general plan.

Conservation Element
One of the seven State-mandated elements of a local general plan, it contains adopted goals, policies, and action 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, Consistent With
Free from significant variation or contradiction. California State law requires that a general plan be internally consistent and requires consistency between a general plan and implementation measures such as the zoning ordinance. The various diagrams, text, goals, policies, and action programs in the general plan must be consistent with each other, not contradictory or preferential. The term “consistent with” is used interchangeably with “conformity with.” The courts have held that the phrase “consistent with” means “agreement with; harmonious with.” Webster defines “conformity with” as meaning harmony, agreement when used with “with.” The term “conformity” means in harmony therewith or agreeable to (Sec 58 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 21, 25 [1975]).

Creek
(1) Any natural watercourse noted on the most recent United States Geological Survey Blue Line Survey Maps available for viewing in the Community Development Department. (WCMC, §10-2.3.402.A.)
(2) A stream smaller than a river. (See “Stream” and “Intermittent Stream.”)

Critical Facility
Facilities housing or serving many people, which are necessary in the event of an earthquake, flood, or other disaster, such as hospitals, fire, police, and emergency service facilities, utility “lifeline” facilities, such as water, electricity, and gas supply, sewage disposal, and communications and transportation facilities.

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

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

dB
Decibel; a unit used to express the relative intensity of a sound as the human ear hears it.

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

Dedication, In lieu of
(See “In Lieu Fees.”)

Deficiency Plan
An action program for improving or preventing the deterioration of level of service on the Congestion Management Agency street and highway network.
Density, Residential
The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. Densities specified in the General Plan may be expressed in units per net developable acre.

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 as modified by SB1818 in 2004, a housing development that provides 10 percent of its units for lower income households, or 5 percent of its units for very low-income households, or 10 percent of the units in a condominium development for moderate-income households, or any senior citizen housing development, is entitled to a density bonus and at least one other specified incentive.

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/acre).

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. “Design Review” usually refers to a system set up outside of the zoning ordinance—as is the case of Walnut Creek—whereby projects are reviewed against certain standards and criteria by a specially established Design Review Commission.

Detention Dam/Basin/Pond
Dams may be classified according to the broad function they serve, such as storage, diversion, or detention. Detention dams are constructed to retard flood runoff and minimize the effect of sudden floods. Detention dams fall into two main types. In one type, the water is temporarily stored, and released through an outlet structure at a rate which will not exceed the carrying capacity of the channel downstream. Often, the basins are planted with grass and used for open space or recreation in periods of dry weather. The other type, most often called a Retention Pond, allows for water to be held as long as possible and may or may not allow for the controlled release of water. In some cases, the water is allowed to seep into the permeable banks or gravel strata in the foundation. This latter type is sometimes called a Water-Spreading Dam or Dike because its main purpose is to recharge the underground water supply. Detention dams are also constructed to trap sediment. These are often called Debris Dams.

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
(1) Any improvement of real property which requires the approval of a subdivision, design review approval, a conditional use permit, a minor use permit, a planned development permit, a variance, a grading permit, a site development permit, a demolition permit, or a building permit. (WMC, §3-8.02.c.) (2) The physical extension or construction of urban land uses, excluding routine repair and maintenance.

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. For example, one development right may equal one unit of housing or may equal a specific number of square feet of gross floor area in one or more specified zone districts.

Disability; Disabled
Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual, or a record of such impairment; being regarded as having such impairment.
Appendix A, Glossary

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.

Diversion
The direction of water in a stream away from its natural course (i.e., as in a diversion that removes water from a stream for human use).

Diversity
Differences among otherwise similar elements that give them unique forms and qualities. E.g., housing diversity can be achieved by differences in unit size, tenure, or cost.

Duplex
A detached building under single ownership that is designed for occupation as the residence of two families living independently of each other.

Dwelling
A building designed exclusively for residential occupancy, including single-family, duplex, and multifamily dwellings, but not including a tent, cabin, hotel, motel, boardinghouse, recreational vehicle, motor home, or trailer. (WCMC, §10-2.1.303, No. 53.)

Dwelling Unit
One or more rooms served by a single common kitchen, designed for occupancy by one family for living and sleeping purposes. (Second family residential units are exempt from this definition.) (WCMC, §10-2.1.303, No. 57.)

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 land owner. These may be positive rights (providing the public with the opportunity to hunt, fish, hike, or ride over the land), or they may be restrictive rights (limiting the uses to which the land owner may devote the land in the future.)

Elderly
Persons age 62 and older. (See “Seniors.”)

Element
A major subdivision of a general plan. State law requires seven basic elements in a general plan. General Plan 2025 is organized into chapters and sections. A table in the introductory chapter shows where the seven basic elements are found.

Encourage, v.
To stimulate or foster a particular condition through direct or indirect action by the private sector or government agencies.

Enhance, v.
To improve existing conditions by increasing the quantity or quality of beneficial uses or features.

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

Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
A report required of general plans by the California Environmental Quality Act 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. (See “California Environmental Quality Act.”)

Fault
A fracture in the earth’s crust forming a boundary between rock masses that have shifted. An active fault is one that shows evidence of movement during the last 3,000,000 years.

Finding(s)
The result(s) of an investigation and the basis upon which decisions are made. Government agents and bodies use findings to justify action the entity plans to take.

Fire Hazard Zone
An area where, due to slope, fuel, weather, or other fire-related conditions, the potential loss of life and property from a fire necessitates special fire protection measures and planning before development occurs.
Appendix A, Glossary

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

Flood Plain
The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream regularly subject to flooding. The Federal Insurance Administration designates that part of the flood plain subject to a one percent chance of flooding in any given year as an “area of special flood hazard.”

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

Floor Area, Gross
The total area of all floors in a building as measured to the outside surfaces of exterior walls or to the centerline of common walls, excluding crawl spaces, garages, carports, breezeways, attics without floors, and open porches, balconies, and terraces.” (See WCMC, §10-2.1.303, No. 61, for additional details.)

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)
The ratio of developed gross floor area to net lot area, both expressed in square feet. (WCMC, §10-2.1.303, No. 63.) (Note: FAR is determined by taking the gross floor area permitted on a site and dividing by the total net area of the site, and expressing the result as a decimal to one or two places. In the diagram below, on a site with 10,000 net sq. ft. of land area, a Floor Area Ratio of 1.0 would allow a maximum of 10,000 gross sq. ft. of floor area to be built. An FAR of 0.5 would allow only 5,000 sq. ft. FAR is typically applied on a parcel-by-parcel basis as opposed to an average FAR for an entire land use area or zoning district.)

Diagrammatic Examples of Floor Area Ratios

Freeway
A high-speed, high-capacity, limited-access transportation facility designed with four or more travel lanes. The two freeways in Walnut Creek are Interstate 680 and State Route 24. (WCMC, §10-2.1.303, No. 142a.)

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

General Plan
A compendium of City policies on the city’s long-term development, in the form of maps and accompanying text. The General Plan is a legal document required of each city and county by the State of California (Government Code §65301) and adopted by the City Council or Board of Supervisors. The General Plan has seven mandatory elements (Circulation, Conservation, Housing, Land Use, Noise, Open Space, and Safety) and may include any number of optional elements (such as Air Quality, Economic Development, Hazardous Waste, or Parks and Recreation). The General Plan may also be called a “City Plan,” “Comprehensive Plan,” or “Master Plan.”
Goal
A general, overall, and ultimate purpose, aim, or end toward which the City will direct effort during the 20-year timeframe of the General Plan.

Green
A term that describes environmental practices and buildings that are more energy-efficient and have a minimal impact on the environment. – GreenBiz.com, 11-09-04

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

Groundwater Recharge
The natural process of infiltration and percolation of rainwater from land areas or streams through permeable soils into water-holding rocks that provide underground storage (“aquifers”).

Grove
Three or more trees of any size which are part of an integral cover with stems having an aggregate circumference of forty inches or more measured four and a half feet above the natural grade. (WCMC, §3-8.02.g.)

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

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

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

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

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)
Any vehicle other than a driver-only automobile or truck (e.g., a vanpool, a bus, a motorcycle, or two or more persons in a car or truck).

Hillsides
Land that has an average percent of slope equal to or exceeding 15 percent.

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

Household
All those persons—related or unrelated—who occupy a single housing unit.

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 two households share one existing unit. Thus, while household formation can continue to take place even without an increase in population, it nevertheless increases 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.

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 action programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. Under State law, Housing Elements must be updated every five years.
Appendix A, Glossary

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

Identity
A consistent quality that makes a city, place, area, or building unique and gives it a distinguishing character. (See “Character.”)

Impact
The effect of any direct human actions, or of any indirect repercussions of human undertakings, 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 §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.

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

Implementation
Actions, procedures, programs, or techniques that carry out policies.

Incubator Space
Retail or industrial space that is affordable to new, low-margin businesses.

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

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

In Lieu Fees
Cash payments — referred to as in lieu fees or in lieu contributions — that may be required of an owner or developer as a substitute for (1) a dedication of land, usually calculated in dollars per lot, or (2) the provision of affordable housing.

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).

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 action 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.

L10
A statistical descriptor indicating peak noise levels—the sound level exceeded 10 percent of the time. It is a commonly used descriptor of community noise, and has been used in Federal Highway Administration standards and the standards of some cities and counties.

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

Landscaping
Planting — including trees, shrubs, and ground covers — suitably designed, selected, installed, and maintained as to enhance a site or roadway permanently.
Appendix A, Glossary

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

Land Use Category
In the general plan system for classifying and designating which uses may be conducted on properties, the name assigned to a district specifying the uses allowed in that district.

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 to 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).

Lands of Interest
(See “Areas of Interest.”)

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

L_{eq}
The energy equivalent level, defined as the average sound level based on sound energy (or sound pressure squared). The L_{eq} is a “dosage” type measure and is the basis for the descriptors used in current standards, such as the 24-hour CNEL used by the State of California.

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.

Delay index
A measurement of the observed travel time divided by the free flow travel time.

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 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.

Linkage
(1) 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. (See “In Lie Fee.”) The linkage program must establish the cause-and-effect relationship between a new commercial or industrial development and the increased demand for housing. (2) With respect to economic policy, “linkage” refers to ways of marketing or doing business.
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Liquefaction
The transformation of loose water-saturated granular materials (such as sand or silt) from a solid into a liquid state. A type of ground failure that can occur 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. 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.

Local Streets
(See “Streets, Local.”)

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. (See “Land Use Element.”)

Median Strip
The dividing area, either paved or landscaped, between opposing lanes of traffic on a roadway.

Microclimate
The climate of a small, distinct area, such as a city street or a building’s courtyard; can be favorably altered through functional landscaping, architecture, or other design features.

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

Minipark
Small park of approximately one acre or less.

Mitigate, v.
To ameliorate, alleviate, or avoid to the extent reasonably feasible.

Mixed-use
Generally, the combining of various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, and residential, in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development with significant functional interrelationships and a coherent physical design. “Single site” may include a number of contiguous properties.

Multifamily unit
A dwelling unit in a multifamily building. (See “Residential, Multifamily.”)

Municipal Services
Services traditionally provided by local government agencies, including water and sewer, roads, parks, schools, and police and fire protection.

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

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

Natural State
The condition existing prior to development.

Neighborhood
A residential area focused around parks, schools, or other amenities that identify and serve the area, with arterial streets at the perimeter. The “neighborhood unit” was a basic building block of American cities and suburbs from 1930 to 1970. Commercial uses were restricted to perimeter arterials and intersections.

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

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

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

**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 action programs to reduce the community’s exposure to noise.

**Non-attainment**
The condition of not achieving a desired or required level of performance. Frequently used in reference to air quality.

**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. Government Code §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 action 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. (California Government Code §65560(b))

**Ordinance**
A law or regulation set forth and adopted by a City.

**Overlay**
A land use designation on the Land Use Map, or a zoning designation on a zoning map, that modifies the basic underlying designation in some specific manner.

**Ozone**
A tri-atomic form of oxygen (O\(_3\)) created naturally in the upper atmosphere by a photochemical reaction with solar ultraviolet radiation. In the lower atmosphere, ozone is a recognized air pollutant that is not emitted directly into the environment, but is formed by complex chemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen and reactive organic compounds in the presence of sunlight, and becomes a major agent in the formation of smog.

**Para-transit**
Refers to transportation services and that operate vehicles, such as buses, jitneys, taxis, and vans for senior citizens, and/or mobility-impaired.

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

**Parking, Shared**
A public or private parking area used jointly by two or more uses. The number of parking spaces supplied is less than the total needed for each individual use.

**Parking Management**
An evolving TDM technique designed to obtain maximum use of 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.”)

**Parkland, Park Land**
Land that is publicly owned or controlled for the purpose of providing parks, recreation, or open space for public use.

**Parks**
Open space lands whose primary purpose is recreation. (See “Open Space Land,” “Community Park,” and “Neighborhood Park.”)
Passive Recreation
(See “Recreation, Passive.”)

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
(1) 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. (2) Standards set by government agencies to measure the quality or effectiveness of municipal services, such as police, fire, or library.

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

Plan Line
A precise line that establishes future rights-of-way along any portion of an existing or proposed street or highway and 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)
A description of a proposed unified development, consisting at a minimum of a map and adopted ordinance setting forth the regulations governing, and the location and phasing of all proposed uses and improvements to be included in the development.

Planning Area
The Planning Area is the land area addressed by the General Plan. Except for venturing into Concord at one point, the Walnut Creek Planning Area boundary coincides with the Sphere of Influence.

Planning Commission
A body of seven members, created by the City in compliance with Government Code §65100. The code requires the assignment of the planning functions of the City to a planning department, Planning Commission, hearing officers, and/or the City Council itself, as deemed appropriate by the City Council.

Policy
A specific statement of principle or guidance that implies clear commitment; a specific direction the City elects to follow in order to meet its goals.

Pollutant
Any introduced gas, liquid, or solid that makes a resource unfit for its normal or usual purpose.

Pollution
The presence of matter or energy whose nature, location, or quantity produces undesired environmental effects.

Preserve, v.
To keep safe from destruction or decay; to maintain or keep intact. (See “Maintain.”)

Principle
An assumption, fundamental rule, or doctrine that will guide general plan policies, proposals, standards, and implementation measures. Government Code §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; Action Program
(See “Action.”)

Program EIR
Under the California Environmental Quality Act, an Environmental Impact Report prepared for a general (non-specific) plan. Unlike a Project EIR, a Program EIR is not intended to address impacts of individual projects that may be proposed under the general plan evaluated by the Program EIR. Where a Program EIR is prepared, individual projects will require separate environmental review when and as they are proposed.
Appendix A, Glossary

Protect, v.
To maintain and preserve beneficial uses in their present condition as nearly as possible. (See “Enhance.”)

Public and Quasi-public Facilities
Institutional, academic, governmental and community service uses, either publicly owned or operated by nonprofit organizations.

Public Transit
(See “Transit, Public.”)

Public Spaces
Areas open to and used by the public, whether held in public ownership or not. The degree of public accessibility and use will vary, depending on the nature and ownership of the public space.

Reconstruction
As used in historic preservation, the process of reproducing by new construction the exact form and detail of a vanished structure, or part thereof, as it appeared during a specific time period. Reconstruction is often undertaken when the property is essential to understanding and interpreting the value of a historic district, and sufficient documentation exists to insure an exact reproduction of the original.

Recreation, Active
A type of recreation or activity that requires the use of organized play areas including, but not limited to, fields and courts for softball, baseball, volleyball, soccer, tennis, and basketball courts and swimming pools and designated areas for various forms of children’s play equipment.

Recreation, Passive
A type of recreation or activity that does not require the use of organized play areas, including, but not limited to, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, and picnicking.

Recycle, v.
The process of extraction and reuse of materials from waste products.

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

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

Rehabilitation
The repair, preservation, and/or improvement of structures, usually used with respect to substandard housing.

Residential
Land designated in the General Plan and zoning ordinance for buildings consisting only of dwelling units.

Residential, Multifamily
Land use classifications and zoning districts that permit on a single site, a “structure containing more than one dwelling unit sharing common walls or being otherwise attached, including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, apartments, and single room occupancy facilities (SRO).” (See WCMC §10-2.1.403[A][8].) (Note: Multifamily dwelling units on a single site may be in the same or separate buildings.)

Residential, Single-family
Land use classifications and zoning districts that permit on a single site, “a structure containing one dwelling unit located on a single lot. This classification includes mobile homes and manufactured housing.” (See WCMC §10-2.1.403[A][8].)

Resources, Non-renewable
Refers to natural resources, such as fossil fuels and natural gas, which, once used, cannot be replaced and used again.

Restore, v.
To renew, rebuild, or reconstruct to a former state.

Retention Basin/Retention Pond
(See “Detention Basin/Detention Pond.”)

Retrofit, v.
To add materials and/or devices to an existing building or system to improve its operation, safety, or efficiency. Buildings have been retrofitted to use solar energy and to strengthen their ability to withstand earthquakes, for example.

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

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

Ridgeline
(1) The ground line located at the highest
elevation of the ridge running parallel to the long
axis of the ridge. (WCMC, §10-2.3.402.H.) (2) A
line connecting the highest points along a ridge
and separating drainage basins or small-scale
drainage systems from one another.

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.

Route of Regional Significance
An expressway or major arterial street that carries
significant traffic between sub-regions of the
County, and which has been so identified by the
Contra Costa Transportation Authority. Ygnacio
Valley Road, Treat Boulevard, Pleasant Hill Road
and a portion of N. Main Street are Routes of
Regional Significance.

Runoff
That portion of rain or snow that does not
percolate into the ground and is discharged into
streams instead.

Safety Element
One of the seven State-mandated elements of a
general plan, it contains adopted goals, policies,
and action programs for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks
associated with seismic and geologic hazards,
flooding, wildland and urban fires, and other
disasters. Many safety elements also incorporate a
review of emergency response needs, objectives,
facilities, and services.

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

Scenic Corridor
The area outside a road right-of-way that is
generally visible to persons traveling on the road.

Scenic Highway, Scenic Route
A highway, road, drive, or street that, in addition
to its transportation function, provides
opportunities for the enjoyment of natural and
man- made scenic resources and access or direct
views to areas or scenes of exceptional beauty or
historic or cultural interest. The aesthetic values
of scenic routes often are protected and enhanced
by regulations governing the development of
property or the placement of outdoor advertising.
Until the mid-1980s, general plans in California
were required to include a Scenic Highways
element.

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

Seismic
Caused by or subject to earthquakes or earth
vibrations.

Senior Housing
(See “Elderly Housing.”)

Seniors
Persons 62 years or older, or 55 years of age or
older in a senior citizen housing development.
The term “senior” has the same meaning as the
term “senior citizen” as such term is defined by
California and federal law. (WCMC, §10-2.1.303,
No. 132.)

Setback
(1) The required minimum horizontal distance
between the building line and the related front,
side, or rear property line. (WCMC, §10-2.1.303,
No. 135.) (2) The horizontal distance between a
property line and any structure.

Shaping Our Future
A joint planning project by Contra Costa County
and its cities in 2003 to develop a “smart growth”
response to future change. The project included a
visioning process involving citizens, community
leaders, and elected officials. (See “Smart
Growth.”)

Shared Parking
(See “Parking, Shared.”)
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Shopping Center
A group of commercial establishments, planned, developed, owned, or managed as a unit, with common off-street parking provided on the site.

Signal Preemption
A system used by emergency vehicles, public transit vehicles and/or trains to change signal phasing from red to green assigning immediate right-of-way for a specific purpose.

Significance
As used in historic preservation, a term ascribed to buildings, sites, objects, or districts that possess exceptional value or quality for illustrating or interpreting the cultural heritage of the community when evaluated in relation to other properties and property types within a specific historic theme, period, and geographical setting. A principal test of significance for historic property is “integrity.”

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.

Single-family Dwelling
A dwelling unit occupied or intended for occupancy by only one household.

Smart Growth
Popularized in the mid 1990s, and also called “new urbanism,” smart growth proposes development principles and planning practices that result in more efficient land use and transport patterns as an alternative to low-density, dispersed, automobile-dependent development. (See “Shaping Our Future.”)

Solar Access
The provision of direct sunlight to an area specified for solar energy collection when the sun’s azimuth is within 45 degrees of true south.

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

Specific Plan
A legal tool authorized by Article 8 of the Government Code (§65450 et seq.) for the systematic implementation of the general plan for a defined portion of a community’s planning area. A specific plan must specify in detail the land uses and public and private facilities needed to support the land uses, the phasing of development, standards for the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, and a program of implementation measures, including financing measures.

Sphere of Influence
The probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local agency (city or district) as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of the County.

Standards
(1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. The State Government Code (§65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, principles, “standards,” and proposals of the general plan. Examples of standards might include the number of acres of parkland per 1,000 population that the community will attempt to acquire and improve, or the “traffic Level of Service” (LOS) that the plan hopes to attain. (2) Requirements in a zoning ordinance that govern building and development as distinguished from use restrictions—for example, site-design regulations such as lot area, height limit, frontage, landscaping, and floor area ratio.

State Responsibility Areas
As used in the Safety Element of the general plan, areas of the state in which the financial responsibility for preventing and suppressing fires has been determined by the State Board of Forestry (pursuant to Public Resources Code §4125) to be primarily the responsibility of the State.

Storm Runoff
Surplus surface water generated by rainfall that does not seep into the earth but flows overland to flowing or stagnant bodies of water.

Stream
A body of water flowing in a channel or watercourse, as a river. (See “Creek” and “Intermittent Stream.”)
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
Roads designed to provide direct access to adjacent property. Through-traffic is discouraged on these roadways. (WCMC, §10-2.1.303, No. 142e.)

Streets, Minor
(See “Streets, Local.”)

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

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

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 community wellbeing while protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which people and economies depend. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Telecommuting
An arrangement in which a worker—at home or in a location other than the primary place of work—communicates with the workplace and conducts work via wireless or telephone lines, using modems, fax machines, or other electronic devices in conjunction with computers.

Topography
Configuration of a surface, including its relief and the position of natural and man-made features.

Tourism
The business of providing services for persons traveling for pleasure, tourism contributes to the vitality of the community by providing revenue to local business. Tourism can be measured through changes in the transient occupancy tax, or restaurant sales.

Townhouse; Town home
A one-family dwelling in a row of at least three such units in which each unit has its own front and rear access to the outside, no unit is located over another unit, and each unit is separated from any other unit by one or more common and fire-resistant walls. Townhouses usually have separate utilities; however, in some condominium situations, common areas are serviced by utilities purchased by a homeowners association on behalf of all townhouse members of the association. (See “Condominium.”)

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

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

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

Transit, Public
A system of regularly-scheduled buses and/or trains, publicly operated and available to the public, usually on a fee-per-ride basis.

TRANSPAC
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One of four regional subcommittees that make up the Contra Costa Transportation Authority. TRANSPAC is composed of representatives of Walnut Creek, Clayton, Concord, Martinez, and Contra Costa County.

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

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

Tree
(1) Any live woody plant having a single perennial stem of 28 inches or more in circumference or multistemmed perennial plant having an aggregate circumference of 40 inches or more measured four and a half feet above the natural grade. (2) A multistemmed plant having one stem of 28 inches or more in circumference. (3) A tree of any size which is part of a Grove. (WCMC, §3-8.02.)

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; 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 are designated as “undevelopable” as defined further in WCMC §10-2.3.402, D, F, and J.

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

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

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 Growth Boundary
(See “Urban Limit Line.”)

Urban Land Use
Residential, commercial, or industrial land use in areas where urban services are available.

Urban Limit Line
A legally mapped and parcel-specific boundary marking 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. Interchangeable with and sometimes called urban growth boundary.

**Urban Service Area**
(1) An area in which urban services will be provided and outside of which such services will not be extended. (2) Developed, undeveloped, or agricultural land, either incorporated or unincorporated, within the sphere of influence of a city, which is served or will be served during the first five years of an adopted capital improvement program by urban facilities, utilities, and services. The boundary around an urban service area is called the “urban service area boundary” and is to be developed in cooperation with a city and adopted by a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). *(California Government Code §56080.)*

**Urban Services**
Utilities (such as water, gas, electricity, and sewer) and public services (such as police, fire, schools, parks, and recreation) provided to an urbanized or urbanizing area.

**Use**
The purpose for which a site or structure is arranged, designed, intended, constructed, erected, moved, altered, or enlarged, or for which either a site or a structure is or may be occupied. *(WCMC, §10-2.1.303, No. 149.)* (NB: The use must accord with the City’s General Plan land use designations and zoning ordinance.)

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

**View Corridor**
The line of sight—identified as to height, width, and distance—of an observer looking toward an object of significance to the community (e.g., ridgeline, river, historic building, etc.); the route that directs the viewers attention.

**Viewshed**
The area within view from a defined observation point.

**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.”)*

**Wastewater Irrigation**
The process by which wastewater that has undergone appropriate treatment is used to irrigate land.

**Water-efficient Landscaping**
Landscaping designed to minimize water use and maximize energy efficiency.

**Watercourse**
Natural or once natural flowing (perennially or intermittently) water including rivers, streams, and creeks. Includes natural waterways that have been channelized, but does not include manmade channels, ditches, and underground drainage and sewage systems. *(See “Stream” and “Creek.”)*

**Watershed**
The total area above a given point on a watercourse that contributes water to its flow; the entire region drained by a waterway or watercourse that drains into a lake, or reservoir.

**Waterway**
*(See “Watercourse.”)*

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

**Wildlife**
Animals or plants existing in their natural habitat.

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

**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
Appendix A, Glossary

conversion to urban and suburban development. The program entails a 10-year contract between the City and an owner of land whereby the land is taxed based on 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. (See “Agricultural Preserve.”)

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

Zoning Map
Government Code §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.