

# A

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

**Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance:** an ordinance that ties development approvals to the availability and adequacy of public facilities. Adequate public facilities are those facilities relating to roads, sewer systems, schools, and water supply and distribution systems. If school classrooms will be too crowded, or roads too congested, or there will be insufficient sewer capacity or water supply, an APFO says that the development shouldn't be approved.

**affordable housing:** housing affordable to persons or families whose income is at or below 60 percent of MFI. The housing can be either owned or rented. The term is also used to describe any publicly subsidized housing.

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

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

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

**automobile-intensive use:** A use of a retail area that depends on exposure to continuous auto traffic.

**Average Daily Traffic Volume (ADT):** The average number of vehicles passing a specific point during a 24-hour period.

# B

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

**blight:** physical and economic conditions within an area that cause a reduction of or lack of full utilization of that area. A blighted area is one that has deteriorated or has been arrested in its development by physical, economic, or social forces. Blight spreads; a blighted condition at a site, structure, or area may cause nearby buildings and/or areas to decline in attractiveness and/or utility.

**board of zoning appeals:** An appointed board that hears appeals on variances and exceptions.

**brownfield:** Abandoned, idled, or under-utilized industrial site where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. (See greenfield and greyfield.)

**buffer zone:** An area of land separating two distinct land uses that acts to soften or mitigate the effects of one land use on the other — for example, a screen of planting or fencing to insulate the surroundings from the noise, smoke, or visual aspects of an industrial zone or junkyard.

**building codes:** Local government regulations that prescribe minimum standards for the construction and maintenance of buildings. (See International Building Code)

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

**building permit:** A permit issued by a city to authorize structural, electrical, heating and cooling, plumbing, or wrecking work.

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

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

# C

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

**carrying capacity:** Used in determining the potential of an area to absorb development: (1) The level of land use, human activity, or development for a specific area that can be accommodated permanently without an irreversible change in the quality of air, water, land, or plant and animal habitats. (2) The upper limits of development beyond which the quality of human life, health, welfare, safety, or community character within an area will be impaired. (3) The maximum level of development allowable under current zoning. (See Buildout.)

**Central Business District (CBD):** a term used to describe the heart of an urban downtown.

**Certificate of Appropriateness:** A certificate issued by the state or local Historic Preservation Commission authorizing exterior changes to building and grounds in locally designated historic areas. A certificate of appropriateness is required before a building permit allowing construction or demolition is issued for these areas. The certificate reflects a determination that the changes are in keeping with the historic character of the area and are appropriate to the building, site, or streetscape.

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

**Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO):** Combined sewer systems are sewers that are designed to collect rainwater runoff, domestic sewage, and industrial wastewater in the same pipe. Most of the time, combined sewer systems transport all of their wastewater to a sewage treatment plant, where it is treated and then discharged to a water body. During periods of heavy rainfall or snowmelt, however, the wastewater volume in a combined sewer system can exceed the capacity of the sewer system or treatment plant. For this reason, combined sewer systems are designed to overflow occasionally and discharge excess wastewater directly to nearby streams, rivers, or other water bodies. These overflows, called combined sewer overflows (CSOs), contain not only stormwater but also untreated human and industrial waste, toxic materials, and debris. They are a major water pollution concern for the approximately 772 cities in the U.S. that have combined sewer systems.

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

**community plan (or neighborhood plan):** A portion of the local general or comprehensive plan that focuses on a particular area or community within the city or county. Community plans supplement the policies of the general plan.

**Community Reinvestment Act (CRA):** A federal law adopted in 1977 requiring mortgage lenders to demonstrate their commitment to home mortgage financing in economically disadvantaged areas.

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

**Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation Liability Information System (CERCLIS):** A list, maintained by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, that includes properties across the nation that may contain environmental contamination.

**comprehensive plan:** A statement of policies, including text and diagrams setting forth objectives, principles, standards and plan proposals, for the long-term future physical development of the city or county. This may also be called a general plan, city plan, or master plan.

**conditional use permit:** Pursuant to the zoning ordinance, a conditional use permit (CUP) may authorize uses not routinely allowed on a particular site. CUPs require a public hearing and, if approval is granted, are usually subject to the fulfillment of certain conditions by the developer. Approval of a CUP is not a change in zoning.

**consistency requirement:** most state enabling laws require consistency between a general or comprehensive plan and implementation measures such as the zoning ordinance.

**Council of Governments:** a regional agency made up of elected officials from member cities and counties. Concerned primarily with transportation planning and housing, they do not directly regulate land use, though they may exert influence and act in an advisory capacity.

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

**Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED):** Community design based on the relationship between the physical environment and crime. CPTED usually involves the use of three principles: natural surveillance (by placing physical features, activities, and people to maximize visibility); natural access control (through the judicious placement of entrances, exits, fencing, landscaping, and lighting); and territorial reinforcement (using buildings, fences, pavement, signs, and landscaping to express ownership).

# D

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

**defensible space:** (in urban areas) open spaces, entry points, and pathways configured to provide maximum opportunities to rightful users and/or residents to defend themselves against intruders and criminal activity. (See also Crime Prevention through Environmental Design.)

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

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

**density, residential:** The average number of households, persons, or dwelling units per acre of land. Densities specified in the general plan may be expressed in units per gross acre or per net developable acre.

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

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

# E

**Easement:** 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. One type of easement is a conservation easement, which is a tool for acquiring open space with less than full-fee purchase, whereby a public agency buys only certain specific rights from the landowner. These may be positive rights (providing the public with the opportunity to hunt, fish, hike, or ride over the land).

**economic development commission:** a local or regional agency charged with seeking economic development projects and economic expansion at higher employment densities. A possible ally for bringing in businesses such as grocery stores to underserved areas.

**Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):** Under the National Environmental Policy Act, a statement on the effect of potential investments (in infrastructure or development) using Federal funds or lands that significantly affect the environment. An Environmental Assessment is an alternative form of statement for actions that do not have a significant impact on the environment. Many states have alternative requirements under state law, such as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which governs non-Federal actions.

**eminent domain:** The right of a government to acquire the lands and rights necessary for a public use if the government is unable to agree with the owner of the land or right on damages or the purchase price. The government may exercise eminent domain to condemn the land or right necessary to carry out a public use.

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

**exurbs:** Communities located beyond the suburbs.

# F

**family housing:** housing unit(s) two bedrooms or larger.

**Federal Fair Housing Law:** In accordance with the Federal Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988, this law states it is illegal to discriminate in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, family status, or national origin.

**fiscal impact analysis (or report):** A projection of the direct public costs and revenues resulting from population or employment change to the local jurisdiction(s) in which the change is taking place. Enables local governments to evaluate relative fiscal merits of general plans, specific plans, or projects.

**floodplain:** low areas adjacent to rivers, lakes, estuaries, and oceans that are periodically flooded at intervals of varying frequency. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates such areas. Generally, communities with land in one or more floodplains must have special floodplain ordinances governing development within these sensitive areas.

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

**form-based code:** is a means of regulating land development to achieve a specific urban form, without the focus on uses of land that drive standard zoning codes. Proponents argue that form-based codes foster predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form. Form-based codes are regulations, not guidelines, adopted into city, town, or county law and offer an alternative to conventional zoning regulation.

# G

**General Obligation Bond (GO Bond):** A type of local government bond that can be used for a variety of projects. Proceeds of GO bonds can be issued either directly for economic development purposes or indirectly by providing for infrastructure improvements. The issuance of GO bonds requires approval of taxpayers located within the boundaries of the unit issuing the debt.

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

**green building:** Building design that yields environmental benefits, such as savings in energy, building materials, and water consumption, or reduced waste generation.

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

**greenway:** A linear open space; a corridor composed of natural vegetation. Greenways can be used to create connected networks of open space that include traditional parks and natural areas.

**greyfield:** A blighted area such as a failed shopping center that is ripe for redevelopment. (See Greenfield and Brownfield)

**growth management:** A local program limiting the rate of community growth. Communities use a wide range of techniques to determine the amount, type, and rate of development desired by the community and to channel that growth into designated areas. Growth management policies can be implemented through growth rates, zoning, capital improvement programs, public facilities ordinances, urban limit lines, standards for levels of service, and other programs. Examples include an annual cap on the number of building permits issued, tying new development intensity to infrastructure capacity, or limiting the location of new development. (See Congestion management plan.)

# H

**historic area:** an area or building in which historic events occurred, or one which has special value due to architectural or cultural features relating to the heritage of the community. May be designated on a local, state, or federal register of historic places, each of which can provide tools and offer restrictions on demolition, rehabilitation, or re-use. Elements in historic areas have significance that necessitates preservation or conservation.

**Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA):** A Federal Reserve regulation requiring depository institutions to make annual disclosure of the location of certain residential loans, to determine whether depository institutions are meeting the credit needs of their local community.

**HOME:** The HOME Investment Partnerships Program is a federal affordable housing supply program established by the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 and administered by HUD. It provides grants to state and local governments (“participating jurisdictions”) to fund affordable housing for renters and homeowners with incomes at or below 80 percent of HAMFI. By statute, 90 percent of renters assisted by HOME funds must have incomes at or below 60 percent of HAMFI.

**HOPE VI:** a plan by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, intended to revitalize the worst public housing projects in the United States into mixed-income developments. Its philosophy is largely based on New Urbanism and the concept of Defensible space. The program began in 1992, and was replaced in 2010 by HUD’s Choice Neighborhoods program. As of June 1, 2010 there have been 254 HOPE VI Revitalization grants awarded to 132 housing authorities since 1993 - totaling more than \$6.1 billion. HOPE VI grants were used to demolish 96,200 public housing units and produce 107,800 new or renovated housing units, of which 56,800 were to be affordable to the lowest-income households. The new and renovated housing units were mixed income, less dense, and sought to attain better design and integration into the local neighborhoods.

**HUD-Adjusted Area Median Family Income (HAMFI):** The area median family income refers to the median income of all families in a given geographic area, such as a county, state, or metropolitan area. To establish income eligibility for its programs, HUD annually establishes thresholds of area median family income adjusted by household size and other factors required by statute. This is sometimes simply referred to as Median Family Income or MFI.

**Housing Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA):** A program that is funded under the AIDS Housing Opportunity Act and administered by HUD. The program authorizes grants for housing assistance and supportive services for low-income persons with HIV/AIDS and their families.

# I

**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. Most state law specify that development fees shall not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fee is charged. To lawfully impose a development fee, the public agency must verify its method of calculation and document proper restrictions on use of the fund. (See Nexus.) The most common are: (1) impact fees (such as parkland acquisition fees, school facilities fees, or street construction fees) related to funding public improvements which are necessitated in part or in whole by the development; (2) connection fees (such as water line fees) to cover the cost of installing public services to the development; (3) permit fees (such as building permits, grading permits, sign permits) for the administrative costs of processing development plans; and (4) application fees (rezoning, CUP variance, etc.) for the administrative costs of reviewing and hearing development proposals.

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

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

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

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

**infrastructure:** The underlying foundation or basic framework of a city, including public (and quasi-public) services and facilities, such as streets, parks, bridges, sewers, street lights, water supply, telecommunications, schools, and other utilities.

# J

**jobs/housing balance:** a concept that policies and programs should seek to 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.

**joint powers authority:** 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.

# L

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

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

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

**Level of Service (LOS):** A scale that measures the vehicular traffic delay at intersections, where an "A" represents a free flow (no delay) and "F" represents delays of 80 seconds or greater. Because LOS only measures vehicular traffic delay, it does not account for pedestrian or bicycle conditions or the operation of a series of intersections along a street in connection with each other. Recent attempts have been made to develop pedestrian and bicycle "level of service" measures, as well as a "multi-modal level of service" measure that seeks to balance all road users.

**light industrial:** A land use plan category recommending industries that conduct their entire operations within completely enclosed buildings and do not have objectionable characteristics that extend beyond their property lines. Some examples are jewelry manufacturing and engraving, warehousing, construction companies, upholstering, paper box and paper products manufacturing from finished paper, and manufacturing of optical goods.

**low income:** households with incomes from 51 to 60% HAMFI. (This term is also used generically to refer to all households at or below 60% HAMFI.)

**Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC):** A federally funded program whereby each state is allocated a prescribed amount of tax credits every year. The states then issue these tax credits to affordable housing developers who in turn sell the tax credits to investors who supply upfront equity for affordable rental projects. The investors receive a return on their investment through a tax credit they can take against their tax liability. They can take this credit for 10 years. The developer must guarantee that the units financed with these credits will remain affordable to households earning 60 percent of median family income or less for 15 years.

# M

**market rate housing:** housing for which rents are not suppressed or restricted to below rents of the surrounding community generally considered to be 80 percent MFI or above although 'market' varies by neighborhood and location.

**Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO):** a federally mandated and federally funded transportation policy-making organization in the United States that is made up of representatives from local government and governmental transportation authorities.

**Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA):** a geographical region with a relatively high population density at its core and close economic ties throughout the area. A typical metropolitan area is centered on a single large city that wields substantial influence over the region (e.g., Chicago or Atlanta). However, some metropolitan areas contain more than one large city with no single municipality holding a substantially dominant position (e.g., Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, Riverside-San Bernardino or Minneapolis-Saint Paul). MSAs are defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and used by the Census Bureau and other federal government agencies for statistical purposes.

**mixed income housing:** a housing development open to persons or families at varying income levels. More specifically at both affordable (below 60% MFI) and market rate income levels (above 60% MFI).

**mixed-use:** zoning that permits various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, light industrial and residential, to be combined in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development project.

**mobile dwelling:** A land use plan category recommending a density of approximately 6 dwelling units per acre. Development may be in the form of a mobile home park.

**moderate income:** households with incomes from 61 to 80% AMFI.

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

**multi-family development:** Housing units in a structure containing 3 or more housing units.

# N

**National Environmental Policy Act:** An act passed in 1974 establishing federal legislation for national environmental policy, a council on environmental quality, and the requirements for environmental impact statements.

**new urbanism:** A design philosophy that borrows from traditional city planning concepts, particularly those of the years 1900-1920, and applies them to modern living. New urbanism integrates housing, shops, workplaces, parks, and civic facilities into compact, walkable communities that have ready access to transit. Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Peter Calthorpe are considered the pioneers of this method of community design. This may also be called Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND).

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

**nonconforming use:** A use that was valid when brought into existence but does not meet current zoning requirements. Any use lawfully existing on any piece of property that is inconsistent with a new or amended general plan, and that in turn is a violation of a zoning ordinance amendment subsequently adopted in conformance with the general plan, will be a nonconforming use. Typically, nonconforming uses are permitted to continue, but may not be expanded or enlarged.

**Not in My Back Yard (NIMBY):** Used primarily to refer to advocates who oppose unpleasant land uses near their homes, such as power plants, junk yards, nightlife venues, and multi-family housing.



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

**overlay zone:** A set of zoning requirements that is superimposed upon a base zone. Overlay zones are generally used when a particular area requires special protection (as in an historic preservation district) or has a special problem (such as steep slopes, floodplain, or earthquake faults). Development of land subject to overlay zoning requires compliance with the regulations of both the base and overlay zones.

# P

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

**parking management:** An evolving technique designed to obtain maximum utilization from a limited number of parking spaces. Can involve pricing and preferential treatment for HOVs, non-peak period users, and short-term users.

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

**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 development that, for zoning approval purposes, is not judged by typical zoning standards but on the basis of an overall plan for the total development. To be approved by the zoning review agency, the plan must include detailed information regarding such issues as land use, building height, density, and setbacks at the overall edge of the development.

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

**pro forma:** Pro forma, is a schedule that includes a rent schedule, anticipated operating expenses, vacancy rates, and all other information pertinent to the operation of the property. Operating income and expenses are generally projected for at least ten years.

# R

**redevelopment area:** Areas that are designated for redevelopment by the local legislative body. Establishing a redevelopment area allows government to accomplish a wide variety of public goals. A variety of tools can be used in the districts to acquire and assemble land (including eminent domain), prepare it for disposition, write-down acquisition costs, make needed area improvements, and assist developers and property owners in improving their property.

**redevelopment:** The renewal and improvement of older commercial and residential areas through actions or programs that encourage and facilitate private and public investment. This investment can include activities and programs designed to improve neighborhoods; strengthen existing businesses; encourage quality renovation and new construction; enhance public spaces and pedestrian amenities; ensure safe, efficient, and convenient traffic flow; attract new businesses; and contribute to the social and economic vitality of the area.

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

**Regional housing needs plan:** A state-mandated quantification by a regional Council of Governments of existing and projected housing need, by household income group, for all localities within a region. The identified housing need is one of the bases for development of a jurisdiction's housing element.

**Regional Transportation Plan (RTP):** This plan guides the development of the area's transportation system for the next 25 years. It is developed through the cooperation of citizens, planners, engineers, and public officials.

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

**Request for Proposal (RFP):** Public agencies use the RFP process to solicit proposals for new projects and programs. An example is that the RFP process is frequently used when a municipality seeks a developer for publicly-owned property. There is a public advertisement of the type of development being sought, and interested firms may submit information explaining why their firm is the best qualified to develop the property. A selection is then made based on the proposals submitted.

**Request for Qualifications (RFQ):** Public agencies use the RFQ process to solicit information regarding individuals or firms that might provide professional services to the agency. An example is that the RFQ process is frequently used when a municipality seeks to hire an architect or engineering firm. There is a public advertisement of the services being sought, and interested firms may submit information explaining why their firm is the best qualified to perform the services. A selection is then made based on the qualifications submitted.

**revenue bonds:** public bonds where the principal and interest are secured by revenues derived from tolls, charges or rents from the facility built with the proceeds of the bond issue. Public projects financed by revenue bonds include toll roads, bridges, airports, water and sewage treatment facilities, hospitals and subsidized housing. Many of these bonds are issued by special authorities created for that particular purpose.

**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.

**road diet:** A road diet is a technique in transportation planning whereby a road is reduced in number of travel lanes and/or effective width in order to achieve systemic improvements. One of the most common applications of a road diet is to improve safety or provide space for other users in the context of two-way streets with 2 lanes in each direction. The road diet reduces this to 1 travel lane in each direction. The freed-up space is then used to provide any or several of the following features: (wider) sidewalks 2. (Wider) landscaping strips 3. bicycle lanes, on one or both sides of the road 5. A two-way turn lane / flush traffic median for turning traffic 6. A reversible center lane

# S

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

**single-family housing:** a detached housing structure that contains 1 dwelling unit.

**Single-Room Occupancy (SRO):** A single-room-occupancy building is a multi-tenant building that houses one or two people in each room. Tenants typically share toilets, kitchen facilities, and other common areas within the building. This type of housing is often used to provide permanent housing for people transitioning out of homelessness.

**site control:** an enforceable right to use a parcel of land. This right must be formally (or legally) given in writing, most often in the forms of required for this RFP in the form of title deed, an option to purchase, or a lease or easement agreement exceeding 99 years. In many cases, State and Federal agencies will not release grant funds unless site control is shown in the documentation of the project.

**smart growth:** a series of principles that encourage development that better serves the economic, environmental and social needs of communities than do many of the principles that have guided development in the post-World War II period. Smart growth advocates compact, transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use, including neighborhood schools, complete streets, and mixed-use development with a range of housing choices.

**special needs housing:** housing unit(s) which are available to a specific population, such as elderly, disabled, homeless, or people recovering from drug or alcohol use.

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

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

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

**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.

**streetscape:** The space between the buildings on either side of a street that defines its character. The elements of a streetscape include: building frontage/façade; landscaping (trees, yards, bushes, plantings, etc.); sidewalks; street paving; street furniture (benches, kiosks, trash receptacles, fountains, etc.); signs; awnings; and street lighting.

**subdivision ordinance:** a local policy that provides the process for subdividing or partitioning lands within the jurisdiction.

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

# T

**tax abatement:** Property tax abatements are usually granted by local (city and county) governments, where the lion's share of property taxes are paid. Property tax abatements are often discretionary subsidies, granted on a case-by-case basis to a particular company, and can be structured various ways. A company may receive an abatement of a certain percent for a specified number of years; for instance, if a company received a 50 percent property tax abatement for 20 years, they only have to pay half the property taxes they would normally owe for the next two decades.

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF):** A redevelopment agency's powerful tool to issue bonds against the anticipated additional revenue of the tax increment. The base of existing assessed valuation is frozen, and additional tax revenues result from increases in property values within a development area. State laws that permit tax increment to be earmarked for redevelopment purposes often require at least 20 percent to be used to increase and improve the community's supply of very low-and low-income housing.

**traffic calming:** The process of increasing pedestrian safety by decreasing automobile traffic speed and volume, typically using physical design features, such as street trees, landscaping bump outs, and textured pavement to slow down automobile traffic passing through neighborhood areas. The intention is to improve the quality of life in urban neighborhoods and to make neighborhoods more pedestrian friendly.

**Traffic Impact Study (TIS):** An analysis of certain new developments to determine the impact on the surrounding transportation system.

**Transfer of Development Rights (TDR):** A program that allows landowners to transfer the right to develop one parcel of land to a more suitable parcel of land. TDR programs establish "sending area" and "receiving areas" for development rights.

**Transit-Oriented Development (TOD):** a mixed-use residential and commercial area designed to maximize access to public transport, and often incorporates features to encourage transit ridership. A TOD neighborhood typically has a center with a transit station or stop (train station, metro station, tram stop, or bus stop), surrounded by relatively high-density development with progressively lower-density development spreading outward from the center. TODs generally are located within a radius of one-quarter to one-half mile (400 to 800 m) from a transit stop, as this is considered to be an appropriate scale for pedestrians

**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.

# U

**unit (of housing):** a house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms or a single room occupied as separate living quarters or, if vacant, intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live and eat separately from any other persons in the building and which have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall.

**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:** An urban growth boundary defines 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. The line circumscribes an entire urbanized area and is used by local governments to guide land-use decisions.

# V

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

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

# W

**wetlands:** Land that has wet or spongy soil. These areas are often important wildlife habitats and have special restrictions on use to protect habitat.

**workforce housing:** rental or ownership housing units that are affordable to households with incomes generally between 80% and 120% of HAMFI.

# Z

**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 typically establishes the use of property and the size, height, and location of structures placed on it.

**zoning map amendment:** the redesignation of property from one zone to another (for example, residential to commercial) on the zoning map. Frequently, a request for a zone change will also involve a comprehensive plan map change.