

# GLOSSARY

## A

### **Accessory Dwelling Unit**

A separate self-contained smaller living unit with bathroom and kitchen facilities located on the same lot as a single-family residence. Can be either detached or attached from the primary residence with a separate entrance. Also known as granny units, in-law units, second units, or backyard cottages.

### **Active Transportation**

Human-powered transportation, such as walking or bicycling.

### **Adaptation**

The process by which strategies and actions are undertaken to respond to the actual or expected effects of climate change.

### **Alternative Energy Technology**

Technology that facilitates the use of renewable (non-fossil fuel) energy resources.

### **Alternative Energy Source**

Any of a number of energy sources that do not rely on fossil fuels, including sunlight, wind, cogeneration, and biomass.

### **Ambient Noise Level**

The composite of noise from all sources near and far. The normal or existing level of environmental noise at a given location.

### **Amendment**

A formal City Council change or revision to the Comprehensive Plan, including either the Plan's text or its maps.

### **Appropriate**

An act, condition, or state that is considered suitable.

### **Aquifer**

An underground water-bearing layer of permeable rock, sand, or gravel through which water can seep or be held in natural storage.

### **Architectural Review Board (ARB)**

City Council appointed five-member board, responsible for reviewing the design of all exterior building and site changes requiring a building permit, except singly developed single family dwellings and duplexes.

### **Arterial**

Major roadway mainly serving through-traffic; takes traffic to and from expressways and freeways; provides access to adjacent properties.

### **Assessment District**

A procedure to pay for capital improvements wherein bonds are sold and obligation for payment is shared by property owners within the district.

### **Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)**

A consortium of cities and counties in nine Bay Area Counties formed to cooperate on common planning issues and solve common development problems.

### **At Risk Units**

Housing units that may lose their federal subsidies due to expiring contracts under curtailed federal housing programs. Such units are “at risk” of being converted to market rate housing.

### **Auto-oriented**

A form of development that depends on exposure to auto traffic and presumes people will use cars to travel to and from the site.

### **Average Household Size**

The number of persons in the cCity living in households divided by the total number of households in the cCity. Excludes persons living in group quarters.

**A-Weighted Sound Level, dBA**

The sound pressure level in decibels as measured on a sound level meter using the A-weighting filter network. The A-weighting filter de-emphasizes the very low and very high frequency components of the sound in a manner similar to the frequency response of the human ear and correlates well with subjective reactions to noise. All sound levels in this report are A-weighted, unless reported otherwise.

**B****Baseline Emissions**

The emissions that would occur without policy intervention (in a business-as-usual scenario). Baseline estimates are needed to determine the effectiveness of emissions reduction programs (often called mitigation strategies).

**Baseline Rate**

A utility rate structure that provides all customers with enough energy (or water, etc.) to meet basic needs at an affordable cost; higher rates are charged for amounts used beyond the base consumption level.

**Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD)**

Regional agency responsible for air quality planning in the Bay Area, monitoring air pollution levels, and setting and enforcing limits for stationary air pollution sources.

**Bay Trail**

400-mile trail system, with spur trails to parks and nearby urban areas, being constructed in segments that will eventually encircle San Francisco Bay close to the waterfront; about 45 percent complete in 1997.

**Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)**

Rail rapid transit system serving Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties.

**Baylands**

General term for the low-lying areas east of Highway 101, including developed land, open space, wetlands, marsh and flood basins.

**Baylands Master Plan (1987 )**

1987 City Council adopted Palo Alto planning policy document for areas east of Highway 101.

**Below Market Rate (BMR) Housing Unit**

Any housing unit specifically priced to be sold or rented to very low-, low-, or moderate-income households for an amount less than the fair market value of the unit.

**Below Market Rate (BMR) Program**

The City of Palo Alto's Inclusionary Housing policy and procedures that seek to increase the amount of housing affordable to individuals and families with less than median income.

**Best Management Practice (BMP)**

Programs, technologies, operating methods, or other measures that control, prevent, or reduce pollution.

**Bicycle Boulevard**

A low volume through-street where bicycles have priority over cars, conflicts between cars and bicycles are minimized, and bicycle travel time is reduced by removal of stop signs and other impediments to bicycle travel.

**Bicycle Lane (Class II Facility)**

A separate lane on a roadway that is reserved for bicyclists and demarcated by lane striping.

**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.

### **Bike Share/Sharing**

A transportation service in which a fleet of bicycles is made available for users to borrow on a short-term basis. Typically, the service is designed so that a user may borrow a bicycle from a self-serve station and return the bicycle to another station in the bike share system.

### **Bikeway**

A corridor designated and/or reserved for bicyclists. A Class I facility is a bike path that is not part of a vehicle roadway. A Class II facility consists of on-street bike lanes. A Class III facility is a roadway that has been designated as a bike route by signage only.

### **Biotechnology**

The industry associated with the application of biological and engineering data to technology.

### **Bird-Friendly Design**

The use of building strategies and materials intended to reduce harm for birds, such as glass treatments that reduce bird collisions with buildings.

### **Bollard**

A relatively short post used on or along a street or path for decorative, lighting, or traffic control purposes.

### **Boulevard**

A roadway characterized by a landscaped median and planting strips on each side.

### **Buffer**

An area of land separating two distinct land uses that acts to soften or mitigate the effects of one land use on the other.

### **Building Envelope Restriction**

A method of limiting the size of a building by specifying the maximum building size in three dimensions.

### **Buildout**

The point at which all land eligible for development under the Comprehensive Plan has been developed to its maximum allowed level.

**Bulbout**

A usually rounded extension of the sidewalk or parkway into the adjacent street that facilitates pedestrian activity or added landscaping.

**Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**

A bus-based transit system designed to increase speed, reliability, and capacity in comparison to conventional bus service by applying features typical of rail transit. Bus rapid transit can include features such as dedicated lanes, easy-to-board vehicles, boarding platforms, off-board ticketing, real-time schedule information, signal priority, and increased frequency.

**Business Outreach**

City programs that convey information to local businesses, receive input from local businesses regarding their needs, and assist businesses in meeting these needs.

**Business Retention**

City programs aimed at supporting, retaining, and sustaining local businesses.

**Bypass Culvert**

An overflow device used along creeks to divert excess stormwater as a means of reducing flooding and avoiding the need for creek channelization.

**C**

**CAL FIRE**

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection; State department that provides fire protection and land stewardship for California's privately-owned wildlands as well as emergency services through contracts with local governments.

**Cal-Ventura**

Mixed use neighborhood located southeast of the California Avenue business district generally bordered by Cambridge Avenue, Fernando Avenue, the Caltrain railroad tracks, and El Camino Real.

**California Air Resources Board (CARB)**

State board responsible for approving air quality attainment plans, establishing air quality standards and vehicle emissions requirements, and implementing the Federal Clean Air Act State Implementation Plan.

### **California Department of Toxic Substances Control (CDTSC)**

State agency responsible for the regulation of contaminated sites.

### **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

State law requiring State and local agencies to regulate activities with consideration for environmental protection, and requiring the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) if the potential for a significant adverse environmental impact exists.

### **California Integrated Waste Management Act (1989-)**

State legislation enacted in response to the need for diverting materials from landfills generally by reductions in consumption or by recycling, in order to preserve decreasing landfill capacity and natural resources; required cities and counties to divert 25 percent of solid waste from disposal by 1995 and 50 percent by January 1, 2000.

### **California Register of Historic Resources**

Register created in 1992 as an authoritative guide for identifying the State's historic resources and indicating properties that are to be protected; includes properties on the National Register and State Historic Landmarks No. 770 and higher.

### **Caltrain**

Passenger rail service serving the corridor between San Francisco and Gilroy, via cities along the west side of San Francisco Bay (including Palo Alto).

### **Caltrans**

California Department of Transportation; State agency responsible for the construction, maintenance, planning, and management of major transportation facilities in California.

### **Canopy**

The layer of tree leaves, branches, and stems that cover the ground when viewed from above.

### **Canopy: Trees for Palo Alto**

A non-profit organization established in 1996, partially funded by the City of Palo Alto for the purpose of providing community leadership, channeling volunteer efforts, and the planting of street trees. Successor to the "Tree Task Force."

**Canopy Cover**

The amount of ground area covered by tree canopy.

**Capitol Improvement Program (CIP)**

The City's spending plan for infrastructure projects. The CIP is a five-year program that is contained in the City's annual capital budget; it allocates capital improvement funds based on City Council priorities.

**Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)**

Colorless, odorless, non-poisonous gas that is a normal part of the ambient air. Carbon dioxide is a product of fossil fuel combustion. Although carbon dioxide does not directly impair human health, it is a greenhouse gas that traps terrestrial (i.e., infrared) radiation and contributes to the potential for global warming.

**Carbon Neutrality**

A state in which the carbon emissions of an action are balanced with an equivalent amount of carbon sequestration or offsets. *Also known as zero net carbon.*

**Carpooling Incentive Program**

Program designed to encourage employees to travel to work via car pool rather than via single passenger automobile; may include such incentives as preferential parking, high-occupancy vehicle lanes or financial remuneration.

**Center**

Commercial and mixed-use areas of the City that serve as the focus for community life; may serve the region, the City, general neighborhoods, or a single neighborhood.

**Center-based Child Care**

Child care services that are provided from a designated facility, rather than in a private residence.

**Central Business District (CBD)**

Major commercial downtown center of a community. In Palo Alto, the University Avenue/Downtown area. General guidelines for delineating a CBD are defined by the US Census of Retail Trade; specific boundaries are set by municipalities.



### **Channelization**

The straightening and/or enlarging of a watercourse for the purposes of storm runoff control or ease of navigation; may include lining of streambanks with a retaining material such as concrete.

### **Charette**

An intensive effort, usually over one or two days, by a variety of interested stakeholders to develop a design solution to a given problem.

### **Charter**

Document approved by the voters of Palo Alto that functions as a “constitution” for the City.

### **City/School Liaison Committee**

A committee consisting of two school board members and two City Council members that meets periodically to identify and address issues of mutual interest and concern.

### **Citizen**

A person who lives, works, shops, or visits in Palo Alto.

### **City Council**

Nine-member elected body of Palo Alto residents responsible for governing the City and making decisions regarding the provision of City services and resolution of civic issues.

### **Civic Use**

Any building or property that serves a public function, including schools, libraries, City Hall, post offices, police and fire stations, and recreational and cultural facilities.

### **Clean Air Act (CAA)**

The principal national legislation passed by Congress for air quality management. Originally passed in 1963, it was greatly changed and strengthened in 1970 and 1977. In 1990, the Clean Air Act Amendments introduced significant changes in the federal approach to air quality management.

### **Climate Change**

The change in climate patterns associated with the alteration of the chemical composition of the atmosphere due to the buildup of greenhouse gases.

### **Co-housing**

Housing designed to include private, individual sleeping and living areas with shared or communal cooking, dining, work, and/or recreational facilities.

### **Collector Street**

Roadway that collects and distributes local traffic to and from arterial streets, and provides access to adjacent properties.

### **Commercial Center**

Commercial and mixed-use areas that serve as focal points of commercial activity; commercial centers in Palo Alto include regional centers, multi-neighborhood centers, and neighborhood centers.

### **Commercial Strip**

A land use pattern characterized by continuous automobile-dependent commercial frontage, usually dominated by front parking lots and long, low buildings oriented towards a highway or arterial street.

### **Community Facility**

Facility in which public services for Palo Alto residents are provided, including recreational and cultural services, and services for youth and seniors.

### **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

Grant program administered by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the State Department of Housing and Community Development. Grants must primarily be used to benefit very low- and low-income households with emphasis on housing and public improvement projects. The City of Palo Alto is an entitlement city that receives an annual funding grant from HUD.

### **Compact Development**

A development philosophy that emphasizes infilling of vacant and underutilized lots before expanding the boundaries of the urban area, and encourages higher residential densities and non-residential development intensity as a means of conserving open space and supporting public transit.

### **Compatible**

Capable of existing together without significant conflict or ill effects.

### **Complete Streets**

Streets that provide safe travel for all users, including motorists, transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

### **Composting**

The process of mixing decaying organic material, such as yard waste and food waste, to create fertilizer and reduce the amount of waste that must be disposed in landfills.

### **~~Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)~~**

~~Legislation passed by Congress in 1980 to address the problem of cleaning up hazardous waste sites; created a national priority list of sites to be cleaned up.~~

### **Comprehensive Plan**

A compendium of city (or county) policies regarding long-term development, in the form of maps and accompanying text. The Plan is a legal document required of each local agency by the State of California Government Code Section 65301 and adopted by the City Council. Referred to in State Law and most California cities as the General Plan.

### **Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC)**

37-member ad hoc committee appointed in 1992 by the Palo Alto City Council to prepare the draft Comprehensive Plan goals, policies, and programs.

### **Computerized Traffic Management System**

A system in which traffic signals are timed with the aid of a computer to provide coordination, thus minimizing delays and ensuring that traffic flows as smoothly as possible.

### **Conditional Use Permit (CUP)**

A discretionary permit that allows the use of land or occupancy of a structure for a particular purpose subject to limitations or conditions of approval.

### **Condominium Conversion Ordinance**

Palo Alto ordinance enacted in 1974 that restricts the conversion of apartments to condominiums as a way of preserving the City's rental housing stock.

### **Congestion Management Program (CMP)**

A State-mandated program required of urban counties; employs growth management techniques, level of service requirements, standards for public transit, trip reduction programs, jobs/housing balance strategies, and capital improvement programming to control and/or reduce the cumulative regional traffic impacts of development.

### **Consolidated Plan Action Plan**

Locally prepared document required for the receipt of federal housing funds; outlines actions to be taken to provide housing opportunities for low and moderate income households.

### **Convenience-oriented Business**

A business that sells retail items generally necessary or desirable for everyday living, usually purchased at a convenient nearby location. Often purchased without comparison shopping because these goods cost relatively little compared to income.

### **Coordinated Area Plan**

A plan that provides more specific guidance than the Comprehensive Plan for development of a sub-area identified as having the potential for change; a means to achieve citizen participation in the planning of such an area. *See also "Precise Plan and Specific Plan".*

### **Coordinated Resource Management and Planning (CRMP)**

Coalition of local government staff, resource agency staff, and representatives from various community, business, and interest groups, administered by the Peninsula Conservation Center; formed to address a range of natural resource issues in creek watersheds, with 1996-8 emphasis on San Francisco Creek.

### **Corporate Citizenship**

Refers to the active participation of local business in community affairs.

### **Corridor**

Any major transportation route, including freeways, expressways, arterials, or transit lines; may also be used to describe land uses along these routes.

### **Cost-effective**

Intended to provide good value or productive results for the amount of money paid.

### **Cottage**

A small, simple, usually single-story detached dwelling unit.

### **Cottage Cluster**

A grouping of cottages on a single property, often arranged around a common lawn or green area and sharing parking.

### **Council/Manager Government**

~~A type of municipal government in which the chief executive official is a manager selected by the City Council. Palo Alto has a Council/Manager Government.~~

### **Creek**

Any of a number of natural watercourses flowing from the hill areas to San Francisco Bay; usually characterized by a distinct channel and a band of dense vegetation along the banks.

### **Creek Setback**

A minimum distance requirement between the top of a creekbank and the nearest structure or other improvement; used to reduce erosion, minimize flooding, and conserve wildlife habitat.

### **Criteria Air Pollutants**

A group of very common air pollutants regulated by EPA on the basis of criteria (information on health and/or environmental effects of pollution). Criteria air pollutants are widely distributed all over the country.

### **Curb Lane**

Portion of a street next to the curb that can be used for on-street parking or auto or bicycle travel.

### **Customer Service**

In the context of the Comprehensive Plan, refers to courteous treatment of the public, and efficient, responsive delivery of services by City employees.

### **Customer-oriented Process Improvement**

An approach to restructuring City service delivery that places first priority on making things easier for the public.

### **Cybersecurity**

Protection of computers, networks, and technology users against criminal or unauthorized uses of or access to electronic data.

## **D**

### **Day/Night Noise Level ( $L_{dn}$ )**

The average A-weighted noise level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of 10 decibels to levels in the night between 10:00 ~~p.m.~~ and 7:00 ~~a.m.~~

### **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 ten times more intense.

### **Decibel (dB)**

A unit describing the amplitude of sound, equal to 20 times the logarithm to the base 10 of the ratio of the pressure of the sound measured to the reference pressure, which is 20 micropascals (20 micronewtons per square meter).

### **Demand-responsive Paratransit**

Form of transit serving persons with disabilities in which vehicles are dispatched on an as-needed basis instead of following a fixed route and schedule; includes taxis and dial-a-ride services.

## Density

For residential uses, the number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. For non-residential uses, density is often referred to as development intensity and is expressed through a ratio of floor area to lot size. *See also Gross Density, Net Density.*

## Density Bonus

The allocation of development rights that allow a development to include additional residential units or square footage beyond the maximum otherwise allowed by zoning, usually in exchange for the provision or preservation of an amenity at the same site or another location.

## Design Guidelines

Provisions guiding the design of buildings that are not mandatory but may be used by Staff, the City's advisory boards and commissions, and the City Council in evaluating projects.

## Design Review

A process used to administer regulations for the design of structures to ensure that such structures are suitable, harmonious, and in keeping with the general appearance, historic character, and/or style of the structure and/or surrounding area.

## Detention

The temporary storage of stormwater overflow; typically in a pond or underground pipes.

## Development

The physical extension and/or construction of urban land uses. Development activities include subdivision of land; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities, and other facilities; installation of septic systems; grading; deposit of refuse, debris, or fill; and clearing of natural vegetative cover for non-agricultural purposes.

## Dewatering

The removal of water. Construction dewatering refers to the process of pumping groundwater from a construction site.

## District Park

Parks that serve large areas of the City and contain a broad variety of facilities.

### **Downtown**

The business center of a City or town; in Palo Alto, used to describe the University Avenue business district.

### **Downtown Urban Design Guide**

1994 City Council approved document intended to provide a framework for the design of buildings and public spaces in Downtown Palo Alto; provisions are advisory, not mandatory.

not mandatory.

### **Drainage**

(1) Surface water runoff; and (2) the removal of surface water or groundwater from land by drains, grading, or other means that include runoff controls to minimize erosion and sedimentation during and after construction or development, the means for preserving the water supply, and the prevention or alleviation of flooding.

### **Drought-tolerant Landscaping**

Landscaping that minimizes water requirements and consumption through plant selection, design, installation, and management. *Also known as low water use landscaping or xeriscape.*

### **Dwelling Unit**

A room or group of rooms, including living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation facilities, constituting a separate and independent housekeeping unit, occupied or intended for occupancy by one household on a non-transient basis and having not more than one kitchen.

## **E**

### **E-bike**

Bicycles with an electric motor that can be used to assist with propulsion.

### **Earthquake Fault Zone**

The State of California, Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act identifies sites within 1,000 foot wide zone with the fault at the center as Earthquake Fault Zones. The Alquist-Priolo Act requires that these sites undergo specialized geologic investigations prior to approval of certain new development. State law requires that these zones be incorporated into local general plans.



### **Easement**

The right to use property owned by another for specific purposes, such as access to another piece of property, conveyance of stormwater, or transmission of gas or electricity.

### **Economic Resources Plan**

1993 City Council adopted five point strategy for working with the local business community.

### **Eichler**

A style of housing popularized in Palo Alto during the 1950s by homebuilder Joseph Eichler and characterized by single story, slab on grade construction, spartan facades, interior courtyards, flat or slightly sloping roofs and expansive glass walls.

### **Electric Vehicle**

An automobile propelled by one or more electric motors using electrical energy stored in rechargeable batteries.

### **Electronic Information**

Information that is stored, transmitted, or received via an electronic medium, such as a computer and modem.

### **Element**

A component chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. State law requires each Plan to incorporate seven elements (Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Open Space, Conservation, Safety and Noise), although the elements may be organized in any of a number of ways.

### **Emergency Shelter**

A facility that provides immediate and short-term housing and supplemental services for homeless persons.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

The act of planning and preparing for a natural or man- made disaster, such as an earthquake or fire.

### **Emergency Management Plan**

City of Palo Alto document that includes provisions for pre-disaster planning, evacuation, communication, shelter, welfare, public health and safety, and post-disaster recovery.

### **Emission**

Discharges into the atmosphere from such sources as smokestacks, residential chimneys, motor vehicles, locomotives, and aircraft.

### **Employment District**

Relatively large areas of the City dominated by low-rise office, high technology, light industrial, and other job-generating land uses but containing relatively few retail and service uses.

### **Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**

An informational document that provides decision makers and the public with information about the effects a proposed project is likely to have on the environment, ways these effects may be minimized and alternatives to the proposed project. The document is prepared consistent with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

### **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

Federal agency charged with protecting the environment.

### **Environmentally Sensitive Area**

Areas that have limited suitability for development due to their natural resource values, such as wetlands, steep hillsides and distinctive wildlife habitat areas.

### **Environmental Review**

Process through which the City of Palo Alto, following the procedures of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), evaluates a project for its potential impacts on the environment.

### **Erosion**

(1) The loosening and transportation of rock and soil debris by wind, rain, or running water. (2) The gradual wearing away of the upper layers of earth.

### **Expansive Soils**

Soils that swell when they absorb water and shrink as they dry.

### **Expressway**

Major roadway with limited access to adjacent properties; devoted almost exclusively to traffic movement, mainly serving through-traffic.

## **F**

### **Fair Share**

The equitable assignment of a regional need, such as affordable housing, to the individual local governments within that region. Typically used by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to assign affordable housing responsibilities to Bay Area cities and counties, but also used with regard to hazardous materials and special needs housing.

### **Fault**

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

### **Fault Rupture**

Fracturing or displacement of the ground surface due to seismic activity along an earthquake fault or fault trace. *Also called "surface rupture."*

### **Feasible**

Capable of being done, executed, or managed successfully considering physical, financial, scheduling and other constraints.

### **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)**

Federal agency responsible for air safety and regulation of air traffic.

### **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

Federal agency responsible for disaster response and assistance in post-disaster recovery.

### **Fiber Optic Ring**

A network of Fiber Optic cables installed by the City of Palo Alto to serve a portion of the electronic data needs of the business and residential community.

### **Flexible Zoning**

Land use regulations that provide more leeway to property owners by using performance standards rather than rigid lists of permitted and prohibited uses and dimensional requirements.

### **Flood Control**

Any of a number of structural or non-structural measures designed to divert or contain floodwater and prevent flooding.

### **Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)**

The official map on which the Federal Insurance Administration has delineated areas of special flood hazard and the risk premium zones applicable to the community.

### **Floor Area Ratio (FAR)**

The gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the total net area of the site, expressed in decimals of one to two places.

### **Foothills**

The hilly and sloping areas lying at the base of a mountain range. In Palo Alto, the area between the alluvial flatland and Skyline Boulevard are called the Foothills, including Stanford lands southwest of Junipero Serra Avenue.

### **Form Code**

A set of regulations that address the location and physical attributes of building(s) or site(s) by precisely establishing the location and form of structures including setbacks, building heights and other physical features, rather than control development by applying maximum development limits.

### **Freeway**

Major roadway with controlled access; devoted exclusively to traffic movement, mainly of a through or regional nature. Local examples include Highways 101 and 280.

**Frontage**

The part of a lot that touches a road, street, or watercourse; it is often described as a specific amount such as “60 feet of frontage”.

**G****Gateway**

A point along a roadway at which a motorist or pedestrian gains a sense of having entered the City or a particular part of the City. This impression can be imparted through such things as signs, monuments, landscaping, a change in development character, or a natural feature such as a creek.

**General Fund**

Component of City budget generated by sales tax, property tax, utility tax, and other miscellaneous sources, and used to fund general City Services and debt service.

**General Plan**

*See Comprehensive Plan.*

A city's basic planning document, which provides the blueprint for development throughout the community and is the vehicle through which competing interests and needs of the citizenry are balanced and meshed. In Palo Alto, this Comprehensive Plan is the general plan. See also Comprehensive Plan

**Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**

A method of storing geographic information on computers. Geographic information can be obtained from a variety of sources, including topographic maps, soil maps, aerial and satellite photos, and remote sensing technology.

**Geologic Hazard**

Any public safety hazard associated with geologic forces, including landsliding, mudsliding, surface rupture, groundshaking, liquefaction, and erosion and sedimentation.

**Goal**

A general end towards which the City will direct effort.

**Grade**

The average level of the finished surface of the ground adjacent to the exterior walls of the building.

**Grade, Existing**

The vertical elevation of the ground surface prior to excavating or filling.

**Grading Ordinance**

Locally adopted ordinance that regulates grading activities and ensures that erosion, aesthetic, and drainage considerations are taken into account.

**Green Infrastructure**

The network of natural features and systems that help to address urban issues, such as by reducing heat islands, increasing biodiversity, producing food, improving air quality, generating sustainable energy, cleaning soils, and managing stormwater,

**Greenhouse Gas (GHG)**

Gases that are released into the atmosphere largely as a byproduct of burning fossil fuels, including oil, natural gas, and coal, and can be emitted as methane during the production and transport of fossil fuels.

**Gross Density**

The number of housing units per acre of land, including roads, utility easements, and other dedicated rights-of-way.

**Groundshaking**

Earthquake-induced shaking of the ground; may cause widespread damage and structural failure. Varies depending on the firmness of the ground and the magnitude of the earthquake.

**Groundwater**

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

**Groundwater Recharge**

The process of infiltration and percolation of rainwater from land areas or streams through permeable soils into water holding aquifers that provide underground storage.

**~~Guard and Go~~**

~~Method of discouraging through-traffic on local streets through frequent use of stop signs.~~

**H****Habitat**

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

**Hazardous Material**

An injurious substance, including pesticides, herbicides, poisons, toxic metals and chemicals, liquefied natural gas, explosives, volatile chemicals, and nuclear fuels.

**Hazardous Waste**

Any refuse or discarded material or combinations of refuse or discarded materials in solid, semisolid, liquid, or gaseous form which cannot be handled by routine waste management techniques because they pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or other living organisms because of their chemical, biological, or physical properties.

**Hazardous Waste (HW) Facility Combining District**

A special zoning district that allows hazardous waste facilities subject to specified standards; used in combination with a “base” zoning district that allows a broader range of uses such as industrial or manufacturing.

**Heritage Tree**

A designated tree that is unique and important to the community because of its species, age, size, location, and/or historical significance.

**High Density**

A relative term, used to describe development dominated by multi-family housing and buildings of two stories or more. In Palo Alto, high density areas generally exceed 30 housing units per acre.

**High Speed Rail (HSR)**

A rail system designed to significantly increase speed in comparison to conventional rail service. The California High-Speed Rail Authority is responsible for planning, designing, building, and operating California High Speed Rail, which is anticipated to travel from Southern California to the Bay Area, including through Palo Alto.

### **High Technology**

An economic sector composed of a broad range of activities, including development and production of computers and office machines, communications equipment, semiconductors and electronic components, aerospace and military vehicles, computer services, research and development laboratories, and scientific instruments.

### **High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane**

A traffic lane reserved for vehicles that contain two or more (and in some cases three or more) persons.

### **Historic Buildings Inventory**

City-maintained roster of buildings and/or sites with national, state, or local historic significance.

### **Historic Preservation**

The preservation of historically significant structures and neighborhoods, often with the intent of restoring or rehabilitating the structures to their former condition.

### **Historic Preservation Ordinance**

City of Palo Alto legislation guiding the maintenance and preservation of historic buildings and sites.

### **Historic Resource**

A historic building or site that is noteworthy for its significance in local, state or national history or culture, its architecture or design, or its works of art, memorabilia, or artifacts.

### **Historic Resources Board (HRB)**

City Council appointed seven-member board, responsible for designating, preserving, protecting, enhancing and perpetuating those historic structures, districts and neighborhoods that contribute to the cultural and aesthetic heritage of Palo Alto.

### **Historic Structure**

A structure deemed to be historically significant based on its visual quality, design, history, association, context, and/ or integrity.



### **Home Improvement Exception**

A process in the City's Zoning Ordinance that allows minor exceptions to the site development regulations in order to preserve an existing architectural style or neighborhood character.

### **HOME Program**

Federal program enacted in 1990 that distributes funds on a formula basis to qualifying local jurisdictions and to the State Department of Housing and Community Development for distribution to other local jurisdictions; funds may be used for rehabilitation, new construction, acquisition, and tenant-based rental assistance; the City of Palo Alto is a non-entitlement City for HOME funds and must make application to the State.

### **Horizon Year**

The end of the period covered by the Comprehensive Plan; in this case, 2010.

### **Household Hazardous Waste**

Waste that is generated in the home that are toxic or hazardous to humans and the environment when discarded, including paint, motor oil, batteries, and household cleaning products.

### **Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

A cabinet level department of the federal government that administers housing and community development programs.

### **Housing Development Fund**

City maintained fund that can be used for acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of housing. The funds are primarily available to non-profit groups who agree to maintain the long-term affordability of the housing units.

### **Housing Discrimination Ordinance**

~~Chapter 9.74 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code that prohibits discrimination in renting or leasing housing based on age, parenthood, pregnancy, or the potential or actual presence of a minor child.~~

### **Housing Technical Document**

A supplement to the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan that includes technical, socioeconomic and housing data as well as more detail on the City's housing programs; meets State requirements for Housing Elements.

### **Housing Unit**

The place of permanent or customary abode for a person or household. May be a single family dwelling, a condominium, a co-operative, a mobile home, an apartment, or any other residential unit considered real property under State law. Must have cooking facilities, a bathroom, and a place to sleep.

### **Human Relations Commission (HRC)**

City Council appointed board consisting of seven Palo Alto residents; responsible for addressing a broad range of human relations and equity issues in the City.

I

### **Impervious Surface**

Surface through which water cannot easily penetrate, such as roof, road, sidewalk, and paved parking lot.

### **Impact**

The effect of any direct, man-made actions or indirect repercussions of man-made actions on existing physical, environmental, social, or economic conditions.

### **Implementation**

An action, procedure, program or technique that involves the carrying out of policies.

### **In-lieu Fee**

Cash payments that may be required of an owner or developer as a substitute for dedication of land or physical improvements; usually calculated in dollars per lot or square foot of land or building area.

### **Incentive**

A reward or bonus offered by the City to encourage the private sector to take an action that would be less likely otherwise.

### **Inclusionary Housing**

Housing that is built as a result of local regulations that require a minimum percentage of all units in developments exceeding a certain size to be affordable to low and moderate income households.

### **Infill**

Development of individual vacant lots or leftover vacant properties within areas that are already developed.

### **Infiltration**

The process through which water travels from the ground surface through soil to the aquifer.

### **Infrastructure**

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

### **Initial Study**

A preliminary evaluation of a project under the California Environmental Quality Act to determine the necessity for and scope of an Environmental Impact Report, or to enable modifications that would qualify for a Negative Declaration, or to provide a factual basis for a Negative Declaration.

### **Injection Well**

A well used to dispose of liquids or replenish groundwater through injection into the ground.

### **Intercity/Intercounty**

Involving more than one City or County.

## **J, K**

### **Jitney**

A small bus or van that transports passengers on a fixed route according to a flexible schedule for free or a small fare. *See also Shuttle Bus.*

### **Jobs/Housing Balance**

The availability of affordable housing for employees.

### **Jobs/Housing Ratio**

The jobs/housing balance 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.

## **L**

### **L01, L10, L50, L90**

The A-weighted noise levels that are exceeded 1 percent, 10 percent, 50 percent, and 90 percent of the time during the measurement period.

### **LAFCo (Local Agency Formation Commission)**

A five-member commission within Santa Clara County comprised of two county supervisors, two City Council members, and one member of the public, that reviews, evaluates and is empowered to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve all proposals for formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts and merger of districts within the county.

### **Land Banking**

Acquisition of land by a local government or other nonprofit entity for eventual resale or improvement at a later date, usually for affordable housing, open space or parkland.

### **Landsliding**

The rapid downslope movement of rock, soil, and debris; usually induced by heavy rain or seismic activity.

### **Land Use and Circulation Map**

The poster-sized fold-out diagram in the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan illustrating the general distribution and intensity of allowable development, and the location of existing and planned roads, public facilities and open space.

### **Land Use Definitions**

Definitions of Land Use correspond to the categories on the land use and Circulation Map. Complete definition of each category is contained in the Land Use and Circulation Element.

**L<sub>dn</sub>**

See *Day/Night Level*.

**Legislative Decision Making**

Decisions that involve making or recommending new policies or laws.

**Level of Service (LOS) Standard, Traffic**

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

**Liquefaction**

The transformation of loose, water-saturated granular materials (such as sand or silt) from a solid into a liquid state; may occur during major earthquakes.

**Livability**

Refers to the environmental and social quality of an area. A livable community has a high degree of safety, health, housing and transportation options, functional ecosystems, aesthetic value, public participation in civic life, recreation, entertainment, and a unique identity.

**Live/Work**

A development type designed so that persons may live and work in the same space, often in former commercial or industrial buildings renovated for habitation.

**Local Street**

Minor roadway that provides access to adjacent properties only.

**Local Action List**

List developed by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to reduce automobile trips and traffic congestion.

**Local-serving**

Economic activities with a primarily local market, such as retail stores and personal services; contrasted to “basic” economic activities such as manufacturing and wholesale trade.

### **Long-term Parking Facility**

A lot or structure dedicated to all day automobile parking.

#### **LOS A**

Indicates a relatively free flow of traffic, with little or no limitation on vehicle movement or speed.

#### **LOS B**

A steady flow of traffic, with only slight delays in vehicle movement and speed

#### **LOS C**

A reasonably steady, high-volume flow of traffic, with some limitations on vehicle movement and speed, and occasional backups on critical approaches.

#### **LOS D**

Designates where the level of traffic nears an unstable flow. Intersections still function but short queues develop and cars may have to wait through one cycle during short peaks.

#### **LOS E**

Traffic characterized by slow movement and frequent (although momentary) stoppages. This type of congestion is considered severe, but is not uncommon at peak hours, with frequent stopping, longstanding queues, and blocked intersections.

#### **LOS F**

Represents 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.

### **Low-Emission Vehicle**

A motor vehicle that emits relatively low levels of motor vehicle emissions in comparison to a conventional motor vehicle. California's LEV standards apply to certain passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty passenger vehicles.

### **Low Impact Development (LID)**

An approach to land development that utilizes natural processes and incorporates systems and practices designed to manage stormwater in a way that protects water quality.

### **Low-Income**

Households with incomes between 51 and 80 percent of the areawide median family income. Thresholds vary depending on the number of persons in the household.

## **M**

### **Marguerite Shuttle**

Bus or van service available to the general public provided by Stanford University at no fee to riders, serving the campus and portions of Palo Alto and Menlo Park.

### **Market Pricing**

An approach to transportation management for the purpose of discouraging vehicle trips that varies the cost of travel to the user through road and bridge tolls, parking fees, and other methods depending on the level of demand.

### **Market-rate Housing**

Housing that is offered for rent or sale at fair market value without any consideration of standards for determining affordability.

### **Median**

1) The paved or landscaped area on a major roadway that separates traffic moving in opposing directions. 2) The point at which one-half of a set is greater and one-half is less, such as median income or median rent.

### **Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)**

The regional transportation agency for the Bay Area; responsible for long-range transportation and mass transit planning, road funding, traffic and transportation models, and traffic projections.

### **Microunits**

Compact, one-room dwelling units, typically with 150 to 300 square feet of space.

### **Mid-Peninsula**

Pertaining to the central part of the San Francisco Peninsula, extending from San Francisco Airport south to and including Palo Alto.

### **Mineral Deposits of Regional Significance**

A designation applied by the State Division of Mines and Geology to land on which known deposits of commercially viable mineral or aggregate deposits exist; intended to protect quarrying operations from encroachment by incompatible uses.

### **Mini-park**

Small neighborhood park of approximately one-half to two acres.

### **Minimize**

To reduce or lessen, but not necessarily to eliminate.

### **Minimum Density Requirements**

Land use regulations that allow development only if the proposed density will be greater than a specific number of units per acre.

### **Mission-driven Budget (MDB)**

Palo Alto's unique budgetary process that integrates principals of Management by Objectives, program budgeting and performance reporting; emphasizes ensuring that resources are allocated based on agreed upon missions; focuses on planning and evaluation, accountability, resource allocation, and financial management.

### **Mitigate**

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

### **Mitigated Negative Declaration**

A Negative Declaration that concludes a project will not have a significant effect on the environment because the project has been modified and/or mitigation measures have been included.

### **Mitigation**

Measures taken to eliminate or minimize damages from development activities by replacement of the resource or other means of compensation.



**Mixed Use**

A development type in which various uses, such as office, retail, and residential, are combined in the same building or within separate buildings on the same site or on nearby sites.

**Mobility**

The ability to move from one place to another, or to transport goods from one place to another.

**Moderate-Income**

Households with incomes between 81 and 120 percent of the areawide median family income. Thresholds vary depending on the number of persons in the household.

**Mortgage Credit Certificates**

Federally created, locally run program that assists first-time home buyers in qualifying for mortgages. Certificates are issued by a local agency to qualified low- or moderate-income first-time home buyers; the IRS allows eligible home buyers to take 20 percent of their annual mortgage interest as a dollar-for-dollar tax credit against their personal income tax.

**Mortgage Revenue Bonds**

Government bonds that provide low-cost tax-exempt financing to developers who make a portion of the units in their projects available to low- and moderate-income households.

**Multi-modal Transit Station**

A location that provides connections between bus and rail transit modes and includes pick-up, drop-off and parking areas for cars, as well as bicycle-related facilities.

**Multi-Neighborhood Center**

Retail shopping centers or districts that serve more than one neighborhood with a diverse mix of uses, including retail, service, office, and residential.

**Mutual Aid Agreement**

An agreement between two or more jurisdictions for the joint provision of services that cross jurisdictional boundaries, such as fire protection.

## N

### **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

Federal law requiring agencies to document and consider the environmental implications of their actions.

### **National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)**

The Nation's largest independent, non-profit public service organization advocating quality recreation and parks for the American people; its objectives revolve around public advocacy, public visibility, research, and professional development.

### **National Register of Historic Places**

The federal government's list of properties that have been identified as worthy of preservation; properties may be listed on the Register or may be identified as being "eligible" or "potentially eligible;" properties are usually listed in the National Register through nominations by the State Office of Historic Preservation.

### **Native Plants**

Plants indigenous to an area or from a similar climate and requiring little or no supplemental irrigation once established.

### **Negative Declaration**

A finding under the procedures of the California Environmental Quality Act that a proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and does not require preparation of an Environmental Impact Report.

### **Neighborhood**

A part of the City defined by distinct characteristics and boundaries and considered as familiar territory by its residents.

### **Neighborhood Beautification**

Refers to any of a number of efforts or programs aimed at improving the visual quality of a neighborhood, including improved landscaping, signage, streets, painting and building facades, as well as community clean-ups.

### **Neighborhood Center**

A small retail center with a primary trade area limited to the immediately surrounding area; often anchored by a grocery or drug store and may include a

variety of smaller retail shops and offices oriented to the everyday needs of surrounding residents. Also called "*Neighborhood Shopping Center.*"

### **Neighborhood Park**

Park of roughly two to 10 acres in size, intended to meet the recreation needs of people living or working within a one-half mile radius.

### **Net Density**

The number of housing units per acre of land, excluding public roads, natural watercourse and drainage easements, and other dedicated rights of way.

### **Net Zero**

A sustainability concept wherein resource usage is balanced by resource generation or offsets.

### **~~1989 Citywide Land Use and Transportation Study~~**

~~1989 City Council approved Palo Alto planning document that established non-residential development limits (in square feet) for different geographic areas in the City.~~

### **Noise**

A sound of any kind, especially one that is loud, unwanted, or disagreeable.

### **Noise Compatibility**

The relationship between land uses and ambient noise levels; residential uses are considered to be less compatible with high noise environments than industrial uses.

### **Noise Contour**

A line connecting points of equal noise level as measured on the same scale. Noise levels greater than the 60 L<sub>dn</sub> contour (measured in dBA) require noise attenuation in residential development.

### **Noise Ordinance**

Locally adopted legislation that regulates noise-producing activities.

### **Non-automobile Mode**

Any mode of transportation that does not use private automobiles; includes bicycling, walking, buses and trains.

### **Non-conforming Use**

A use that was valid when brought into existence but by subsequent regulation becomes no longer conforming. Typically, non-conforming uses are permitted to continue for a designated period of time, subject to certain restrictions.

### **Non-indigenous Landscaping**

Landscaping that is not native to an area and typically requires more water than naturally occurring vegetation. *Also called "exotic" or "non-native" landscaping.*

### **Non-point Source**

Sources of air or water pollution that enter the environment from dispersed sources, such as pollution tainted stormwater runoff from streets and parking areas, rather than at a single point, such as an industrial facility discharge pipe.

### **Non-profit**

Not conducted or maintained for the purpose of making a profit.

### **Non-residential**

Any of a broad category of land uses that do not contain housing; includes commercial, industrial, public, and institutional uses, among others.

### **Non-renewable Resource**

Natural resources, such as fossil fuels and natural gas, which once used cannot be replaced and used again.

### **No Net Loss of Housing Potential**

Development philosophy that allows non-residential development on a residentially zoned site only when an equal or greater amount of housing potential is created elsewhere in the City.

### **Northern California Power Agency (NCPA)**

A public agency that delivers electric power to several jurisdictions in Northern California, including Palo Alto.

## **O**

### **Off-grid**

Self-sufficient design that allows for independence from one or more public utilities. In Palo Alto, this refers specifically to the electrical grid.

### **Off-peak**

Not being in the period of maximum use. For traffic, generally refers to the weekday periods before and after the morning and evening commute hours, typically 9 AM to 3 PM and 7 PM to 6 AM. For electric utilities, generally refers to non-business hours, typically 7 PM to 6 AM. Other examples apply.

### **Off-street Parking**

Parking that is provided outside of the right-of-way of a public street, typically in a surface parking lot or parking structure.

### **On-street Parking**

Parking that is provided within the right-of-way of a public street, typically in designated parallel or diagonally striped spaces adjacent to moving traffic lanes.

### **Open Space**

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

## **P**

### **Palo Alto Community Child Care (PACCC)**

Non-profit agency that organizes community resources for the development and improvement of child care services.

### **Palo Alto Foothills Fire Management Plan**

Planning document that presents strategies to reduce fuel build-up and the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the Palo Alto foothills.

### **Palo Alto Municipal Code**

Compendium of municipal ordinances and codes, including zoning regulations.

### **Palo Alto Sanitation Company (PASCO)**

Provider of trash collection services to Palo Alto residents and businesses.

### **Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD)**

Special district that provides public education to residents of Palo Alto and a limited number of outlying areas. Owns and operates elementary and secondary schools throughout the City.

### **Parkway**

A low-speed road laid through a garden or park-like landscape, usually with median and roadside plantings. More narrowly, a planted strip between a curb and a sidewalk.

### **Paratransit**

A “door to door” transportation service offered to individuals who cannot use conventional public transit service due to physical, visual, or cognitive disabilities.

### **Parking, Unbundled**

A strategy in which the cost of parking spaces for housing or commercial units are separated from rental or sales prices.

### **Particulate(s) (PM<sub>10</sub>)**

Particulates, or particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), less than 10 microns in diameter, includes a wide range of solid and liquid inhalable particles, including smoke, dust, metallic oxides, aerosols and other tiny bits of solid materials that are released into and move around in the air. Particulates are produced by many sources, including burning of diesel fuels by trucks and buses, incineration of garbage, mixing and application of fertilizers and pesticides, road construction, industrial processes such as steel making, mining operations, agricultural burning (field and slash burning), and operation of fireplaces and woodstoves. Particulate pollution can cause eye, nose and throat irritation and other health problems.

### **Passive Open Space**

Open space that is set aside for the purpose of resource conservation, protection of public safety, or visual enjoyment rather than active recreation.

### **Pavement Management Program**

City of Palo Alto Public Works program that analyzes and prioritizes the maintenance and repair of road surfaces.

### **Peak Hour**

For any given traffic facility, the daily 60-minute period during which traffic volumes are the highest.

### **Pedestrian-oriented**

Form of development that makes the street environment inviting for pedestrians; for commercial areas may be characterized by special sidewalk pavement, zero front and side yard setbacks, buildings of varied architectural styles, street-facing window displays, an absence of front yard parking, benches and other amenities; for residential areas may be characterized by sidewalks, parkways, front porches, low fences, lighting and other amenities.

### **Performance Standards**

Zoning regulations that allow uses based on a particular set of standards of operation rather than on the particular type of use; may be established to limit noise, air pollution, emissions, odor, glare, vibration, dust, dirt, heat, fire hazards, waste, traffic generation, and visual impact.

### **Permeable Paving**

Paving through which water easily passes. *Also called "porous paving."*

### **Persons with Disabilities**

Persons with developmental, physical, or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more life activities.

### **Planned Community (PC) Ordinance**

A local zoning provision that allows flexibility in land uses and development standards for a particular project, subject to controlled conditions and a finding that the project has a public benefit.

### **Planning Area**

The geographic area covered by the Comprehensive Plan; corresponds to all land within the City limits plus land in the unincorporated area that relates directly to the City's planning needs as designated by Santa Clara County LAFCo.

### **Planning Commission**

City Council appointed board of seven Palo Alto residents; responsible for reviewing and making recommendations to the City Council on proposals for development,

the subdivision of land, amendments to zoning, land use studies, the annual Capital Improvement Program, the Comprehensive Plan and other development regulations.

### **Planting Pocket**

A small landscaped area within the normally-paved parking lane, used to separate on-street parking spaces from one another and create the impression of narrower streets.

### **PM<sub>10</sub>**

Particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter; includes a wide range of solid and liquid inhalable particles, including smoke, dust, metallic oxides, and aerosols.

*See Particulate Matter*

### **Pocket Park**

Very small landscaped area or plaza in an urban area, providing visual relief, passive recreation (sunbathing, reading, dining, etc.), nature enjoyment, or a public gathering space.

### **Point Source**

Sources of air or water pollution that enter the environment at a single point such as a smokestack or drain pipe rather than in a dispersed manner.

### **Policy**

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

### **Pollutant**

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

### **Precise Plan**

A plan for a sub-area of the City that implements the Comprehensive Plan through specific provisions and standards for how individual properties may be developed.

*See also Coordinated Area Plan and Specific Plan.*



### **Preliminary Development Review Ordinance**

City Council adopted ordinance that allows applicants to submit conceptual development plans for City Council comment prior to formal submittal for City approval.

### **Prime Farmland**

State Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program classification; indicates farmland that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for the production of crops.

### **Program**

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

### **Public Art**

Sculpture, painting, murals, and other forms of artwork that are placed in public spaces or in public view to enrich and add visual interest to the built environment.

### **Public Art Commission (PAC)**

City Council appointed seven-member board, responsible for advising the City in matters pertaining to the quality, quantity, scope and style of art in public places, and for acquiring and siting permanent works of art, specifically outdoor sculpture.

### **Public Facility**

*See Community Facility*

### **Public/Private Partnership**

A merging of public and private resources to achieve an end result or product that would be difficult to achieve through public or private activity alone. May refer to the delivery of services, such as child care, or to the construction of buildings, such as cultural facilities.

### **Public Way**

A public path, walkway, street, alley, trail, or other publicly owned space through which people have the right to pass.

**Purple Pipe**

Infrastructure used to convey recycled water.

**Q**

**Quasi-judicial Decision Making**

Decisions that involve application of existing laws and policies to a specific situation.

**R**

**Receiver Site**

A site to which development rights are transferred or upon which higher densities are allowed in exchange for foregoing development on another site.

**Recycled Water**

Converted wastewater that has been treated so that it may be used again for new purposes. ‡

**Redevelop**

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 Shopping Center**

In Palo Alto, a shopping center with a primary trade area covering at least the Peninsula and South Bay areas, usually anchored by several department stores and offering a broad array of goods and services.

**Regional Center**

A commercial activity center of citywide and regional significance, with a mix of shopping, offices, and some housing.

**Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)**

Regional agency responsible for implementing State and federal Clean Water Acts. Defines beneficial use of Bay waters, sets and enforces water quality and discharge standards, and formulates plans and strategies to improve water quality.

### **Regional Water Quality Control Plant (RWQCP)**

Wastewater treatment facility operated by the City of Palo Alto and serving the City and nearby environs including East Palo Alto, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Mountain View and Stanford.

### **Regressive Fee**

A fee in which the per unit amount lessens as the amount subject to the fee increases

### **Remote Parking**

A parking lot on a site other than the property that it serves, usually at a substantial distance and often connected by shuttle bus.

### **Renewable Energy**

Energy generated from a natural source that is not depleted when it is used, such as energy from sunlight, wind, tides, or geothermal heat.

### **Renewable Resource**

Natural resources, such as water and air, that can be replaced by natural ecological cycles or sound management practices.

### **Research and Development (R&D)**

Economic sector oriented around the development and application of new technologies.

### **Residential Arterial**

Major roadway mainly serving through-traffic; takes traffic to and from expressways and freeways; provides access to adjacent properties, most of which are residential properties located on both sides of the roadway with direct frontages and driveways on that roadway.

### **Residential Neighborhood**

Areas of the City characterized by housing, parks, and public facilities; boundaries are based on patterns of land subdivision and public perceptions about where one neighborhood stops and another begins.

### **Resilient/Resiliency**

The ability of a system to absorb the effects of climate change, maintain function, and adapt, reorganize, or evolve into a way that improves the sustainability of the system and anticipates future effects.

### **Revitalization**

Restoring new life or vigor to an economically depressed area, sometimes through public improvements that spark private investment.

### **Ridesharing**

Two or more persons traveling by any mode, including but not limited to carpooling, vanpooling, buspooling, taxipooling, jitney, and public transit. Sometimes used to refer to private companies that link riders with drivers through apps or other technology.

### **Ridge Trail**

A regional trail comprised of a series of interconnected trails traversing the hills around San Francisco Bay, forming a ridge line ring around the Bay several hundred miles in length; about 50 percent complete in 1997. The trail is promoted and managed by the non-profit Bay Area Ridge Trail Council.

### **Right-of-way**

The strip of land over which certain transportation and/or other public facilities are built, including roads, railroads, and utility lines.

### **Riparian Corridor or Riparian Lands**

The strip of land of native vegetation along the banks of a perennial or intermittent stream or creek established by and dependent on the water supply provided by the stream or creek.

### **Runoff**

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

## **S**

### **Safe Routes to School**

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

### **San Mateo Transit (SamTrans)**

Primarily bus transit system serving San Mateo County, with connections to San Francisco and Santa Clara Counties.

### **Santa Clara County Hazardous Waste Management Plan**

Mandatory planning document prepared pursuant to the AB 2948 (Tanner bill); focuses on the management of hazardous wastes generated within the County and the facilities needed to serve these wastes.

### **Santa Clara County Urban Runoff Management Plan**

County Plan that presents recommendations to local governments to improve the quality of stormwater runoff, identifies actions to be taken by private industry to reduce discharges, and assigns a priority rating system for stormwater control measures.

### **Santa Clara Valley Congestion Management Program (CMP)**

See “*Congestion Management Program*”

### **Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program**

Locally implemented program to achieve compliance with the federal Clean Water Act; includes an array of measures designed to reduce water pollution from urban runoff.

### **Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)**

Agency that provides transit services, conducts transportation planning, and implements the State-mandated Congestion Management Program for Santa Clara County.

### **Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD)**

Regional agency responsible for the management of water resources in the Santa Clara Valley, including groundwater, reservoirs, creeks, and potable water.

### **Scale**

The relative proportion of the size of different elements of the built environment to one another; the measurement of the relationship of one object to another.

### **Scenic Route**

A highway, road, or drive that, in addition to its transportation function, provides opportunities for the enjoyment of scenic resources, views, and access to areas of exceptional beauty or historical interest. Scenic Roads in Palo Alto are University Avenue, Embarcadero Road, Oregon Expressway/Page Mill Road, Sand Hill Road, Foothill Expressway, Interstate 280, Junipero Serra Boulevard, and portions of Arastradero Road.

### **Sea Level Rise**

The increase in mean sea level resulting from the increased volume of water in the world's oceans; sea level rise is primarily caused by the climate change effects of land ice that is melting and sea water that is expanding as it warms.

### **Second Unit**

A self-contained living unit, either attached to or detached from, and in addition to, the primary residential unit on a single lot. *Also called* See- "accessory dwelling unit" "in-law" unit or "granny flat."

### **Sedimentation**

Process by which eroding soil is carried by stormwater run-off and deposited, usually along the course of a stream or creek.

### **Seismic**

Caused by or subject to earthquakes or earth vibrations.

### **Seismic Hazard Zone**

The State of California, Seismic Hazards Mapping Act identifies areas within the state where landslides and liquefaction are most likely to occur. The Act requires special investigation of these sites before some types of buildings may be constructed. Property owners must disclose that property lies within such a zone at the time of sale.

### **Seismic Retrofit**

Structural upgrading of buildings to minimize or abate potential hazards in the event of an earthquake.

### **Seismically-induced Flooding**

~~Includes flooding from earthquake-induced dam failure, tsunamis, and seiches (earthquake-induced waves on lakes and other water bodies).~~

### **Senior Care Facility**

Housing licensed by the State Health and Welfare Agency, Department of Social Services, typically for elderly residents who are frail and need assistance.

### **Senior Coordinating Council (SCC)**

Non-profit Palo Alto organization providing a broad range of services to seniors including transportation, health care, housing, counseling, social work, support, and home repair.

### **Sensitive Receptor**

Used in noise analyses to describe any land use that is susceptible to the effects of loud noise, including hospitals, nursing homes, schools, child care facilities, and residential areas.

### **Setback**

The horizontal distance between two points such as a property line and a structure.

### **Shall**

~~Signifies a directive. That which that is obligatory or necessary.~~

### **Shared Housing**

A single dwelling unit that is occupied by persons of more than one family in order to reduce living expenses and provide social contact, mutual support, and assistance.

### **Shopping Center**

In Palo Alto, a group of commercial establishments, planned, developed, owned or managed as a unit, with off- street parking provided on the site.

### **Short-term Parking Facility**

A parking area designed for rapid turnover, where the duration of stay is usually short (e.g., less than two hours).

### **Should**

Signifies a directive to be honored in the absence of significant countervailing considerations.

### **Shuttle Bus**

A bus or van service that transports passengers between or among fixed stops for free or fare. *See also jitney.*

### **Sign Ordinance**

Local legislation regulating the location and design of signs.

### **Signage**

General term referring to public and private signs and their design attributes.

### **Significant Adverse Impact**

A substantial detrimental effect on the environment as determined by application of the California Environmental Quality Act; may include impacts on air, water, or land resources, among others.

### **Single Family**

A dwelling unit intended for occupancy by one family that may be independent from any other structure or that may share common walls with an adjoining structure.

### **Single-Family Detached Home**

A dwelling unit intended for occupancy by one family that is structurally independent from any other dwelling unit.

### **Single Occupant Vehicle**

A private automobile containing a driver and no passengers.

### **Single Room Occupancy (SRO)**

A dwelling unit, typically consisting of a single room of 80 to 250 square feet, with a sink and closet, that may include private bathroom, bathing and kitchen facilities or may utilize communal facilities.

### **Slope**

Land gradient described as the vertical rise divided by the horizontal run, and expressed in percent.



### **Small Lot Single-Family**

Single-family homes on lots smaller than “standard” City lots; typically less than 5,000 square feet. Usually characterized by narrow (or zero) setbacks, smaller homes, and greater lot coverage than conventional development.

### **Small Scale Change**

A proposed alteration to a previously approved building design or site plan that will not significantly change the character or impact of the project as approved.

### **Solid Waste**

General category that includes organic wastes, paper products, metals, glass, plastics, cloth, brick, rock, soil, leather, rubber, yard wastes, and wood.

### **Sunnyvale Material and Recovery Transfer (SMaRT) Station©**

Public facility in Sunnyvale at which solid waste from Palo Alto and other jurisdictions is sorted to remove recyclable materials for resale.

### **Source Reduction**

Minimizing the quantity of total waste generated by reducing the use of non-recyclable material; replacing disposables and products with reusable materials, reducing packaging, reducing the amount of organic wastes generated, purchasing repairable items, and by using products and materials more efficiently.

### **Source Reduction and Recycling Element**

Locally adopted plan required by the State that describes how the jurisdiction will reduce its solid waste disposal by 25 percent by 1995 and 50 percent by 2000; prepared in accordance with regulations established by the California Integrated Waste Management Board.

### **Source Separation**

Separation of waste materials in a manner that enables the City to gain more control over recycling and quantify the material disposed in its jurisdiction.

### **South-of-Forest Area (SOFA)**

Area of mixed residential, institutional, and commercial uses generally located south of Forest Avenue and south of the University Avenue/Downtown business district.

### **Southern Connection**

A potential new roadway extending from the west end of the Dumbarton Bridge along the edge of the Bay to Highway 101 near the Embarcadero Road/Oregon Expressway interchange.

### **Special Status Species**

Any plant or animal species identified by the State or federal governments as rare, endangered, or threatened; such species require protection and conservation due to their rarity, scarcity, or danger of extinction.

### **Specific Plan**

A legal tool for detailed design and implementation of a defined portion of the area covered by a General Plan. *See also Coordinated Area Plan and Precise Plan.*

### **Sphere of Influence (SOI)**

A boundary established by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) that encompasses all land in the City limits plus land in the unincorporated area that could ultimately become part of the City through annexation.

### **State Implementation Plan**

State Plan required by the Federal Clean Air Act to attain and maintain national ambient air quality standards; adopted by local air quality districts and the State Air Resources Board.

### **State Historic Buildings Code**

Regulations prepared by the State Historic Building Safety Board and adopted by the State of California Building Standards Commission that require enforcing agencies to accept reasonably equivalent alternatives to the California Building Standards Code (CBCS) and other applicable regulations when dealing with qualified historical buildings.

### **Storm Drain**

A device used to capture stormwater runoff, usually from streets or other non-permeable surfaces, and transport it via pipes to ditches, creeks, channels, and other drainage courses.

### **Stormwater Collection-Storm Drain System**

Network of pipes, drains, and channels designed to convey rainwater that does not seep into the earth to creeks and the Bay.

### **Storm Drainage Master Plan**

City of Palo Alto document setting priorities and identifying long-range improvements to the City's storm drainage system.

### **Stormwater/Stormwater Runoff**

Surface water resulting from precipitation events or snow/ice melt. Stormwater runoff is generated when stormwater flows over land or impervious surfaces, rather than infiltrating into the ground.

### **Street Furniture**

Those features associated with a street that are intended to enhance the street's physical character and be used by pedestrians, such as benches, trash receptacles, kiosks, lights, and newspaper racks.

### **Street Tree(s)**

Trees planted in medians or along sidewalks in the public right-of-way that are intended to enhance the visual quality of a street, provide shade, absorb pollutants and noise, and provide habitat for urban wildlife.

### **Street Tree System**

Term used to collectively describe all of Palo Alto's street trees.

### **Subsidence**

Localized sinking of the ground, usually caused by groundwater withdrawal.

### **Superfund**

Federal funding source for the clean-up of a priority list of contaminated sites in the United States.

### **Support Services**

Any of a wide array of social services that provide information, assistance and referrals, such as child care, job training and placement, health care, and counseling, to citizens.

### **Surplus Property**

Land or structure owned by a public agency, such as the City of Palo Alto or the School District, that is no longer needed for the delivery of public services or protection of public health, safety, and welfare.

### **Sustainable/Sustainability**

The balance of environmental health, economic prosperity, and social equality and the simultaneous consideration of current and future needs.

### **Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)**

A plan that each of California's metropolitan planning organizations must prepare as part of its regional transportation plan to show how the region will meet its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

### **Sustainability/Climate Action Plan (S/CAP)**

A City of Palo Alto plan is currently preparing to provide a pathway to achieving sustainability goals and exceeding State requirements for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

-T

### **Telecommuting**

Using computers, telephones, modems, fax machines, and other telecommunications devices to connect to a workplace from a remote location (such as home) rather than physically being in that workplace.

### **Through-traffic**

Traffic with both origins and destinations outside a particular area of reference, such as a City or neighborhood.

### **Title 24**

Regulations adopted in 1977 by the California Energy Commission; contains prescriptive standards for wall, ceiling, and floor insulation, vapor barriers, glazing, infiltration, climate control systems, and water heating equipment.

### **Traffic Calming**

Refers to measures that make permanent, physical changes to streets to slow traffic and/or reduce volumes; also can include education and enforcement measures to promote changes in driver behavior.

### **Traffic Circle**

A raised island in the center of an intersection that helps reduce speeding by forcing drivers to slow.

### **Transbay**

Pertaining to travel between the east and west sides of San Francisco Bay.

### **Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)**

Program in which a landowner's development rights are relocated from a site where development is considered undesirable (due to environmental impacts) to another site chosen based on its ability to accommodate more development.

### **Transit Corridor**

A major bus or rail route; may also be used to describe land uses along the route.

### **Transit Mall**

Street or portion thereof that has been closed to general auto traffic and redesigned to accommodate bus or light rail vehicles and pedestrians.

### **Transit-oriented Development**

Form of development that maximizes investment in transit infrastructure by concentrating the most intense types of development around transit stations and along transit lines; development in such areas is designed to make transit use as convenient as possible.

### **Transitional Housing**

~~Shelter provided to the homeless for an extended period, often as long as 18 months, and generally integrated with other social services and counseling programs to assist in the transition to self-sufficiency through the acquisition of a stable income and permanent housing.~~

### **Tree Task Force**

~~Ad hoc committee created by the City Council in 1993 to study tree planting, maintenance, and funding issues. This entity evolved into "Canopy" which incorporated in 1996. See "Canopy"~~

**Transportation Demand Management (TDM)**

A coordinated set of strategies that are designed to reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles, and thereby reduce both traffic and parking demand.

**Transportation Management Authority (TMA)**

In Palo Alto, an independent non-profit organization that works collaboratively with the City and the business community, is responsible for coordinating TDM programs.

**Tree Technical Manual**

A companion document to the Heritage Tree Ordinance; provides guidelines for required care of Protected Trees and regulates the removal and replacement of both public and private trees.

**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 Reduction**

An approach to reducing traffic congestion that minimizes the necessity of driving alone.

**U**

**Understory**

The layer of vegetation, such as shrubs, plants, and small trees, that grows between the ground and the canopy of larger trees.

**Underutilized Parcel**

Land that is not being used to its full potential and could be redeveloped with a more economically productive use.

**Uniform Building Code**

A national, standard building code that sets forth minimum standards for construction.

### **Urban Design**

The art and science of giving form, in terms of both beauty and function, to selected urban areas or to whole cities; addresses the location, mass, and design of various components of the environment and combines elements of urban planning, architecture, and landscape architecture.

### **Urban Forest**

Term used to describe trees, plants, soil and associated organisms along streets, in parks, and in yards throughout the City; collectively, these trees form a canopy that supports wildlife and provides environmental benefits.

### **Urban Service Area**

Area where City services and facilities provided by the City and other public agencies are generally available, and where urban development requiring such services should be located.

### **User-friendly Transit**

Transit that is designed to be safe, convenient, and easy to use; may also include use of small, environmentally friendly transit vehicles.

### **Utilities Fund**

Component of Palo Alto's revenue stream generated through rates for various City services including water, sewer, gas, electric, refuse, and storm drainage.

### **Utilities Advisory Commission (UAC)**

City Council appointed five-member board, responsible for advising the City on long-range planning and policy matters relating to the electric, water and gas utilities.

## **V**

### **Vacancy Rate**

The ratio of unoccupied housing units to total housing units; or the ratio of unoccupied leasable non-residential floor area to total leasable non-residential floor area.

### **Vehicle Miles Traveled**

Miles traveled by vehicles within a given geographical area during a specified period of time; calculated by multiplying the number of vehicle trips by trip distances.

### **Vertical Curb**

A curb with well-defined right-angled edges to discourage drivers from parking on the sidewalks.

### **Vertical Integration**

The mixing of one land use over another in a building of two stories or more, for example residential units over a retail store.

### **Very Low-Income**

Households with incomes between 0 and 50 percent of the areawide median family income. Thresholds vary depending on the number of persons in the household.

### **Village Residential**

Land use category that allows specific traditional types of housing that contribute to the pedestrian orientation of a street or neighborhood, at low to medium densities.

### **Vision**

A shared dream of the future characterized by long-term idealistic thinking. Provides the foundation for the development of the goals, policies and programs. A vision is not a binding goal and may not be achievable in the lifetime of those participating in the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Vision Zero**

A project to improve traffic safety, based on the concept that every traffic collision and death is preventable, either through engineering, education, or enforcement.

### **Volunteer Transfer Program (Schools)**

Program that enables students in one School District to attend school in another as authorized by the Allen bill.

### **Voucher**

A certificate worth a particular dollar amount but transferable only for a specific commodity (such as rent or transit) rather than for cash.

### **VTA**

*See Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority.*



**W****Walkable Neighborhood**

An area designed and constructed in such a way to provide and encourage pleasant, easy and efficient pedestrian movement.

**Wastewater**

The spent or used water from individual homes, a community, a farm, or an industry that often contains dissolved or suspended matter.

**Wastewater -Recycling**

The practice of using highly treated effluent from a wastewater treatment plant for landscape irrigation and other non-potable purposes.

**Water Resources**

Term used to collectively describe groundwater (aquifers), surface water (bays, rivers, creeks, oceans, etc.), precipitation, and water supply.

**Watershed**

The total area above a given point on a watercourse that contributes water to the flow of the watercourse; the entire region drained by a watercourse.

**Western Area Power Administration (WAPA)**

Federal agency that oversees the allocation of federal energy resources in the Western United States.

**Wetland(s)**

A lowland area, such as a marsh, that is saturated with moisture all or part of the year. Standards for defining wetland boundaries consider hydrology, vegetation, and soil conditions.

**Wildlife Corridor**

A landscape element that serves as a link between historically connected habitats or landscapes that are otherwise separated. Wildlife corridors provide avenues along which wildlife can travel, migrate, and meet mates; plants can propagate; genetic interchange can occur; populations can move in response to environmental changes and natural disasters; and individuals can re-colonize habitats from which populations have been locally extirpated.

### **Williamson Act**

Known formally as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965, the Williamson Act is a state law designed as an incentive to retain prime agricultural land and slow its conversion to urban uses. Each year landowners are offered reduced property tax assessments if they agree to not develop their land for the following ten years. The lowered assessments are based on the agricultural use of the land rather than its "market value."

## **X,Y,Z**

### **Zone "A"**

Term used by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to indicate those areas subject to inundation by a 100-year flood.

### **Zone "AE"**

Term used by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to indicate areas subject to inundation by a 100-year flood, where the flood level is referenced to a fixed elevation relative to sea level.

### **Zone "AO"**

Term used by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to indicate areas subject to inundation by a 100-year flood, but only at depths of 1 to 3 feet and with flooding typically caused by sheet flow on sloping terrain.

### **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 Map**

Map that depicts the division of the City into districts or "zones" in which different uses are allowed and different building and lot size restrictions apply.

### **Zoning Ordinance**

A set of land use regulations enacted by the City to create districts that permit certain land uses and prohibit others. Land uses in each district are regulated according to type, density, height, and the coverage of buildings.

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### **100-year Flood Plain**

The area subject to flooding during a storm that is expected to occur on the average of once every 100 years, based on historical data.

### **13-Point Parking Program**

Program adopted in 1995 by the Palo Alto City Council to manage parking supply and demand in the University Avenue/Downtown area.

### **1985 Land Use Policy Agreement**

Sets forth policies regarding land use, planning and development. The agreement governs unincorporated Stanford University Lands located in Santa Clara County among the County of Santa Clara, the City of Palo Alto, and Stanford University.

### **1989 Citywide Land Use and Transportation Study**

1989 City Council approved Palo Alto planning document that established non-residential development limits (in square feet) for different geographic areas in the City.