

PART IV

GENERAL PLAN GLOSSARY

The following is a glossary of abbreviations, acronyms, and terms used throughout the 2030 Merced County General Plan.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AB	California Assembly Bill
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
ARC	Agricultural Residential Center
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CLUP	Comprehensive Land Use Plan
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB	Decibel
DU	Dwelling Unit
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GBA	Gross Building Area
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
JPA	Joint Powers Authority
LAFCo	Merced County Local Agency Formation Commission
LOS	Level of Service
MCAG	Merced County Association of Governments
NLA	Net Lot Area
SB	California Senate Bill
SOI	Sphere of Influence
TAZ	Traffic Analysis Zone
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Services
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant

A

A-Weighting. A frequency-response adjustment of a sound level meter that conditions the output signal to approximate human response. All noise level measurements and noise standards associated with this General Plan are provided in terms of A-weighted sound levels.

Achieve. To carry out successfully or accomplish.

Acknowledge. To recognize the rights, authority, or status of.

Acoustics. The science of sound.

Acres, Gross. The total area of a site including portions that cannot be developed (e.g., right-of-way, open space).

Acres, Net Developable. The total area of a site excluding portions that cannot be developed (e.g., right-of-way, open space). Sometimes referred to as the “buildable” area of the project.

Affordable Housing. Housing which costs no more than 30 percent of gross household income. Housing costs include rent or mortgage payments, utilities, taxes, insurance, homeowner association fees, and other related costs.

Airport Land Use Commission. Responsible for developing and maintaining comprehensive land use plans to protect public health and safety, ensure compatible land uses in the areas around each airport, and ensure consistency between local land use plans and comprehensive land use plans for airport areas.

Allocate. To apportion for a specific purpose or to particular persons or things.

Allow. To make a possibility or admit.

Ambient Noise. The distinctive acoustical characteristics of a given space consisting of all noise sources audible at that location. In many cases the term ambient is used to describe an existing or pre-project condition such as the setting in an environmental noise study.

Annex, v. To incorporate a land area into an existing district or municipality, with a resulting change in the boundaries of the annexing jurisdiction.

Anticipate. To give advance thought, discussion, or treatment to.

Apply. To put to use especially for some practical purpose.

Approve. To accept as satisfactory.

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

Arterial. A roadway designed to favor mobility over local access. While some access to adjacent properties may be provided, arterials are designed and controlled to allow through movement at relatively high travel speeds.

Assist. To give usually supplementary support or aid to.

Attract. To pull to or draw toward oneself or itself.

B

Building Codes. State regulation enforced by the most recently updated codes in Title 15 of the Municipal Code, Title 24 of the California Building Code, California Mechanical, Plumbing, Electrical, Fire, and California Energy Code.

C

City. An incorporated municipality with local administrative and regulatory authority, usually governed by a mayor and council. When spelled with a capital "C," refers to a government agency or administration body. When spelled with a lower case "c," refers to the geographical area or a generic city.

Class I (Bike Path). A bicycle path intended for the exclusive use of bicycles or shared with pedestrians and physically separated by distance or a barrier from the roadway. Class I paths provide the safest opportunities for bicycle travel.

Class II (Bike Lane). A bicycle lane that shares the right-of-way with the roadway defined by the creation of a separate lane with pavement markings.

Class III (Bike Route). A bicycle route that shares the right-of-way with the roadway, but is not separated by markings or barriers. Instead, Class III bike routes are designated by signage along the roadway. Class III facilities are typically provided along low-volume streets to minimize the potential for conflicts between bicyclists and motorists.

Climate Change. The change in the statistical distribution of weather over periods of time that range from decades to millions of years. It can be a change in the average weather or a change in the distribution of weather events around an average (for example, greater or fewer extreme weather events). Climate change may be limited to a specific region, or may occur across the whole Earth. In recent usage, especially in the context of environmental policy, climate change refers to changes in the modern climate and may be qualified as anthropogenic climate change, more generally known as "global warming" or "anthropogenic global warming."

Collaborate. To work jointly with other agencies or organizations on planning, land use, and environmental topics. This can include meeting and discussing options, but is less formal than coordinate.

Collector. A roadway that provides a balance between mobility and access. These roadways serve to "collect" traffic from the local streets and deliver it to the arterial network at a moderate rate of speed.

Community Plan. A policy plan that focuses on a particular region or community of the County within the overall general plan area. They refine policies of the general plan as they apply to a smaller geographic area. All principles, goals, objectives, policies, and plan proposals set forth in a community plan must be consistent with the overall general plan.

Condominium. A building or group of buildings in which units are owned individually, but the structure, common areas and facilities are jointly owned by all owners on a proportional, undivided basis.

Conduct. To direct or take part in the operation or management of.

Consider. To think of especially with regard to taking some action.

Consistent. Free from variation or contradiction. State law requires consistency between a general plan and implementation measures such as the County Code and infrastructure projects.

Cooperate. To act or work together in compliance with another agency, organization, or group.

Coordinate. To solicit, consider, and respond to comments from other agencies, organizations, or groups in order to bring common actions, movements, or conditions. Coordinate is used in the context of the general plan to direct an organized approach to addressing inter-jurisdictional issues that are not solely under the purview of Merced County. This does not imply that the County is superior or subordinate to other agencies, organizations, or groups. Rather, it indicates that the County will confer with other agencies, organizations, or groups to find mutually-agreeable solutions. (*Note: "to coordinate" or "coordination" does not have the same meaning as found in the appellate court decision of California Native Plant Society v. City of Rancho Cordova (2009) 2009 Cal. App. Lexis 430.*)

Cultural Resource. A broad definition for a variety of resources, including archaeological sites, isolated artifacts, Native American cultural properties, and historic buildings, structures, landscapes, sites, and features.

Culvert. A short, closed (covered) conduit or pipe that passes storm water runoff under an embankment, usually a roadway.

D

Decibel. Fundamental unit of sound that is defined as ten times the logarithm of the ratio of the sound pressure squared over the reference pressure squared.

Detention Pond. A water system that delays the downstream progress of storm water runoff in a controlled manner. This is typically accomplished using temporary storage areas and a metered outlet device, as opposed to retention ponds, which retain all storm water and rely on evaporation and/or percolation for its removal.

Develop. As applied to general plan policies, is a directing term for the drafting or preparation of rules, guidelines, policies, or illustrations.

Development. A human-made change to property, such as buildings or other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation, or drilling operations.

Designate. To indicate and set apart for a specific purpose, office, or duty.

Determine. To settle or decide by choice of alternatives or possibilities.

Direct. To carry out the organizing, energizing, and supervising of.

Discharge. Flow of surface water in a stream or canal or the outflow of ground water from a flowing artesian well, ditch, or spring. Can also apply to discharge of liquid effluent from a facility.

Discourage. A less rigid directive to be honored in the absence of compelling or contravening considerations. Discourage communicates a clear commitment against a particular topic, but permits flexibility if circumstances so dictate.

Drainage. The control and removal of excess rainfall runoff or groundwater by the use of surface or subsurface features or drains.

Dwelling Unit. A room or group of rooms (including sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation facilities), which constitutes an independent housekeeping unit, occupied or intended for occupancy by one household on a long term basis.

Dwelling, Multi-family. A building containing two or more dwelling units for the use of individual households; an apartment or condominium building is an example of this dwelling unit type.

Dwelling, Single-family Attached. A one-family dwelling attached to one or more other one-family dwellings by a common vertical wall. Row houses and town homes are examples of this dwelling unit type.

Dwelling, Single-family Detached. A dwelling, not attached to any other dwelling, which is designed for and occupied by not more than one family and surrounded by open space or yards.

E

Element. A division or chapter of the General Plan.

Encourage. A less rigid directive to be honored in the absence of compelling or contravening considerations. Encourage communicates a clear commitment in favor of a particular topic, but permits flexibility if circumstances so dictate.

Enforce. To carry out effectively.

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

Ensure. A directive policy term referring to the monitoring of another agencies, organizations, or groups activity, or monitoring the compliance of a regulation or policy.

Environmental Impact Report. A detailed statement prepared under CEQA describing and analyzing the significant environmental effects of a project and discussing ways to mitigate or avoid the effects.

Establish. To bring into existence.

Evaluate. To determine the significance, worth, or condition by careful appraisal and study.

Expand. To increase the extent, number, volume, or scope of.

Explore. To investigate, study, or analyze.

F

Facilitate. To make easier or help bring about.

Family. (a) Two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption (United States Bureau of the Census). (b) An individual or a group of persons living together who constitute a bona fide single-family housekeeping unit in a dwelling unit, not including a fraternity, sorority, club, or other group of persons occupying a hotel, lodging house or institution of any kind (State of California).

Federal Emergency Management Agency. A Federal agency established to respond to major emergencies. FEMA seeks to reduce the loss of life and protect property against all types of hazards through a comprehensive, risk-based emergency management program. In March 2003, FEMA became part of the Department of Homeland Security.

Flood. A temporary rise in flow or stage of any watercourse or storm water conveyance system that results in water runoff exceeding its normal flow boundaries and inundating adjacent, normally dry areas.

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

Flood Control. The specific regulations and practices that reduce or prevent damage caused by either storm water runoff or dam failure.

Floodplain. The relatively level land area outside of river, stream, or creek channel that is regularly subject to flooding. That part of the floodplain subject to a one percent chance of flooding in any given year is designated as an “area of special flood hazard” by the Federal Insurance Administration.

Floodway. The area between the banks of a river, stream, or creek.

Floor Area Ratio. The gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the total net area of the site, expressed in decimals to one or two places. For example, on a site with 10,000 net square feet of land area, a floor area ratio of 1.0 will allow a maximum of 10,000 gross square feet of building floor area to be built. On the same site, an FAR of 1.5 would allow 15,000 square feet of floor area; an FAR of 2.0 would allow 20,000 square feet; and an FAR of 0.5 would allow only 5,000 square feet.

Focus. To concentrate attention or effort.

Follow. To be or act in accordance with.

Formalize. To give a certain or definite form to.

Foster. To promote the growth or development of.

Frequency. The measure of the rapidity of alterations of a periodic acoustic signal, expressed in cycles per second or Hertz.

G

General Plan. A compendium of goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs regarding its long-term development, in the form of maps and accompanying text. The General Plan is a legal document required of each local agency by the State of California Government Code Section 65301 et seq. and adopted by either a City Council or a Board of Supervisors.

Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill 32). A California law, adopted in 2006, that focuses on reducing statewide greenhouse gas emissions. AB 32 requires the California Air Resources Board, the State agency charged with regulating statewide air quality, to adopt rules and regulations that would achieve GHG emissions equivalent to statewide levels in 1990 by 2020.

Goal. A general, overall, and ultimate purpose to which an endeavor is directed.

Green Building. Any building that is sited, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained for the health and well-being of the occupants, while minimizing impact on the environment.

Greenhouse Gases. Gases in an atmosphere that absorb and emit radiation within the thermal infrared range. The primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone.

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

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

H

Hazardous Material. Any item or agent (biological, chemical, physical) which has the potential to cause harm to humans, animals, or the environment, either by itself or through interaction with other factors. Hazardous materials include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous waste, and any material which a handler or the administering agency has a reasonable basis for believing that it would be injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment.

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

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

I

Identify. To establish the identity of.

Impact Fee. A fee, also called a development fee, levied on the developer of a project by a city, county, or other public agency as compensation for otherwise unmitigated impacts the project will produce. Government Code §66000, et seq., specifies that development fees shall not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fee is charged. To lawfully impose a development fee, the public agency must verify its method of calculation and document proper restrictions on use of the fund. Impact/development fees may be used to pay for preparing and updating general and specific plans.

Implement. Carry out or accomplish. To give practical effect to and ensure of actual fulfillment by concrete measures.

Implementation. An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out general plan policy.

Improve. To advance or make progress in what is desirable.

Increase. To make greater.

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

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

Institute. To originate and get established.

Investigate. To observe or study by close examination and systematic inquiry.

J

Jobs/Housing Ratio. The availability of housing near employment areas. A jobs/housing ratio divides the number of jobs in an area by the number of employed residents. A ratio of 1.0 indicates a balance. A ratio greater than 1.0 indicates a net in-commute; less than 1.0 indicates a net out-commute.

Joint Powers Authority. A legal arrangement that enables two or more units of government to share authority in order to plan and carry out a specific program or set of programs that serves both units.

K

There are no terms to be included.

L

L50. The median noise level, or level exceeded 50 percent of time.

Ldn. The average day/night sound level. Similar to CNEL but with no evening weighting.

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

Level of Service. A standard used by government agencies to measure the quality or effectiveness of a municipal service such as police, fire, or library, or the performance of a facility, such as a street or highway.

Level of Service (Traffic). A standard scale used by government agencies to measure the amount of traffic that a roadway or intersection can accommodate, based on such factors as maneuverability, driver dissatisfaction, and delay.

Limit. To curtail or reduce in quantity or extent.

Lmax. The highest root-mean-square sound level measured over a given period of time.

Local Agency Formation Commission. A five- or seven-member commission within each county that reviews and evaluates all proposals for formation of special districts,

incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts, and merger of districts with cities. Each county LAFCo is empowered to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve such proposals. LAFCo members generally include two county supervisors, two city council members, and one member representing the general public. Some also include two representatives of special districts.

Local Street. A street whose primary function is to provide direct access to adjacent properties and to connect to the collector network. Local streets can serve residential, commercial, or institutional uses.

Locate. To determine or indicate the place, site, or limits of.

Loudness. A subjective term for the sensation of the magnitude of sound.

M

Maintain. To keep in an existing state (as of repair, efficiency, or validity). To preserve from failure or decline.

Maximize. To make the most of.

Minimize. To reduce or keep to a minimum.

Mitigate, v. To ameliorate, alleviate, or avoid.

Monitor. To watch, keep track of, or check for a special purpose.

N

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

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

Non-potable. Water that does not meet drinking quality standards.

O

Oppose. To place over against something so as to provide resistance, counterbalance, or contrast.

Ordinance. A law or regulation adopted by a governmental authority, usually a city or county.

Overcrowding. Households or occupied housing units with 1.01 or more persons per room.

P

Participate. To have a part or share in something.

Partner. To join or associate with another agency, organization, or group.

Pedestrian Path. A path that is physically separated by distance or barrier from the roadway. Most pedestrian paths will be built in conjunction with a Class I Bike Path.

Paratransit. Paratransit is an alternative mode of flexible passenger transportation that does not follow fixed routes or schedules. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, public transit operators are required to provide complementary paratransit along most public transit services which receive funding from the Federal Transit Administration for those unable to ride fixed-route transit due to disabling conditions.

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

Peak Hour. The time period during which the greatest demand occurs on the transportation system in the morning and early afternoon, also known as “rush hour.”

Plan. To devise or project the realization or achievement of.

Policy. A specific statement of principle or action that guides the management of public affairs. Policies are adopted by a legislative body (such as a city council or county board of supervisors) in order to meet specified goals and objectives before undertaking an action program.

Prepare. To work out the details of something in advance.

Preserve. To keep alive, intact, or free from decay.

Productive Agriculture/Productive Farmland. Farmland that has received water supplies in three of the prior 10 years and is classified as Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland on the Statewide Important Farmland map.

Prohibit. A directive to not allow a particular use, activity, or action.

Promote. To contribute to the growth or prosperity of.

Protect. To maintain the status or integrity of.

Provide. To supply or make available.

Pursue. To find or employ measures to obtain or accomplish.

Q

There are no terms to be included.

R

Recognize. To acknowledge or take notice of in some definite way.

Recycled Water. Wastewater that becomes suitable for a specific beneficial use as a result of treatment.

Reduce. To diminish in size, amount, extent, or number.

Rehabilitation. The repair, preservation, and/or improvement of substandard housing.

Remove. To get rid of or eliminate.

Renewable Energy. Energy that is produced by effectively using naturally-replenished resources such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides and geothermal heat.

Require. An unequivocal directive that communicates a mandatory requirement.

Residential, Multiple Family. Usually three or more dwelling units on a single site, which may be in the same or separate buildings.

Residential, Single-family. A single dwelling unit on a building site.

Review. To go over or examine critically or deliberately.

Ridership. The number of passengers on a given transportation system measured in number of one-way passenger trips.

Right-of-way. A linear strip of land occupied or intended to be occupied for transportation (streets, bike lanes, sidewalks, on-street parking, transit lanes, railroad tracks) or public facilities (utility lines).

Runoff. Drainage water or flood discharge that leaves an area as surface flow or as pipeline flow.

S

Seismic. Terrestrial movement that is caused by or subject to earthquakes or earth vibrations.

Seniors. Persons age 65 and older.

Sensitive Interior Areas. Any interior area associated with any given land use at which noise-sensitivity exists and the location at which the County’s interior noise level standards are applied. Examples of sensitive interior spaces include, but are not limited to, all habitable rooms of residential and transient lodging facilities, hospital rooms, classrooms, library interiors, offices, worship spaces, theaters, etc.

Sensitive Outdoor Areas. The primary outdoor activity area associated with any given land use at which noise-sensitivity exists and the location at which the County’s exterior noise level standards are applied.

Sidewalk. A dedicated paved pedestrian walkway located adjacent to streets and roadways.

Significant Wetlands. An area with high wetland habitat value based on the Adams methodology and United States Army Corps of Engineers delineation methods (also referred to as “jurisdictional wetlands”).

Solid Waste. A waste type that includes predominantly household waste (domestic waste) with sometimes the addition of commercial wastes collected by a municipality within a given area.

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

Sphere of Influence. The probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission of the county.

Storm Drainage System. A system for collecting surface runoff of stormwater and removing it to appropriate outlets. The system may include inlets, catch basins, storm sewer pipes, channels, detention basins, and pump stations.

Streamline. To make simpler or more efficient.

Strengthen. To make stronger.

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

Subdivision Map Act. Section 66410 et seq. of the California Government Code, this act vests in local legislative bodies the regulation and control of the design and improvement of subdivisions, including the requirement for tentative and final maps.

Subsidence. The sinking of land, usually occurring over broad areas, which typically results from extraction of groundwater, gas, oil, and geothermal energy, or hydro-compaction, peat oxidation, earthquake, and fault rupture.

Support. A commitment to agree with, maintain, uphold, or advocate the actions, activities, or programs of another agency or organization.

T

Target. To set a defined goal.

Terrestrial Species. An animal that lives predominantly or entirely on land (e.g., cattle, deer, fox), as compared with aquatic animals which live predominantly or entirely in the water, or amphibians which rely on a combination of aquatic and terrestrial habitats.

Traffic Model. A mathematical representation of traffic movement within an area or region based on observed relationships between the kind and intensity of development in specific areas.

U

United States Army Corps of Engineers. A Federal agency of civilian and military engineers, scientists, and other specialists working in engineering and environmental matters to provide quality, responsive engineering services to the United States including planning, designing, building, and operating water resources and other civil works projects (e.g., navigation, flood control, environmental protection, disaster response); designing and managing the construction of military facilities for the Army and Air Force; and providing design and construction management support for other Defense and Federal agencies (i.e., interagency and international services).

United States Fish and Wildlife Service. A Federal bureau within the Department of the Interior whose mission is to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Update. To bring up to date.

Use. To put into action or service.

V

Vacant. Lands or buildings that are not actively used.

W

Waste Water Treatment Plant. A municipal or public service district which provides treatment of collected waste water.

Watershed. A regional land area, defined by topography, soil, and drainage characteristics, within which raw waters collect and replenish supplies.

Wetland. Lands where saturation with water is the dominant factor determining the nature of soil development and the types of plant and animal communities living in the soil and on its surface.

Wildlife Corridors. A strip of habitat connecting wildlife populations separated by human activities (e.g., roads, development, or logging); allows an exchange of individual wildlife populations; and facilitates reestablishment of wildlife populations in isolated areas.

Work. To bring to pass.

Workforce Housing. Housing that is affordable to working households that do not qualify for publicly subsidized housing, and cannot afford market-rate housing in their own community. Ideally, workforce housing will satisfy the housing needs of family households earning between 60 and 180 percent of the median-household income.

X

There are no terms to be included.

Y

There are no terms to be included.

Z

Zoning. The division of a city or county by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, that specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that implements policies of the general plan.

Zoning Code. The regulatory ordinance that contains all applicable use and size restrictions by zones, used to implement the general plan.