

Glossary

The following are terms used in the Manhattan Beach General Plan. These terms, as defined below, are intended to assist the reader in understanding the General Plan. They may have different definitions in other planning documents, such as the Zoning Ordinance and the Local Coastal Plan.

Access - A way of approaching or entering a property, including ingress (the right to enter) and egress (the right to leave).

Acres, Net - The portion of a site that can actually be built upon. The following generally are not included in the net acreage of a site: public or private road right-of-way, public open space, and floodways.

ADT - Average daily trips made by vehicles in a twenty-four-hour period.

Air Basin - One of fourteen self-contained regions in California minimally influenced by air quality in contiguous regions.

Air Pollutant Emissions - Discharges into the atmosphere, usually specified in terms of weight per unit of time for a given pollutant from a given source.

Air Pollution - The presence of contaminants in the air in concentrations that exceed naturally occurring quantities and are undesirable or harmful.

Air Quality Standards - The prescribed level of pollutants in the outside air that cannot be exceeded legally during a specified time in a specified geographical area.

Alley - A public way having a width of not more than twenty feet permanently reserved primarily for vehicular service access to the rear or side of properties otherwise abutting on a street.

Ambient Noise Level - The combination of noise from all sources near and far. In this context, the ambient noise level constitutes the normal or existing level of environmental noise at a given location.

Area District - One of four areas designated on the zoning map for purposes of defining property development regulations that establish minimum lot areas, minimum yards, and maximum area coverage appropriate for that area.

A-Weighted Decibel or dB(A) - A numerical method of rating human judgment of loudness. The A-weighted scale reduces the effects of low and high frequencies in order to simulate human hearing.

Bikeways - A term that encompasses bicycle lanes, bicycle paths, and bicycle routes.

Buffer - A strip of land designated to protect one type of land use from another incompatible use. Where a commercial district abuts a residential district, for example, additional use, yard, or height restrictions may be imposed to protect residential properties. The term may also be used to describe any zone that separates two unlike zones, such as a multi-family housing zone between single-family housing and commercial uses.

California Building Code (CBC) – Statewide standard building code which sets forth minimum standards for construction.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) - A proposed timetable or schedule of all future capital improvements (government acquisition of real property, major construction project, or acquisition of long lasting, expensive equipment) to be carried out during a specific period and listed in order of priority, together with cost estimates and the anticipated means of financing each project. Capital improvement programs are usually projected five or six years in advance and should be updated annually.

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

City - City, with a capital "C," generally refers to the government or administration of a city. City, with a lower case "c" may mean any city.

City Council - The governing board of the City. The five-member elected council is responsible to the electorate for keeping pace with changing community needs, for establishing the quality of municipal services through the open conduct of public affairs, and for encouraging constructive citizen participation.

Coastal Zone - A geographic zone adjacent to the shoreline, the boundaries of which are determined by the California Coastal Act of 1976, as amended, and the City's certified Local Coastal Program.

Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) - The average equivalent sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of five decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7 P.M. to 10 P.M. and after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels in the night after 10 P.M. and before 7 A.M. See also "A-Weighted Decibel."

Compatibility - The characteristics of different uses or activities that permit them to be located near each other in harmony and without conflict. The designation of permitted and conditionally permitted uses in zoning districts is intended to achieve compatibility within the district. Some elements affecting compatibility include: intensity of occupancy as measured by dwelling units per acre; pedestrian or vehicular traffic generated; volume of goods handled; and such environmental effects as noise, vibration, glare, air pollution, or the presence of hazardous materials. On the other hand, many aspects of compatibility are based on personal preference and are much harder to measure quantitatively, at least for regulatory purposes.

Congestion Management Plan (CMP) - A mechanism employing growth management techniques, including traffic level of service requirements, development mitigation programs, transportation systems management, and capital improvement programming, for the purpose of controlling and/or reducing the cumulative regional traffic impacts of development. AB 1791, effective August 1, 1990, requires all cities, and counties that include urbanized area, to adopt and annually update a Congestion Management Plan.

Conservation - The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect.

Council of Governments (COG) - A regional planning and review authority whose membership includes representation from all communities in the designated region. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is an example of a COG in Southern California.

Day-Night Average Level (Ldn) - The average equivalent sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels in the night after 10 P.M. and before 7 A.M. See also "Community Noise Equivalent Level."

Decibel (dB) - A unit for describing the amplitude of sound, as it is heard by the human ear. See also "A-Weighted Decibel," "Community Noise Equivalent Level," and "Day-Night Average Level."

Density - The number of families, individuals, dwelling units or housing structures per unit of land; usually density is expressed "per acre." Thus, the density of a development of one hundred units occupying twenty acres is five units per acre.

Developer - An individual who or business which prepares raw land for the construction of buildings or causes to be built physical building space for use primarily by others, and in which the preparation of the land or the creation of the building space is in itself a business and is not incidental to another business or activity.

Development - The division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels; the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation or enlargement of any structure; any excavation or land disturbance, and any use or extension of the use of land.

Development Impact Fees - A fee or charge imposed on developers to pay for the costs to the city of providing services to a new development.

Dwelling, Multi-family - A building containing two or more dwelling units.

Dwelling, Single-family - A building containing one dwelling unit.

Dwelling Unit - A house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room occupied as separate living quarters, or if vacant, intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live separately from any other individuals in the building and which have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall.

Easement - A grant of one or more of the property rights by the property owner to and/or for use by the public, a corporation, or another person or entity.

Element - A division of the General Plan referring to a topic area for which goals, policies, and programs are defined (e.g., land use, housing, infrastructure).

Environment - The sum of all external conditions and influences affecting the life, development, and survival of an organism.

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

Fault, Active - A fault that has moved within the last 11,000 years and that is likely to move again within the next 100 years.

Fault, Inactive - A fault which shows no evidence of movement in the last 11,000 years and no potential for movement in the relatively near future.

Fault, Potentially Active - A fault that last moved within the Quaternary Period (the last 2,000,000 to 11,000 years) before the Holocene Epoch (11,000 years to the present); or a fault that, because it is judged to be capable of ground rupture or shaking, poses an unacceptable risk for a proposed structure.

FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Fire Flow - A rate of water flow that should be maintained to halt and reverse the spread of a fire.

Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) - For each community, the official map on which the Federal Insurance Administration has delineated areas of special flood hazard and the risk premium zones applicable to that community.

Floodplain - A lowland or relatively flat area adjoining the banks of a river or stream which is subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year (i.e., 100-year flood).

Floodway - The channel of a watercourse or river, and portions of the flood plain adjoining the channel, which are reasonably required to carry and discharge the base flood of the channel.

Floor Area Factor (FAF) - The factor utilized in determining buildable floor area.

General Plan - A legal document that takes the form of a map and accompanying text adopted by the local legislative body. The plan is a compendium of policies regarding the long-term development of a jurisdiction. The state requires the preparation of seven elements or divisions as part of the plan: land use, housing, circulation, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Additional elements pertaining to the unique needs of an agency are permitted.

Goal - The ultimate purpose of an effort stated in a way that is general in nature and immeasurable; a broad statement of intended direction and purpose (e.g., "Achieve a balance of land use types within the city").

Grade - The degree of rise or descent of a sloping surface.

Ground Failure - Mudslide, landslide, liquefaction (see this Glossary), or the compaction of soils due to ground shaking from an earthquake.

Ground Shaking - Ground movement resulting from the transmission of seismic waves during an earthquake.

Groundwater - The supply of fresh water under the ground surface in an aquifer or soil that forms a natural reservoir.

HCD - State Department of Housing and Community Development.

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

Household - According to the U.S. Census, a household is all persons living in a dwelling unit whether or not they are related. Both a single person living in an apartment and a family living in a house are considered households.

Household Income - The total income of all the people living in a household. Households are usually described as very low income, low income, moderate income, and upper income for that household size, based on their position relative to the regional median income.

Housing Affordability - Based on state and federal standards, housing is affordable when the housing costs are no more than 30 percent of household income.

Housing Unit – See definition under Dwelling Unit.

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

Income Categories - Four categories for classifying households according to income based on the median income for each County. The categories are as follows: Very Low (0-50% of County median); Low (50-80% of County median); Moderate (80-120% of County median); and Upper (over 120% of County median).

Infrastructure - The physical systems and services which support development and population, such as roadways, railroads, water, sewer, natural gas, electrical generation and transmission, telephone, cable television, storm drainage, and others.

Intensity - A measure of the amount or level of development often expressed as the ratio of building floor area to lot area (floor-area factor) for commercial, business, and industrial development, or units per acre of land for residential development (also called "density").

Intersection - A location where two or more roads cross at grade.

Issue - A problem, constraint, or opportunity requiring community action.

Landscaping - An area devoted to or developed and maintained with native or exotic plantings, lawn, ground cover, gardens, trees, shrubs, and other plant materials, decorative outdoor landscape elements, pools, fountains, water features, paved or decorated surfaces of rock, stone, brick, block, or similar material (excluding driveways, parking, loading, or storage areas), and sculptural elements.

Land Use - A description of how land is occupied or used.

Land Use Plan - A plan showing the existing and proposed location, extent and intensity of development of land to be used in the future for varying types of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational and other public and private purposes or combination of purposes.

Liquefaction - A process by which water-saturated granular soils transform from a solid to a liquid state due to groundshaking. This phenomenon usually results from shaking from energy waves released in an earthquake.

Lot - A site or parcel of real property delineated with a number or other separate designation on a plat duly recorded in the office of the County Recorder.

Level of service (LOS): A measure of the operational performance of a road link or intersection based on a ratio of volume to capacity (V/C) of the facility as determined by the Intersection Capacity Utilization (ICU) method or seconds of delay determined by the Highway Capacity Manual.

Maximum Credible Earthquake (MCE) - The largest possible earthquake that could reasonably occur along recognized faults or within a particular seismic source.

Median Income - The annual income for each household size which is defined annually by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Half of the households in the region have incomes above the median and half are below.

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

MGD - Million gallons per day.

MWD - Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Noise - Any undesired audible sound.

Noise Exposure Contours - Lines drawn about a noise source indicating constant energy levels of noise exposure. CNEL and Ldn are the metrics utilized to describe community noise exposure.

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

Open Space - Any parcel or area of land or water essentially unimproved and set aside, designated, dedicated, or reserved for public or private use or enjoyment.

Ordinance - A law or regulation set forth and adopted by a governmental authority, usually a city or county.

Parcel - A lot or tract of land.

Parking Structure - A non-enclosed or semi-enclosed area containing a ceiling or roof, used primarily for the temporary storage of motor vehicles, constructed either above or below grade, freestanding, or as part of a building.

Planning Commission - A group of people appointed by the city council that administer planning and land use regulations for the city and provide recommendations on a wide array of land use and land use policy issues. In the City of Manhattan Beach, the Planning Commission is a five-member group, appointed to four-year terms.

Policy - Statements guiding action and implying clear commitment found within each element of the general plan (e.g., "Provide incentives to assist in the development of affordable housing").

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

Program - A coordinated set of specific measures and actions (e.g., zoning, subdivision procedures, and capital expenditures) the local government intends to use in carrying out the policies of the general plan.

Recreation, Active - A type of recreation or activity which requires the use of organized play areas, including, but not limited to: softball, baseball, football and soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts and various forms of children's play equipment.

Recreation, Passive - Type of recreation or activity which does not require the use of organized play areas.

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

Rehabilitation - The upgrading of a building previously in a dilapidated or substandard condition, for human habitation or use.

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

Right-of-Way - A strip of land acquired by reservation, dedication, prescription or condemnation and intended to be occupied by a road, crosswalk, railroad, electric transmission lines, oil or gas pipeline, water line, sanitary or storm sewer, or other similar uses.

Risk - The danger or degree of hazard or potential loss.

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

Seismic - Caused by or subject to earthquakes or earth vibrations.

Sewer - Any pipe or conduit used to collect and carry away sewage from the generating source to a treatment plant.

Site - A parcel of land used or intended for one use or a group of uses and having frontage on a public or an approved private street. A lot.

Site Plan - The development plan for one or more lots on which is shown the existing and proposed conditions of the lot including: topography, vegetation, drainage, floodplains, marshes and waterways; open spaces, walkways, means of ingress and egress, utility services, landscaping, structures and signs, lighting, and screening devices; any other information that reasonably may be required in order that an informed decision can be made by the approving authority.

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

Solid Waste - Unwanted or discarded material, including garbage with insufficient liquid content to be free flowing, generally disposed of in landfills or incinerated.

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) - The Southern California Association of Governments is a regional planning agency which encompasses six counties: Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Los Angeles, and Ventura. SCAG is responsible for preparation of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

Special Needs Groups - Those segments of the population which have a more difficult time finding decent affordable housing due to special circumstances. Under State planning law, these special needs groups consist of the elderly, handicapped, large families, female-headed households, farmworkers and the homeless.

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

Standards - (1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. The State Government Code (Section 65302) requires that General Plans describe the objectives, principles, "standards," and proposals of the General Plan. Examples of standards might include the number of acres of park land per 1,000 population that the community will attempt to acquire and improve. (2) Requirements in a zoning ordinance that govern building and development as distinguished from use restrictions; for example, site-design regulations such as lot area, height limit, frontage, landscaping, and floor area ratio.

Stationary Source - A non-mobile emitter of pollution.

Structure - Anything constructed or erected which requires location on the ground (excluding swimming pools, fences, and walls used as fences).

Subdivision - The division of a lot, tract or parcel of land that is the subject of an application for subdivision.

Subsidence - The sudden sinking or gradual downward settling and compaction of soil and other surface material with little or no horizontal motion. Subsidence may be caused by a variety of human and natural activities, including earthquakes.

Subsidize - To assist by payment of a sum of money or by the granting of terms or favors that reduce the need for monetary expenditures. Housing subsidies may take the forms of mortgage interest deductions or tax credits from federal and/or state income taxes, sale or lease at less than market value of land to be used for the construction of housing, payments to supplement a minimum affordable rent, and the like.

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

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

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) - Individual actions or comprehensive plans to reduce the number of vehicular trips generated by or attracted to new or existing development. TSM measures attempt to reduce the number of vehicle trips by increasing bicycle or pedestrian trips or by expanding the use of bus, transit, carpool, vanpool, or other high occupancy vehicles.

Trip - A one-way journey that proceeds from an origin to a destination via a single mode of transportation; the smallest unit of movement considered in transportation studies. Each trip has one “production end,” (or origin – often from home, but not always), and one “attraction end,” (destination).

Uniform Building Code (UBC) - A standard building code which sets forth minimum standards for construction.

Walkstreet - A public street in the beach area for pedestrians where vehicular access is not permitted. The location of walkstreets is shown in the Infrastructure Element of the General Plan.

Zoning - A police power measure, enacted primarily by units of local government, in which the community is divided into districts or zones within which permitted and special uses are established as are regulations governing lot size, building bulk, placement, and other development standards. Requirements vary from district to district, but they must be uniform within the same district. The zoning ordinance consists of a map and text.

Zoning District - A geographical area of a city zoned with uniform regulations and requirements.

Zoning Map - The officially adopted zoning map of the city specifying the uses permitted within certain geographic areas of the city.