

## 8 GLOSSARY

This glossary explains the technical terms used in the Hillsborough General Plan. Definitions come from several sources, including existing Hillsborough codes, the California Office of Planning and Research and the American Planning Association Glossary of Zoning, Development and Planning Terms.

### A. Abbreviations

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>ADRB</b>     | Architectural and Design Review Board   |
| <b>ADT</b>      | Average daily trips made by vehicles or persons in a 24-hour period                   |
| <b>ALUC</b>     | Airport Land Use Commission   |
| <b>AMR</b>      | American Medical Response   |
| <b>BAAQMD</b>   | Bay Area Air Quality Management District  |
| <b>BART</b>     | Bay Area Rapid Transit  |
| <b>BMPs</b>     | Best Management Practices   |
| <b>C/CAG</b>    | City/County Association of Governments  |
| <b>Caltrans</b> | California Department of Transportation   |
| <b>CEQA</b>     | California Environmental Quality Act  |
| <b>CESA</b>     | California Endangered Species Act   |
| <b>CLUP</b>     | Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plan   |
| <b>CNDDDB</b>   | California Natural Diversity Database   |
| <b>CNEL</b>     | Community Noise Equivalent  |
| <b>CNPS</b>     | California Native Plant Society   |
| <b>dB</b>       | Decibel   |
| <b>dBA</b>      | A-Weighted Sound Level  |
| <b>DFG</b>      | California Department of Fish and Game  |
| <b>DTSC</b>     | Department of Toxic Substances Control,<br>California Environmental Protection Agency |
| <b>du/acre</b>  | Dwelling units per acre   |
| <b>du</b>       | Dwelling units  |
| <b>EIR</b>      | Environmental Impact Report (State)   |

**TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH**  
**GENERAL PLAN**  
GLOSSARY

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>EOC</b>             | San Mateo County Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan |
| <b>EPA</b>             | Environmental Protection Agency (US)                        |
| <b>FAA</b>             | Federal Aviation Administration                             |
| <b>FAR</b>             | Floor Area Ratio  |
| <b>FEMA</b>            | Federal Emergency Management Agency                         |
| <b>FIRM</b>            | Flood Insurance Rate Map                                    |
| <b>GPS</b>             | Geographical Positioning System                             |
| <b>HCSD</b>            | Hillsborough City School District                           |
| <b>LAFCO</b>           | Local Agency Formation Commission                           |
| <b>Ldn</b>             | Day/Night Average Level                                     |
| <b>Leq</b>             | Average noise levels  |
| <b>LOS</b>             | Level of Service  |
| <b>mg</b>              | Million gallons   |
| <b>mgd</b>             | Million gallons per day                                     |
| <b>NPDES</b>           | National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System             |
| <b>PE</b>              | professional engineer                                       |
| <b>PM<sub>10</sub></b> | Particulate matter, 10 microns or less in diameter.         |
| <b>PPM</b>             | Parts per Million   |
| <b>RWQCB</b>           | Regional Water Quality Control Board                        |
| <b>SamTrans</b>        | San Mateo County Transit District                           |
| <b>SEMS</b>            | Standardized Emergency Management System                    |
| <b>sf</b>              | Square footage  |
| <b>SFPUC</b>           | San Francisco Public Utilities Commission                   |
| <b>SmHSD</b>           | San Mateo High School District                              |
| <b>SOI</b>             | Sphere of Influence   |
| <b>SFO</b>             | San Francisco International Airport                         |
| <b>STOPPP</b>          | San Mateo Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program           |
| <b>SUZ</b>             | Airport Vicinity Special Use Zone                           |
| <b>UBC</b>             | Uniform Building Code                                       |
| <b>USFWS</b>           | United States Fish and Wildlife Service                     |
| <b>UST</b>             | Underground Storage Tank                                    |
| <b>VMT</b>             | Vehicle Miles Traveled                                      |

## *B. Terminology*

### **Action**

An action is a program, implementation measure, procedure or technique intended to help achieve a specified goal. (See “Goal”)

### **Archaeological Resource**

Material evidence of past human activity found below the surface of ground or water, portions of which may be visible above the surface.

### **Architectural and Design Review Board (ADRB)**

Hillsborough’s Architectural Design Review Board reviews development proposals and ensures that they are in accordance with the Town’s 2004 Residential Design Guidelines and fit with the existing fabric and community character. The ADRB is comprised of volunteer citizens whose professional backgrounds are typically in the fields of design, architecture or real estate development.

### **Arterials**

Major streets that primarily serve through-traffic and provide access to abutting properties as a secondary function. Arterials are generally designed with two to six travel lanes and have signals at major cross-street intersections. This roadway type is divided into two categories major and minor arterials.

### **Base Flood (100-year flood)**

In any given year, a flood that has a one percent likelihood of occurring, and is recognized as a standard for acceptable risk. (See “Floodplain”)

### **Bicycle Lane (Class II facility)**

A corridor expressly reserved for bicycles, existing on a street or roadway in addition to lanes for use by motorized vehicles.

**Bicycle Path (Class I facility)**

A paved route, not on a street or roadway, expressly reserved for bicycles traversing an otherwise unpaved area. Bicycle paths may parallel roads but are typically separated from them by landscaping.

**Bikeways**

A term that encompasses “bicycle lanes” and “bicycle paths.”

**Building Height**

The vertical distance from the average contact ground level of a building to the highest point of the coping, whether a flat roof, the deck line of a mansard roof, or to the mean height level between eaves and ridge for a gable, hip, or gambrel roof. The exact definition varies by community. For example, in some communities building height is measured to the highest point of the roof, not including elevator and cooling towers.

**Build-out**

Development of land to its full potential, or theoretical capacity, as permitted under current or proposed planning or zoning designations.

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

Legislation and corresponding procedural components established in 1970 by the State of California to require environmental review for projects anticipated to result in adverse impacts to the environment.

**Collectors**

Collectors are streets that provide land access and traffic circulation within residential areas. They connect local streets to arterials and are typically designed with two travel lanes.

**Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)**

A descriptor for the 24-hour A weighted average noise level. The CNEL concept accounts for the increased acoustical sensitivity of people to noise during the evening and nighttime hours. Sound levels during the hours from

7 p.m. to 10 p.m. are penalized 5 dB; sound levels during the hours from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. are penalized 10 dB. A 10 dB increase in sound level is perceived by people to be a doubling of loudness.

**Compatible**

Capable of existing together without conflict or ill effects.

**Conservation**

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

**Cultural Resources**

Includes historic, archaeological and paleontological resources, as well as human remains.

**Decibel (dB)**

A unit used to express the relative intensity of a sound as it is heard by the human ear. The lowest volume a normal ear can detect under laboratory conditions is 0 dB, the threshold of human hearing. Since the decibel scale is logarithmic, 10 decibels are ten times more intense and 20 decibels are a hundred times more intense than 1 db.

**dBA**

The “A-weighted” scale for measuring sound in decibels, which 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 even though the noise is actually ten times more intense.

**Dedication**

The turning over by an owner or developer of private land for public use, and the acceptance of land for such use by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites or other public uses are often required by a town or county as conditions for approval of a development. (See “in-lieu fee”)

**Density**

The amount of development or people per unit of area or property. (See also “Density, Residential” and “Floor Area Ratio”)

**Density, Residential (du/acre)**

The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land.

**Design Review**

With the adoption of the 2004 Residential Design Guidelines, the Town identified a design review process, which is aimed at maintaining Hillsborough’s image and standards for quality while providing for the circumstances of modern life. It provides standards and design direction that homeowners and their architects should reference in the preparation of building and landscaping plans. In addition to having to conform with General Plan policies and Town zoning, a development proposal is also reviewed by the ADRB to evaluate its impact on neighboring properties and the community as a whole, from the standpoint of site and landscape design, architecture, materials, colors, lighting and signs, in accordance with the adopted guidelines.

**Development**

The physical extension and/or construction of non-farm land uses. Development activities include subdivision of land; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities and other facilities; grading; deposit of refuse, debris or fill materials; and clearing of natural vegetative cover (with the exception of agricultural activities).

**Dwelling Unit (du)**

The place of customary abode of a person or household, which is either considered to be real property under State law or cannot be easily moved.

**Element**

California State Government Code Section 65302 requires each General Plan to contain seven separate “elements” that set goals, policies and actions for each mandated subject. Topics can sometimes be combined or included into other elements, as allowed by State law.

**Environmental Impact Report (EIR)**

A report required pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that assesses all the environmental characteristics of an area, determines what effects or impacts will result if the area is altered or disturbed by a proposed action, and identifies alternatives or other measures to avoid or reduce those impacts. (See “California Environmental Quality Act”)

**Entryway**

Entrance to an urban area, or to an important part of a city or town, along a major roadway. It can also be a point along a roadway at which a motorist or cyclist gains a sense of having left the environs and of having entered the town.

**Fault**

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

**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.

**Floodplain**

The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream regularly subject to flooding.

**Floodway**

The part of the floodplain capable of conveying the 100-year flood with no more than a one-foot rise in water. The floodway includes the river channel itself and adjacent land areas.

**Floor Area Ratio (FAR)**

The size of a building in square feet (gross floor area) divided by net land area, expressed as a decimal number. For example, a single story 10,000 square foot building on a 20,000 square-foot parcel would have a floor area ratio of 0.50. The FAR is used in calculating the building intensity of non-residential development.

**General Plan**

A compendium of Town policies 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 and adopted by the City Council. In California, the General Plan has seven mandatory elements (Circulation, Conservation, Housing, Land Use, Noise, Open Space and Public Safety) and may include any number of optional elements the Town deems important.

**Goal**

A description of the general desired results that Hillsborough seeks to create through the implementation of the General Plan. Goals are included in each element of the Plan and may include the key physical or community characteristics that the Town and its residents wish to maintain or develop.

**Groundwater**

Water that exists beneath the earth's surface, typically found between saturated soils and rock, and is used to supply wells and springs.

**Habitat**

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

**Impact Fee**

A fee charged to a developer by the Town according to the proposed development project, typically by number of units, square footage or acreage. The fee is often used to offset costs incurred by the municipality for services and infrastructure such as schools, roads, police and fire services, and parks.

**Impervious Surface**

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

**Implementation**

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

**Infill Development**

Development that occurs on vacant or underutilized land within areas that area already largely developed.

**In-lieu Fee**

Cash payments that may be required of an owner or developer as a substitute for a dedication of land for public use, usually calculated in dollars per lot, and referred to as in-lieu fees or in-lieu contributions. (See “dedication”)

**Land Use**

The occupation or utilization of an area of land for any human activity or any purpose.

**Land Use Designation**

One particular category in a classification series of appropriate use of properties established by the General Plan Land Use Element.

**Level of Service (LOS) Standard**

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 scale that measures the amount of traffic that a roadway or intersection can accommodate, based on such factors as maneuverability, driver dissatisfaction and delay. Level of service are usually described on a scale of A to F, as described in the Circulation Element.

**Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)**

A five- or seven-member commission within each county that reviews and evaluates all proposals for formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts and merger of districts with cities. Each county's LAFCO is empowered to approve, disapprove or conditionally approve such proposals.

**Local Street**

Local streets provide direct access to abutting residential properties as their primary function. In Hillsborough, the majority of streets are local streets.

**Pocket Park**

Generally located on smaller in-fill sites, these parks usually offer limited recreational opportunities, such as a small playground or a landscaped area with a park bench. Since these parks do not offer the same range of recreational opportunities as neighborhood parks, they primarily attract and serve local residents from the immediate neighborhood.

**Neighborhood Park**

Provides a wide range of recreational facilities, such as playing fields, playgrounds and picnic areas, as well as opportunities for passive recreation, such as grassy areas and walking trails. Due to the variety of recreational opportunities, neighborhood parks generally attract people from outside the immediate vicinity of the facility and are used by the community as a whole.

**Noise Contour**

A line connecting points of equal noise level as measured on the same scale.

**Non-Conforming Use**

A use that was valid when brought into existence, but no longer permitted by later regulation. “Non-conforming use” is a generic term and includes (1) non-conforming structures (because their size, type of construction, location on land, or proximity to other structures is no longer permitted); (2) non-conforming use of a conforming building; (3) non-conforming use of a non-conforming building; and (4) non-conforming use of land. Any use lawfully existing on any piece of property that is inconsistent with a new or amended General Plan, and that in turn is a violation of a zoning ordinance amendment subsequently adopted in conformance with the General Plan, will be a non-conforming use. Typically, non-conforming uses are permitted to continue for a designated period of time, subject to certain restrictions.

**Parcel**

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

**Parking Strip**

In the absence of sidewalks and wide streets, the Town of Hillsborough requires the installation of parking strips along the street frontage when major construction and reconstruction occurs. They are intended to address the need for on-street parking that allows cars to be partially out of the roadway, and improve pedestrian safety.

### **Planning Area**

The Planning Area is the land outside of the Town limits and generally outside of the Sphere of Influence that bears a relation to the Town's planning and policy direction. The Planning Area does not lead to regulatory powers outside of the Town limits. Instead, it signals to the County and to other nearby local and regional authorities that Town residents recognize that development within this area has an impact on the future of their community, and vice versa. (See also "Sphere of Influence")

### **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 before undertaking an implementing action. (See "Action")

### **Riparian Corridor**

A habitat and vegetation zone which is associated with the banks and floodplains of a river, stream or lake. Riparian trees and shrubs are typically phreatophytes, plants whose root systems are in constant contact with groundwater.

### **Seiche**

A seiche is a wave that occurs on a lake, bay or other body of water, such as a swimming pool, and is caused by changes in atmospheric pressure, underwater earthquakes or landslides. The movement of the wave can be compared to the back-and-forth sloshing of water in a bathtub.

### **Sensitive Receptors**

Uses sensitive to noise such as residential areas, hospitals, convalescent homes and facilities, and schools.

### **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 cov-

ered 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).

**Sphere of Influence (SOI)**

The probably physical boundaries and service area of the Town, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of the county.

**Steep Slope**

An area with a greater than 10 percent slope.

**Town Limits**

The legal boundaries of the geographical area subject to the jurisdiction of the Town of Hillsborough’s government. For example, development applications for properties located within the Town limits must be reviewed by the Town.

**Traffic Calming**

Measures designed to reduce motor vehicle speeds and to encourage pedestrian use, including

- ◆ Narrow streets
- ◆ Tight turning radii
- ◆ Parking bays
- ◆ Textured paving at intersections

**Unincorporated Area**

Encompasses properties that are located outside of cities. Development in the unincorporated area is subject to County jurisdiction.

**Use**

The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, erected, moved, altered and/or enlarged in accordance with the Town zoning ordinance and General Plan land use designations.

**Utility Corridor**

Rights-of-way or easements for utility lines on either publicly or privately owned property.

**Waste Reduction Plan**

The Town requires all project applicants for demolition and building permits in Hillsborough to submit a Waste Reduction Plan that indicates how much demolition and construction debris will be involved and where it will be transported, as well as a final summary showing that the debris was taken to appropriate facilities. California law requires cities to divert a minimum of 50 percent of their waste to recycling instead of landfills and Hillsborough is one of the few communities to exceed the State requirement.

**Wastewater**

Water that has already been used for washing, flushing, or in a manufacturing process, and therefore contains waste products such as sewage or chemical by-products.

**Watershed**

The region of land from which surface or underground water drains into a river, river system or other body of water.

**Wetland**

An area that is inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, commonly known as hydrophytic vegetation.

**Zoning**

The division of a city or town by ordinance or other legislative regulation into districts or zones, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings constructed in these areas; a program that implements the land use policies of the General Plan.