



Definitions of Terms

The terms defined below are specific to urban planning and the Petaluma General Plan update process.

ABAG – Association of Bay Area Governments

“Part regional planning agency and part local government service provider” with a “mission to strengthen cooperation and collaboration across local governments to build healthier, stronger communities.” ABAG encompasses nine Bay Area counties including Sonoma.

See also “MTC”. (Source: ABAG website)

ADU – Accessory dwelling unit

A secondary house on a single-family residential lot, either in a separate structure or within the primary structure (junior accessory dwelling unit). Often encouraged to address housing shortages.

Affordable housing (capitalized)

Housing which is deemed affordable to those with a median household income or below as rated by the national government or a local government by a recognized housing affordability index. Rent or purchase price determined based on local income levels and family size. Often deed restricted to remain affordable for a fixed number of years.

(Source: Partially from Wikipedia.)

affordable housing (lower case)

Housing that is designed and/or constructed to be more affordable than other housing alternatives.

Bike path (bikeway) classes

- **Class I** bikeways, also known as bike paths or shared-use paths, are facilities with exclusive right of way for bicyclists and pedestrians. *(Second best for bicyclists.)*
- **Class II** bikeways are bike lanes established along streets and are defined by pavement striping and signage to delineate a portion of a roadway for bicycle travel.
- **Class III** bikeways, or bike routes, designate a preferred route for bicyclists on streets shared with motor traffic not served by dedicated bikeways to provide continuity to the bikeway network.
- **Class IIIB** are bikeway routes on residential streets that prioritize through trips for bicyclists. Also known as bike boulevards. Not currently used in Petaluma.
- **Class IV** is a separated bikeway, often referred to as a cycle track or protected bike lane, is for the exclusive use of bicycles, physically separated from motor traffic with a vertical feature. T. Not currently used in Petaluma. *(Best for bicyclists.)*

(Source: Based on City of Oakland website.)



Building permit

Authorization that must be granted by the governing municipality before the construction of a new or renovation of an existing building can legally occur. See also “entitlements”.

(Source: Derived from investopedia.com website)

Bundled parking

Parking for which the cost is included with the cost of buying or renting.

See also “unbundled parking”.

CEQA - California Environmental Quality Act

Requires state and local agencies within California to follow a protocol of analysis and public disclosure of environmental impacts of proposed projects.

(Source: Wikipedia)

Entitlement

A legal agreement between an applicant and the governing municipality to allow for the development of a certain building type or land-use pattern.

See also “building permit”. (Source: Derived from landcentury.com website)

Façade

The face of a building, especially the principal front that looks onto a street or open space.

FAR

The gross floor area of all buildings on a lot divided by the building site area. A 2,000-sf house on an 8,000-sf lot would have a FAR of 0.25. A six-story building with 4,000 sf per floor on a 6,000-sf lot would have an FAR of 4.0.

(Source: First sentence from Petaluma Implementing Zoning Ordinance.)

Form-based zoning code

A land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a quality public realm by using physical form rather than separation of uses as the organizing principle.

See also “use-based zoning”. (Source: Derived from formbasedcodes.org)



Frontage

Boundary between a plot of land or a building and the road onto which the plot or building fronts.

(Source: Wikipedia)

LOS - Level of Service

A qualitative measure used to relate the quality of motor vehicle traffic service. Until the adoption of VMT, the CEQA standard by which traffic impacts were measured.

(Source: Partially from Wikipedia.)

MTC - Metropolitan Transportation Commission

The transportation planning, financing, and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

See also "ABAG". (Source: MTC website)

Parking demand management

Policies and programs designed to reduce parking demand, preserve parking for certain trip types and users, and promote a shift from single occupant vehicle trips to transit, pedestrian, and bicycling trips.

PDA - Priority Development Areas

Places designated by MTC near public transit and planned for new homes, jobs, and community amenities. Located in downtowns, along main streets and around rail stations, PDAs are intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address housing shortages.

(Source: Based on MTC website)

PUD – Planned Unit Development

Developments that are not subject to the standard zoning requirements, but instead work with the local government to develop criteria that will determine common areas, private areas, and building guidelines. Typically used where the proposed development standards are significantly different from the zoning code.

(Source: Partially derived from inman.com)

Quick Build

Quick Build means to change the walking and bicycling safety and effectiveness of a transit area without heavy construction through the use of street striping and signage.



RHNA - Regional Housing Needs Allocation

A process by which the California Department of Housing and Community Development determines the total number of new homes are needed—and how affordable those homes need to be—to meet the housing needs of people at all income levels. ABAG then distributes a share of the Bay Area’s housing need to each city, town, and county in the region. Failure to meet RHNA goals can result in loss of state funds, forcing cities and counties to make up the revenue shortfall elsewhere. (Source: Derived from ABAG website)

Setback

The required distance by which a structure, parking area, or other development feature must be separated from a property line, other structure, development feature (e.g., back of sidewalk or curb), or street center line.

(Source: Petaluma Implementing Zoning Ordinance)

Sprawl

An uncontrolled expansion of urban areas, often an expansion of urban areas in excess of population growth.

TAD – Transit-Adjacent Development

Urban development on a site that could have accommodated TOD but fails to connect to public transportation.

See also “TOD”.

Taking

A situation in which a government regulation limits the uses of private property to such a degree that the regulation effectively deprives the property owners of economically reasonable use or value of their property to such an extent that it deprives them of utility or value of that property, even though the regulation does not formally divest them of title to it.

(Source: Wikipedia)

TOD – Transit-Oriented Development

Urban development that maximizes the amount of residential, business, and leisure space within walking distance of public transportation and maximizes use of the public transportation.

See also “TAD”. (Source: Derived from Wikipedia)



Transects

A zone that functions more like an inclusive environment rather than simply regulating uses as in traditional zoning. The term is borrowed from the natural sciences.

(Source: Derived from the miami21.org website)

UGB – Urban Growth Boundary

A regional boundary set to control urban sprawl by mandating that the area inside the boundary be used for urban development and the area outside be preserved in its natural state or used for agriculture. A UGB need not be the city limits but is the furthest extent to which the city limits may go without modification to the UGB.

Use-based zoning code

A land-use regulation that focuses on the segregation of land-use types, permissible property uses, and control of development intensity through simple numerical parameters (e.g., FAR, dwellings per acre, height limits, setbacks, parking ratios).

See also “form-based zoning”. (Source: Derived from harriman.com website.)

Unbundled parking

The practice of selling or leasing parking spaces separate from the purchase or lease of the commercial or residential use. See also bundled parking.

(Source: Santa Monica zoning code)

VMT – Vehicle Miles Traveled

VMT per capita is the total annual miles of vehicle travel divided by the total population in a state or an urbanized area. In California, VMT reduction is the CEQA standard with the goal of encouraging infill development, promoting public health through active transportation, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

(Source: Derived from transportation.gov and dot.ca.gov websites)

Zoning

A tool that most cities use to govern uses, the size of buildings, and how buildings relate to their surroundings, including other buildings, open spaces, and streets.

(Source: smgov.net.)