



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TABLE 1: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Buffer	An area that separates land uses and helps to decrease each use’s impact on the other. This area can be as small as a stretch of landscape or as large as a group of properties. Buffers are often used to limit an industrial area’s impacts on residential uses or a major road’s impact on surrounding uses.
Buildable Area	The amount of a property where buildings can be built. The property’s zoning dictates where buildings are built and how much of the lot they can cover.
Building Footprint	The shape and position of the ground floor of a building.
Buildout	The maximum amount of development allowed in an area, based on zoning and other policies.
“City of Villages”	A smart growth strategy that focuses growth into mixed use activity centers that are pedestrian-friendly districts linked to an improved regional transit system. It is designed to sustain the long-term economic, environmental, and social health of the City and its many communities. It recognizes the value of San Diego’s distinctive neighborhoods and open spaces that together form the City as a whole.
Common Indoor Open Space	A usable indoor area commonly accessible to all residents and users of the building for passive or active recreation.
Common Outdoor Open Space	Usable outdoor area commonly accessible to all residents and users of the building for passive or active recreation.
Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone (CPIOZ)	Supplemental development regulations that are tailored to specific sites within community plan areas of the City. The intent of these regulations is to ensure that development proposals are reviewed for consistency with the use and development criteria that have been adopted for specific sites as part of the community plan update process. This overlay zone applies to properties that are identified in a community plan as areas requiring supplemental development regulations or processing of a development permit and that have been incorporated by ordinance into this overlay zone.
Community Plans	The officially adopted land use plan of a local community that sets forth (in words, maps, illustrations, and/or tables) goals, policies, and recommendations intended to direct present and future physical development that occurs within the community. Community Plans within the City of San Diego are an integral part of the Land Use and Community Planning Element of the City’s General Plan and therefore, must be consistent with the goal and policies of the General Plan.
General Plan	A compendium of City 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 Code Section 65301 and adopted by the City Council or Board of Supervisors.
Incompatible Uses	A combination of adjacent uses that creates conflicts or negative impacts (for example, heavy industrial uses next to residential uses).

TABLE 1: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Land Use Plan	A document that provides policies and recommendations for the physical development of an area, including specifics about land uses, development intensity and density, and connections to transportation, noise, and other planning topics.
Planned District Ordinance	Zoning regulations, specifically tailored to an area, which provides development standards for the erection, construction, addition, enlargement, conversion, demolition, move-on, alteration or rehabilitation of developments. The intent of the PDO is to implement the Community Plan
Private Open Space	An area connected or immediately adjacent to a dwelling unit. Private open space may include a balcony, porch, ground or above grade patio or roof deck used exclusively by the occupants of the dwelling unit and their guests.
Setback	The amount of space required between a lot line and the building line.
Smart Growth	The concept that provides choice and opportunity by encouraging efficient and sustainable land development. It optimizes previous infrastructure investments, and uses less land.
Stepback	The distance measured from a property line to the building walls of the upper floors of a building above a specified height.
Density Transfer Program	Provides a mechanism for transferring density from sites anywhere inside the Village District ("Sending Sites") to sites located within a ¼-mile radius of San Diego Trolley stops within the Village District ("Receiving Sites"). The goal of the program is to encourage increased density and compact development within defined village centers, and maintain the existing character of neighborhoods outside of the Village District.
Urban Open Space	Any usable space accessible to the general public which is 1,000 square feet or greater in size and includes plazas or parks.
Zoning	The legal designation for the uses and characteristics of development allowed on a property, including the height and size of buildings.

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TABLE 2: MOBILITY	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Circulation	How people, cars, bicycles, buses and others move around in an area on a transportation network, including roads, intersections, bridges, waterways, and sidewalks.
Complete Street	Streets made to serve all means of travel and allow safe access for all users. A complete street allows pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities to safely move along and across a complete street.
Corridor	Usually a long stretch of street, highway, railway, or trail that connects destinations and can contain important features such as shopping areas, historic locations, and entertainment or open space areas.
Easement	The right to use another person's land for a specific purpose. An easement can cover an entire piece of property or a specific section, and is often used in providing and maintaining public services (such as sidewalks or alleys) and other important amenities (such as power lines).
Green Street	Landscaped streetside planters or swales that detain stormwater runoff and allow it to soak into the ground as soil and vegetation filter pollutants. This replenishes groundwater supplies that feed fresh, cool water to rivers and streams. Green Streets also make attractive streetscapes that connect business districts, neighborhoods, parks and schools, and they can be designed to accommodate the diverse traffic needs of cars, trucks, pedestrians and bicyclists.
Local or Neighborhood Street	A street meant only for providing access to adjacent properties, not to provide access for through traffic.
Parking District	Parking Districts are used by local government to finance the costs of building and operating public parking facilities. To finance the costs of the project, the government levies assessments and may issue bonds. The charges created by these laws are considered benefit assessments and thus must be calculated according to the benefit each property will receive from the improvements financed.
Parking Structures	Freestanding parking garages or structures open to the public for a fee or off-site parking structures associated with a specific building or business.
Pedestrian Entrance	A functional entrance or door that is accessible to the general public from an enclosed occupied space. This does not include entrances to mechanical equipment or storage areas, emergency exits, or decorative nonfunctional doors and entrances.
Structured Parking	All parking facilities that serve a primary use or that are open to the general public.
Surface Parking	Surface parking lots offering short-term or long-term parking to the public for a fee
Transportation Demand Management (TDM)	A series of measures that encourage use of alternative forms of transportation to alleviate traffic demand on area roadways.

TABLE 3: URBAN DESIGN	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Active Commercial Uses	Commercial uses that are accessible to the general public, that generate walk-in clientele, and that contribute to a high level of pedestrian activity. Active commercial uses include retail shops, restaurants, bars, theaters and the performing arts, commercial recreation and entertainment, personal and convenience services, hotel lobbies, banks, travel agencies, airline ticket agencies, child care services, libraries, -museums, and galleries.
Blank Wall	Any street wall area that is not transparent, including solid doors and mechanical area wall(s).
Building Materials	All materials visible from the exterior of a development, including materials used for walls, roofs, windows, doors, and architectural or decorative features applied to the building façade.
Compact Building Design	Compact building design suggests that communities be designed in a way which permits more open space to be preserved, and that buildings be built in a style that promotes more efficient use of land and resources.
Courtyard	An open space unobstructed to the sky, located at or above grade level and bounded on two or more sides by building walls.
Facade	One side of the exterior of a building, usually the front
Fenestration	The design, construction, or presence of openings in a building. Fenestration includes windows, doors, louvers, vents, wall panels, skylights, storefronts, curtain walls, and slope glazed systems.
Fine Grain	Small scale, usually low cost spaces that provide a diverse range of activities and users. The fine grain spaces include small retail tenancies with street access.
Frontage	The frontage, or front, of a lot is usually defined as the side nearest the street.
Mass and Scale	The visual perception of the organization of the gross floor area of the structure compared to adjoining development.
Paseo	Pedestrian passageways that add dimension and improve connections to the downtown pedestrian network, which include plazas, mid-block crossings, parks and/or other major public spaces.
Plaza	A public space at the intersection of main streets used for civic purposes and commercial activities. A plaza is bounded by frontages and its landscape consists of durable pavement for parking and trees requiring little maintenance.

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TABLE 3: URBAN DESIGN	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Reflective Glass	A glazing material which obscures vision, reflects surroundings, and has zero or minimal transparent qualities to the exterior.
Screen or Screening	Partial or full enclosure of a space or area by solid materials that are compatible with the materials and architectural design of the development in order to block views of the area from nearby development or public rights-of-way.
Street Wall	The building façade along a property line adjacent to any public street. The street wall may include arcades, colonnades, recessed entrances, private open space, or urban open space.
Urban Design	The appearance and design of buildings, landscaping, and other developments in an urban area.

TABLE 4: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Business Improvement District (BID)	City-designated geographic-based areas where the business owners are assessed annually to fund activities and improvements to promote the business district. The City of San Diego supports BIDs as a tool for strengthening small business communities, creating new jobs, attracting new businesses, and revitalizing older commercial neighborhoods across the city.
Entertainment District	A unique neighborhood/destination that supports performing arts and cultural activities and encourages a pedestrian friendly environment.
Maintenance Assessment District (MAD)	A legal mechanism by which property owners can vote to assess themselves to pay and receive services above-and-beyond what the City of San Diego normally provides. This above-and-beyond service level is called a "special benefit." What the City normally provides is called the "general benefit." MADs may also be known as Landscape Maintenance Districts (LMDs), Lighting and Landscape Maintenance Districts (LLMDs), Enhanced Maintenance Assessment Districts (EMADs), or Community Benefit Districts (CBDs). Because many districts include more than landscaping and lighting, the name was changed to better represent the nature of the districts.
Micro-Assessment District	Provide organized and targeted assistance in areas such as business development and retention, marketing, organization, funding, and special events. The program serves San Diego business districts which have an insufficient number of businesses to form Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

TABLE 5: PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND SAFETY	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Context-Sensitive Design	Designing transportation and other public works projects to fit in with the character of an existing neighborhood.
Infrastructure	Typically, the pieces of the community necessary to support residents, workers, and visitors. Streets, sewers, electricity, flood management, and water supply are parts of a community's infrastructure.
Public Facilities	Public spaces and amenities that provide services to the public, such as a library, community center, or school.
Public Safety Facility	A facility operated by the City of San Diego or its agent that is utilized for public safety and emergency services, including police and fire protection.
Storm Water Management	A process that aims to reduce, control, and prevent storm water runoff

TABLE 6: RECREATION	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Community Park	Land with full public access intended to provide recreation opportunities beyond those supplied by neighborhood parks. Community parks are larger in scale than neighborhood parks but smaller than regional parks.
Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA)	The City's planned habitat preserve within the MSCP Subarea. The MSCP is the regional program through which the MHPA will be assembled as each participating jurisdiction implements their portion of the MSCP. The planned MSCP regional preserve for southwestern San Diego County is targeted at 172,000 acres.
Neighborhood Park	Publicly-owned land intended to serve the recreation needs of people living or working within one-half mile radius of the park.
Park Equivalency	Refers to alternative methods of providing recreation facilities. The use of "equivalencies" is intended to be a part of a realistic strategy for the equitable provision of park and recreational facilities.
Pocket Park or Mini Park	Parks that are less than standard size which are used to supplement an already park-deficient area. Pocket Parks are not intended as a substitute for General Plan park standards.

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TABLE 7: CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Bio-Swale; Vegetated Swale	A landscape element designed to capture storm water run-off from adjacent surface areas. It has inverted sloped sides that permit rainwater to drain into it and contains vegetation and mulch designed to remove pollutants before the water infiltrates into the soil.
Eco-Roof	An open space area on top of a building roof that is landscaped and maintained.
Sustainability	A means of 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.
Sustainability Indicator	One of the key performance categories that can be tracked to demonstrate the condition of a significant sustainability impact over time.
Sustainability Measures	Specific voluntary best practice design measures that make a development more sustainable than it would be under standard development requirements.

TABLE 8: HISTORIC PRESERVATION	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Historic Preservation	The identification, protection, and enhancement of historical resources.
Historical Resources	Buildings, sites, districts, structures, or objects that reflect an area's character, culture, or past and meet local, state, or national designation criteria.

TABLE 9: HOUSING	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Area Median Income (AMI)	<p>A statistic generated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the purpose of determining the eligibility of applicants for certain federal housing programs. HUD determines AMI on an annual basis by region, making adjustments for household size and other factors. The San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) adjusts the income limits for the housing programs offered. The SDHC annual AMI levels in 2014 are \$72,700 for a family of four. The five categories of AMI for housing programs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extremely Low Income 0-30% of AMI • Very Low Income 31-50% of AMI • Low Income 51-80% of AMI • Moderate Income 81-120% of AMI • Above Moderate Income 121% + of AMI
Affordable Housing	<p>Generally, a term used to describe housing (owned or rented) that costs no more than 30% of a household's income. That means rent and utilities in an apartment or the monthly mortgage payment and housing expenses for a homeowner should be less than 30 percent of a household's monthly income to be considered affordable.</p> <p>As an example the median income for a family of four in San Diego is 72,700 (SD Housing Commission). Utilizing HUD's definition, affordable housing for a low-income family (household earning up to 80 percent of San Diego area median income) (AMI), would be an apartment renting for about \$1,578 per month or a home priced under \$225,000. The cost would vary depending on family and unit size.</p>
Artists' Studio	This includes but is not limited to work or exhibit space for artists and artisans, including individuals practicing one of the fine arts, performing arts, or skilled in an applied art or craft.
Companion Unit	A companion unit is a dwelling unit that is an accessory use for a single dwelling unit on a residential lot that provides complete living facilities, including a kitchen, independent of the primary dwelling unit.
Condominium Conversions	The process of converting residential units, commercial or industrial space to condominiums units, or space sold separately
Dwelling Unit	A room or suite of rooms in a building or portion thereof, used or intended or designed to be used or occupied for living purposes by one family, and containing only one kitchen.
Group Living	Group living means residential or institutional uses licensed by the State of California that provide supportive residential facilities to specified sections of the population.
Limited Residential	Dwelling units on upper floors of nonresidential uses.

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TABLE 9: HOUSING	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Live/Work Quarters (Lofts)	An area comprised of one or more rooms or floors in a building originally designed for industrial or commercial occupancy. It includes cooking space, sanitary facilities, and living or working space for artists, artisans, and similarly situated individuals.
Living Unit	Enclosed square feet which are used as a primary residence for a minimum period of one month at a time.
Low Income	Any household whose income exceeds 50 percent but does not exceed 80 percent of the median income as adjusted for household size as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the San Diego Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.
Multi-Family Residential	Two or more dwelling units on a lot.
Multi-Generational Housing	Family households defined as consisting of three or more generations.
Single Family Residential	One dwelling unit on a lot.
Senior Citizens Housing	At least one person residing in each unit shall be at least 55 years of age or physically disabled.
Shopkeeper Unit	A unit with both living quarters and commercial space that meets all occupancy separation requirements of the Building Code.
Tenant Improvements	May include finishing or remodeling of interior space to accommodate a new tenant or occupant, the installation of ancillary mechanical equipment, or the installation of replacement doors or windows to serve a specified use.

TABLE 10: GENERAL TERMS	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Amenities	Characteristics or features of a development or area that make it more valuable to a community or the public. Amenities can include public facilities, landscaping, security enhancements, and attractive street design.
Capital Improvement Project (CIP)	A physical public improvement such as a road, sidewalk, library, park, etc. The CIP is the City's multi-year schedule to prioritize, plan, and fund the physical improvement.
Cultural Institution or Use	A non-profit institution recognized as a 501(c), displaying or preserving objects of interest in the arts or sciences. Cultural uses include libraries, museums, non-profit art galleries, and interpretive centers.
Environmental Justice	The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. See California Government Code section 65040.12(e).
Geographic Equity	States that the services in a region that contribute to the quality of life should be accessible to all who live there. All communities should benefit from the opportunities the region provides.
Gentrification	A process of neighborhood renewal and rebuilding that experiences a shift toward a higher-income population, often with increasing property values that make it difficult for former lower-income residents to continue living there.
Public Notice	Public notice card/flyers are sent by the City on behalf of project applicant to all Property Owners, Tenants, Community Planning Groups within 300 feet of the project and anyone requesting notice.
Quality of Life	A measure of well-being for an individual or a group of people. Can include issues of physical and psychological health, socio-economic status, and overall life satisfaction.

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TABLE 11: TYPES OF PERMIT REVIEW	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Ministerial Review	The Development Services Department is also the primary City department responsible for managing the ministerial permit review process. Ministerial permit review is utilized for projects designed and built in conformance with the adopted community plan designation and underlying zone. Ministerial review requires review and approval only by City staff and other governmental agencies. These types of projects (i.e. building permits) typically are not subject to public review or participation prior to final approval.
Discretionary Review	The discretionary permit process is a collaborative effort that involves review by a variety of governmental agencies, as well as review, input and participation by adjacent tenants and property owners, the general public, organized groups, City recognized community planning groups, and any other interested persons. The Development Services Department is the primary City department responsible for managing the discretionary land development process, including assuring that the community and general public are provided ample opportunity to be involved in the permit review and approval process.

TABLE 12: PROCESS LEVEL	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Process One	Ministerial process 1 is a City Staff decision for approval/denial.
Process Two	Discretionary development permits require public notice, Community Planning Group notification, and City Staff decision for approval/denial. The decision is appealable to the Hearing Officer.
Process Three	Process 3 discretionary development permits require public notice, Community Planning Group hearing and advisory vote, and a public hearing before a Hearing Officer for approval/denial. The decision is appealable to the Planning Commission.
Process Four	Process 4 discretionary development permits require public notice, Community Planning Group hearing and advisory vote, and a public hearing before the Planning Commission for approval/denial. The decision is appealable to the City Council.
Process Five	Process 5 discretionary development permits require public notice, Community Planning Group hearing and advisory vote, and a City Council public hearing for approval/denial. The decision is not appealable.

TABLE 13: PROCESS LEVELS - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Process Two	Discretionary development permits require public notice, Community Planning Group notification, and City Staff decision for approval/denial. The decision is appealable to the City Council.
Process Five	Process 5 discretionary development permits require public notice and a City Council public hearing for approval/denial. The decision is not appealable

TABLE 14: DISCRETIONARY DEVELOPMENT PERMITS	
TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Neighborhood Use Permit (NUP)	NUPs are required for uses that have the potential for limited and identifiable impacts on surrounding development within an immediate area. These uses are identified with the letter "N" in the use regulations tables in Chapter 13, Article 1, Divisions 2-6. Supplemental regulations are provided for these uses in Chapter 14, Article 1. Expansion, enlargement, or resumption of a previously conforming use also requires an NUP. (Regulations for previously conforming uses are in Chapter 12, Article 7.) Regulations for processing NUPs are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 2. NUPs are processed in accordance with Process Two.
Conditional Use Permit (CUP)	CUPs are required for uses that have the potential for significant impacts on surrounding development within a wide area. These uses are identified with the letter "C" in the use regulations tables in Chapter 13, Article 1, Division 2-6. The purpose of the CUP process is to determine whether, and under what conditions, a specific use may be appropriate in a given location. Supplemental regulations for these uses are provided in Chapter 14, Article 1. Regulations for processing CUPs are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 3. CUPs are processed in accordance with Process Three, Process Four, or Process Five.
Neighborhood Development Permit (NDP)	NDPs are required for developments that have the potential for limited impacts on surrounding property. The base zone regulations specify what types of development proposals require an NDP. Supplemental development regulations are provided in Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 3. Regulations for processing NDPs are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 4. NDPs are processed in accordance with Process Two.
Site Development Permits (SDP)	SDPs are required for developments that, because of their location, size, or some other characteristic, may have significant impacts on resources or on the surrounding area. The base zone regulations specify what types of development proposals require an SDP. Supplemental regulations are provided in Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 3. Regulations for processing SDPs are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 5. SDPs are processed in accordance with Process Three, Process Four, or Process Five.
Planned Development Permit (PDP)	PDPs are an optional permit process that allows flexibility in the application of development regulations in exchange for imaginative and innovative design. Minimum planned development standards are provided in Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 4. Regulations for processing PDPs are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 6. PDPs are processed in accordance with Process Three, Process Four, or Process Five.
Coastal Development Permit (CDP)	are required for development in the Coastal Overlay Zone, except as provided in Chapter 12, Article 6, Division 7. Regulations for processing CDPs are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 7. CDPs are processed in accordance with Process Two or Process Three.
Variance	Variances are an optional permit process that provides relief from the strict application of development regulations where reasonable use of the property would otherwise be denied because of special circumstances unique to the property. Regulations for processing variances are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 8. Variances are processed in accordance with Process Three.

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