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Glossary



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Accessory dwelling unit (ADU): A smaller, independent residential dwelling unit on the same lot as a stand-alone (i.e., detached) single-family home.¹

Action: A measure, procedure, or technique intended to implement one or more policies to help reach a goal (see definition of “Goal”). An action may be ongoing or something that can be completed in a discrete timeline.

Active transportation: Any human-powered mode of transportation, such as walking or bicycling.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, compliance: Facilities, services, programs, and activities accessible to individuals with disabilities, consistent with ADA standards.

Areas of Change: Places the City will focus efforts to address housing, services, connectivity, and/or infrastructure needs to help make these complete neighborhoods. There are 21 designated Areas of Change in Santa Rosa, identified in the Preferred Alternative phase of the General Plan Update process.

Atmospheric river: Long, narrow storm systems that carry water vapor from the tropics to higher latitudes.

Brownfield: A property with the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

Buildout: The 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. (see “Environmental Impact Report”)

Capital Improvement Program (CIP): A program that schedules permanent improvements, usually for a minimum of five years in the future, that fits the projected fiscal capability of the local jurisdiction. The program generally is reviewed on an annual basis for conformance to and consistency with the General Plan.

¹ American Planning Association, 2023, “Knowledgebase Collection: Accessory Dwelling Units,” accessed June 20, 2023,

<https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/accessorydwelling/>.

Carbon neutral: Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to zero, either by entirely eliminating all GHG emissions or by balancing out all remaining GHG emissions through carbon removal practices so that the “net” emissions are zero.

Climate Change: A change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. In the context of this plan, this term refers to changes brought on by human activities.

Community members: The individuals who make up a community, including residents, workers, business owners, and students.

Complete neighborhoods: Neighborhoods built at the walkable and bikeable human scale offering people of all ages and abilities safe and convenient access to the goods and services needed in daily life. This includes a variety of housing options, grocery stores, and other commercial services, quality public schools, public open spaces and recreational facilities, transit, and active transportation options.

Complete street: A transportation facility that is planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to provide comfortable and convenient mobility, and improve accessibility and connectivity to essential community destinations for all users and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as pedestrians, bicyclists, public transportation riders, or drivers. Complete streets are especially attuned to the needs of people walking, using assistive mobility devices, rolling, biking, and riding transit.

Critical facility: A facility whose continued functioning is necessary to maintain public

health and safety following a disaster, and where damage or failure could pose hazards to life and property well beyond their immediate vicinity.

Dam inundation zones: The area downstream of the dam that would be flooded in the event of a failure (breach) or uncontrolled release of water, and is generally much larger than the area for the normal river or stream flood event.²

Defensible space: The buffer between a structure and the surrounding area. Adequate defensible space acts as a barrier to slow or halt the progress of fire that would otherwise engulf a property. Defensible space is the first line of defense for structures against wildfire.³

Disadvantaged Unincorporated Community (DUC): Areas with an annual median household income less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income and within the City’s Sphere of Influence (see definition for “Sphere of Influence,” an island within an incorporated jurisdiction’s boundary, or geographically isolated and has existed for at least 50 years.

Environmental Impact Report: A study required pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act 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”)

Environmental justice: The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins with respect to the development, adoption,

² Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2013, February, “Living with Dams: Know Your Risk,” https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/fema_living-with-dams_p-956.pdf.

³ CAL FIRE, 2023, “Defensible Space,” accessed June 27, 2023, <https://www.fire.ca.gov/dspace>.

implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.⁴

Equity Priority Area (EPA): Areas in Santa Rosa where residents suffer most from economic, health, and environmental burdens. EPAs are Santa Rosa’s equivalent of “disadvantaged communities” under Senate Bill 1000, which requires the identification of disadvantaged communities to address their needs in the Environmental Justice Element.

Equity Priority Populations: Groups identified as having characteristics that contribute to vulnerability and/or the likelihood of being underserved in a variety of areas, including environmental justice, equity, health, and safety. Santa Rosa has identified 10 Equity Priority Populations:

1. Low-income individuals and families
2. Racial or ethnic groups experiencing disparate health outcomes
3. Seniors, children, youth, and young adults
4. Individuals with disabilities
5. Immigrants and refugees
6. Outdoor workers and farmworkers
7. Individuals who have limited English proficiency
8. Unhoused people
9. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, asexual, and other LGBTQIA+ communities
10. Individuals who are incarcerated or who have been incarcerated

Equity: The state in which each individual or group is allocated the resources needed to reach an equal outcome.

Exposure: The presence of people; infrastructure; natural systems; and economic, cultural, and social resources in areas that are subject to harm.

Extreme weather: Occurrences of unusually severe weather or climate conditions that can cause devastating impacts on communities and agricultural and natural ecosystems.⁵

Farmers’ market: Two or more local farm vendors or their representatives selling agricultural products directly to consumers at a common recurrent physical location in Santa Rosa.

Fire Hazard Severity Zone: An area of significant fire hazard based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant hazards.

Flood, 100-Year: In any given year, a flood that has a 1 percent likelihood (a 1 in 100 chance) of occurring, and is recognized as a standard for acceptable risk. Also known as the “base flood.”

Flood, 200-Year: In any given year, a flood that has a 0.5 percent likelihood (a 1 in 200 chance) of occurring. Senate Bill 5 requires a 200-year level of flood protection for urban communities in the Central Valley.

Flood, 500-Year: In any given year, a flood that has a 0.2 percent likelihood (a 1 in 500 chance) of occurring.

Goal: An ideal future end related to the public health, safety, or general welfare. A goal is a general expression of community values and, therefore, may be abstract in nature.

⁴ California Government Code, Section 65040.12(e)

⁵ U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2023, “Extreme Weather,” accessed June 27, 2023,

<https://www.climatehubs.usda.gov/content/extreme-weather>.

Consequently, a goal is generally not quantifiable or time dependent.

Greenhouse gas (GHG): A gas that allows sunlight to pass through but reflect heat radiated from the earth’s surface, trapping heat in the lower atmosphere. Common GHGs include water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O). They may be emitted by natural or human processes.

Hazard mitigation: Sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and their property from hazards and their effects.

Hazardous material, Hazardous waste: A substance or waste that, because of its physical, chemical, or other characteristics, may pose a risk of endangering human health or safety or of degrading the environment. This does not include household hazardous waste, universal waste, or electronic waste, as they do not contain the quantity, concentration, and/or types of products significant enough to pose a substantial risk to human health and safety or to the environment.

Junior accessory dwelling unit (JADU): Units created by adding a small kitchen and exterior door to space in an existing single-family dwelling. A JADU may be up to 500 square feet in size.

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

Land use: The occupation or use of an area of land for any human activity or purpose.

Liquefaction: A process by which water-saturated granular soils transform from a solid to a liquid state during strong ground shaking.

Missing Middle Housing: Refers to house-scale buildings with multiple units in walkable neighborhoods.

Mitigation: Modification to avoid, reduce, minimize, or eliminate a negative impact. There are various types of mitigation, including environmental impact mitigation, hazard mitigation, GHG emissions mitigation, and more.

Mode split: The share of travel that is carried by each mode of transport, such as automobile, bus, walking, and biking.

Neck-downs: Raised curb extensions that narrow the travel lane at intersections or midblock locations intended to slow the flow of vehicular traffic.

Noise-sensitive receptors: A location where people reside or where the presence of unwanted sound could adversely affect the use of land, such as residences, schools, and hospitals.

Particulate matter (PM): The term for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air that are so small, they can be inhaled and cause serious health problems. Particles less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter, also known as fine particles or PM_{2.5}, pose the greatest risk to health.⁶

Policy: A specific statement that regulates activities in the city, guides decision making, and directs implementing action to achieve a goal (see definition of “Goal”).

Public safety power shutoff (PSPS) event: Preemptive measures to reduce the risk of fire caused by electric infrastructure during extreme weather events because high winds can blow tree branches and debris into energized lines and cause fires.

⁶ United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2023, “Particulate Matter (PM) Pollution,” accessed June 27, 2023,

<https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/particulate-matter-pm-basics>.

Resilience center: A well-used community-serving facility with year-round programming that also provides local communities with shelter, water, and electricity during hazardous events or disasters.

Resilience: The ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity for self-organization, and the capacity to adapt to stress and change.

Riparian area: Lands that occur along the edges of rivers, streams, lakes, and other water bodies. Examples include streambanks, riverbanks, and floodplains. Riparian areas are different from the surrounding uplands because their soils and vegetation are shaped by the presence of water.⁷

Special-status species: Species that are considered sufficiently rare that they require special consideration and/or protection and should be, or have been, listed as rare, threatened, or endangered by the federal and/or State governments.⁸

Sphere of influence (SOI): The probable physical boundaries and service area of a municipality or special district, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of the county.

Sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Traffic calming: The combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior,

and improve conditions for nonmotorized street users.⁹

Transportation demand management (TDM): A set of strategies aimed at maximizing travel choices.¹⁰

Trauma informed: An approach that reflects six key principles identified by the Department of Health and Human Services and Trauma-Informed Care Implementation Resource Center: safety; trustworthiness and transparency; peer support; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment, voice, and choice; and cultural, historical, and gender issues.

Urban agriculture: The practice of growing and processing fresh food in an urban area.

Urban growth boundary (UGB): A community-established boundary that separates urban areas from the surrounding natural and agricultural lands, or greenbelts, and limits how far out a city can expand. In 1990, Santa Rosa voters approved a five-year UGB, followed by a two-decade UGB measure in 1996 and an extension in 2010 to ensure that the current UGB will not be significantly changed until at least 2035.

Vulnerability assessment: An analysis of how a changing climate may harm a community and which elements—people, buildings and structures, resources, and other assets—are most vulnerable to its effects based on an assessment of exposure, sensitivity, potential impact(s), and the community's adaptive capacity.

Wildland-urban interface (WUI): An area that includes both houses and wildland vegetation,

⁷ National Park Service, 2023, "Riparian Zones: It's All About the Water," accessed June 28, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/nrca_glca_2021_riparian.htm#:~:text=What%20are%20riparian%20zones%3F,by%20the%20presence%20of%20water.

⁸ Sacramento County, 2023, "Special Status Species," accessed June 28, 2023, https://planning.sacounty.gov/InterestedCitizens/Pages/ER_Speci

[alStatusSpecies.aspx#:~:text=%22Special%20Status%20Species%22%20is%20a,Federal%20and%20For%20State%20governments">alStatusSpecies.aspx#:~:text=%22Special%20Status%20Species%22%20is%20a,Federal%20and%20For%20State%20governments](#)

⁹ Lockwood, Ian. ITE Traffic Calming Definition. ITE Journal, July 1997, pg. 22.

¹⁰ Federal Highway Administration, 2023, "Transportation Demand Management," accessed June 28, 2023, https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/plan4ops/trans_demand.htm.

creating a significant threat to human life or property from wildfires.

Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Area: A geographical area identified by the City of Santa Rosa as a “Fire Hazard Severity Zone,” in accordance with the Public Resources Code, Sections 4201 through 4204, and Government Code, Sections 51175 through 51189, or other areas designated by the enforcing agency to be at a significant risk from wildfires.

Youth-populated areas: Spaces where people under 24 years old gather or visit on a regular basis, including playgrounds, community centers, sports centers, gyms, museums, youth clubs, and malls.

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