

GENERAL PLAN TERMINOLOGY FOR LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

Here are some of the basic planning terms used in the General Plan.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

- Land use designations are the intended future uses of every parcel of land in the city. According to State law, land use designations must identify the allowed uses and the development intensity (measured in dwelling units per acre, floor area ratio or jobs/residents per acre). Zoning districts must be consistent with the General Plan land use designations.

While land use designations provide for overall development intensity and allowed uses, it does not specify the form or character of the building. Different interpretations of the same density and FAR can result in buildings of very different character. To encourage similar interpretations of allowed FARs, other City regulations such as zoning height limits, building setbacks, or open space requirements are used to guide the form of buildings within a given FAR range.

MIXED USE

- Mixed use is a term used to describe when two or more uses (typically residential and non-residential uses) are allowed in an area, either a parcel or a group of parcels, such as a neighborhood, district or corridor. Generally, there are two types of mixed use – vertical and horizontal. Vertical mixed use is when the uses are mixed vertically within a building, typically with ground floor retail or services and residential on the upper floors. Horizontal mixed use is when areas contain a mix of residential and non-residential uses.

DENSITY

- Density is the amount of residential development within a given area.

FLOOR AREA RATIO

- Standards of building intensity for non-residential uses such as office, commercial, industrial, and institutional development are stated as a range (i.e., minimum and maximum) of floor

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area ratios (FARs). FAR is a measure of the total amount of building space (or “floor area”) compared to the area of the parcel.

In the case of mixed-use developments that include residential uses, density standards are applied to the residential component while FAR standards are applied to the non-residential component. A site includes all contiguous parcels that will share parking or access.

FULL BUILDOUT

- Full buildout, or theoretical buildout, refers to the maximum amount of development that could occur in an area if every parcel was developed to its maximum capacity. Full buildout is calculated by multiplying the gross land area of each uses multiplied by the maximum density or FAR allowed in the land use designation. Full buildout is considered theoretical because it is a maximum amount of development that will likely never be reached, especially for an already developed city such as Thousand Oaks. This is because most development cannot be built to its maximum capacity due to constraints, and for most parcels it does not make financial sense to tear down one building and replace it with a slightly larger building. General Plans rarely use full buildout as a measure of growth.

2045 GROWTH PROJECTIONS

- Growth projections refer to the predicted amount of development that will likely occur in a given time period. In the case of the Thousand Oaks General Plan update, the horizon year is 2045. 2045 buildout is determined by many factors including the availability of land for development, absorption rates for new development, regional economic trends, government regulations, and the potential for new development on any given parcel.

When preparing a General Plan, the horizon year growth projections are significantly lower than full buildout. The Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan will analyze 2045 growth projections and not full buildout.

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REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION

- According to the Institute for Local Government, “the Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) is the process by which each community is assigned its share of the housing need for an eight-year period. This allocation consists of two steps. First, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) determines the total housing need for each region in the state. Second, as the Council of Governments, ...[SCAG distributes]... this need to local governments. The RHNS identifies each jurisdiction’s responsibility for planning for housing, and is divided into four income categories that encompass all levels of housing affordability. Once it receives its RHNA, each local government must update the Housing Element of its General Plan to show how it plans to meet the housing needs in its community.” The Housing Element is then certified by the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development. Thousand Oaks’ RHNA for the eight-year 2021-2029 Housing Element cycle is 2,615 units.

MEASURE E

- Measure E is a growth control measure approved by voters in November 1996 and approved by City Council in December 1996. The purpose of Measure E is to ensure any residential or commercial development does not place an undue burden on the City’s topography and infrastructure. Measure E requires voter approval for any amendments to the Land Use Element of the General Plan that would result in a net increase in the acreage of land designated “commercial,” or a net increase in the maximum potential number of residential units that were allowed under the General Plan Land Use Element when Measure E was passed in 1996.

Thus, Measure E also caps the total amount of housing units to the full buildout in 1996 based on the General Plan land use designations. Based on an analysis of the full buildout by City staff and approved by the City Council, the full buildout under Measure E is 81,124 housing units.

An increase in allowed residential density or capacity in one area could be approved without voter approval if there is a reduction in allowed residential density elsewhere, if there is no net increase in the total number of potential dwelling units citywide. Units resulting from a

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decrease in maximum allowed density area placed in a “bank” for accounting purposes. For instance, a change of a site’s General Plan Land Use designation from Medium Density Residential to Low Density Residential would result in City Council approving a General Plan Amendment and placing the difference in the maximum potential number of units into the “bank.”

For more information about Measure E, please refer to the Measure E page on the City of Thousand Oaks website: <https://www.toaks.org/departments/community-development/planning/measure-e>

SENATE BILL 330

- In 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom signed SB 330 to promote housing development throughout the State. One of the core components of this legislation is that jurisdictions may not change an existing land use designation to prohibit residential development or lower the intensity of residential development, unless there is a concurrent increase in capacity elsewhere in the city, a concept known as “No Net Loss.”

This means that the new General Plan cannot reduce the total residential capacity of the City because of SB 330 nor can it increase because of Measure E. The decision that must be made in the General Plan is how to distribute the 81,124 housing units to produce the greatest benefit for the city.

Additional requirements in SB 330 include permit streamlining to reduce the time for housing approvals, prohibiting subjective decision-making for residential development, and a prohibition from imposing a moratorium or similar restriction on a housing development that was adopted after 2005.