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GLOSSARY

Acronyms

ABAG: Association of Bay Area Governments

BART: Bay Area Rapid Transit

BAWSCA: Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency

BMP: Best Management Practices

CCWRP: Calera Creek Water Recycling Plant

CDF: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

CDFG: California Department of Fish and Game

CNDDDB: California Natural Diversity Database

CRLF: California Red-Legged Frog

CRSMP: Coastal Regional Sediment Management Plan

EMS: Emergency Medical Services

ESHA: Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area

FESA: Federal Endangered Species Act

GGNRA: Golden Gate National Recreation Area

HPD: Hillside Preservation District

LHMP: Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

LID: Low Impact Development

NCCWD: North Coast County Water District

NCFA: North County Fire Authority

NPDES: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

RWQCB: State of California Regional Water Quality Control Board

PG&E: Pacific Gas & Electric

SamTrans: San Mateo County Transit District

SFGS: San Francisco Garter Snake

SFPUC: San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

SMCWPPP: San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program

TDR: Transfer of Development Rights

USGS: United States Geological Survey

USFWS: United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Definitions

Aquaculture: A form of agriculture as defined in Section 17 of the Fish and Game Code. Aquaculture products are agricultural products, and aquaculture facilities and land uses shall be treated as agricultural facilities and land uses in all planning and permit-issuing decisions governed by this division.

Beach: The expanse of sand, gravel, cobble or other loose material that extends landward from the low water line to the place where there is distinguishable change in physiographic form, or to the line of permanent vegetation. The seaward limit of a beach (unless specified otherwise) is the mean low water line.

Best Management Practices (BMPs): Schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, operation and maintenance procedures, structural treatment devices, and other management practices to prevent or reduce the conveyance of pollution in stormwater and urban runoff.

Biodiversity: A term used to quantitatively or qualitatively describe the species richness and abundance of plants and animals within an ecosystem.

Bluff: A high bank or bold headland with a broad, precipitous, sometimes rounded cliff face overlooking a plain or body of water.

Bluff/Cliff Edge: The upper termination of a bluff, cliff, or seacliff. In cases where the top edge of the cliff is rounded away from the face of the cliff as a result of erosional processes related to the presence of the steep cliff face, the bluff line or edge shall be defined as that point nearest the cliff beyond which the downward gradient of the surface increases more or less continuously until it reaches the general gradient of the cliff. In a case where there is a steplike feature at the top of the cliff face, the landward edge of the topmost riser shall be taken to be the cliff edge.

Bluff Face: The portion of a bluff between the bluff edge and the toe of the bluff.

Buffer: A buffer is a development setback designed to minimize the disturbance that development may cause in sensitive environments, or to protect development from nuisances or hazards.

Cliff: A high, very steep, perpendicular, or overhanging face of rock.

Coastal Access: The ability of the public to reach, use or view the shoreline of coastal waters or in land coastal recreation areas and trails.

Coastal Bluff: A bluff overlooking a beach or shoreline or that is subject to marine erosion. Many coastal bluffs consist of a gently sloping upper bluff and a steeper lower bluff or sea cliff. The term “coastal bluff” refers to the entire slope between a marine terrace or upland area and the sea.

Coastal Development Permit (CDP): A permit for any development within the coastal zone that is required pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 30600 of the California Coastal Act.

Coastal-Dependent Development or Use: Any development or use which requires a site on, or adjacent to, the sea in order to function.

Coastal-Related Development: Any use that is dependent on a coastal-dependent development or use.

Critical Habitat Areas: Areas containing features essential for the conservation of species listed under the FESA, and which may require special management and protection outside that which is already provided by FESA. Critical Habitat Areas are designated by the USFWS.

Cumulative Effects: The incremental effects of an individual project shall be reviewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

Design Life. The design life of a structure is the period of time during which it can still safely meet the demand of its users.

Development: On land, in or under water, the placement or erection of any solid material or structure; discharge or disposal of any dredged material or of any gaseous, liquid, solid, or thermal waste; grading, removing, dredging, mining, or extraction of any materials; change in the density or intensity of use of land, including, but not limited to, subdivision pursuant to the Subdivision Map Act (commencing with Section 66410 of the Government Code), and any other division of land, including lot splits, except where the land division is brought about in connection with the purchase of such land by a public agency for public recreational use; change in the intensity of use of water, or of access thereto; construction, reconstruction, demolition, or alteration of the size of any structure, including any facility of any private, public, or municipal utility; and the removal or harvesting of major vegetation other than for agricultural purposes, kelp harvesting, and timber operations which are in accordance with a timber harvesting plan submitted pursuant to the provisions of the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 (commencing with Section 4511).

Dune: Ridges or mounds of loose, wind-blown material usually sand. A dune structure often has a back and foredune area. Stable dunes are often colonized by vegetation.

Easement: A grant of one or more of the property rights by the property owner to and/or for the use by the public, a corporation or another person or entity.

Economic Life (also called “design life” and “expected life”): Period over which a development is expected to be usable, with normal repairs and maintenance, for the purpose for which it was designed.

Energy Facility: Any public or private processing, producing, generating, storing, transmitting, or recovering facility for electricity, natural gas, petroleum, coal, or other source of energy.

Erosion: The wearing away of soil and rock by processes such as mechanical or chemical weathering; mass wasting; and the actions of waves, wind, and underground water.

Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA): Any area in which plant or animal life or their habitat are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and development (California Public Resources Code Section 30107.5).

Fault Rupture: The displacement of the earth’s surface due to the movement along a fault associated with an earthquake.

Feasible: Capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social, and technological factors.

Fuel Modification: A fire control strategy that thins vegetative cover within a buffer area surrounding development in order to interrupt continuous paths of fuel and provide defensible space to allow for firefighting operations in case of wildland fire.

Groundwater: Subsurface water occupying the zone of saturation usually found in porous rock strata and soils.

Habitat: The locality, including the physical and biological environment, in which a plant or animal lives.

Headland: A high, steep-faced projection extending into the sea, usually marking an area of fairly stable and rigid landform.

Hillside Preservation District (HPD): A district that overlays Pacifica’s base zoning and covers most of the city’s ridges and open spaces. The HPD is intended to ensure that development of highly sensitive slopes does not endanger the public or harm the environmental or scenic values of the site, and to encourage high-quality site planning and design that enhances the beauty of the landscape. The District creates more stringent lot coverage limits, based on the average natural slope of the site, and requires submission of development plans, grading plans, and other documentation.

Hydric Soil: A type of soil with characteristics resulting from prolonged saturation and chemically reducing conditions such as occurs under anaerobic conditions.

Hydrology: The dynamic processes of the water within an environment including the sources, timing, amount, and direction of water movement.

Hydrophytic Vegetation: Plants that have adapted to living in aquatic environments. These plants are also called hydrophytes. In wetlands, hydrophytic species occur where at least the root zone of the plant is seasonally or continually found in saturated or submerged soil.

Landslide: Also known as slope failure, a landslide involves the downslope displacement and movement of material, and can be triggered by either static (gravity) or dynamic (seismic) forces.

Land Divisions: Land divisions include subdivisions (through parcel map, tract map, grant deed, or any other method), lot line adjustments, redivisions, mergers, and certificates of compliance.

Littoral Cell: A region that encompasses most features affecting sediment transport. The boundaries of the cell are usually delineated by river drainage areas, promontory headlands, or submarine canyons on the periphery, the continental shelf-continental slope boundary on the seaward side and by inland ridges and river inlets on the landward side. Sediment within these cells generally travel seaward by river drainage, southward (downcoast) by longshore currents, and are eventually lost to the continental slope area or submarine canyon.

Liquefaction: The transformation of soil from a solid to a liquefied state, in which saturated soil temporarily loses strength due to the buildup of excess pore water pressure, especially during earthquake-induced cyclic loading.

Low Impact Development (LID): An approach to development that seeks to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible, employing principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing imperviousness, and creating functional and appealing site drainage that treats stormwater as a resource rather than as a waste product.

Marine System: Open ocean overlying the continental shelf and coastline exposed to waves and currents of the open ocean shoreward to (1) extreme high water of spring tides; (2) seaward limit of wetland emergent vegetation, trees, or shrubs; or (3) the seaward limit of the Estuarine System, other than vegetation. Salinities exceed 30parts per thousand.

Mitigation: As defined in Section 15370 of the State Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, mitigation includes:

1. Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.
2. Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.
3. Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment.
4. Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.
5. Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

Mitigation Measures: Measures imposed on a project consistent with Section 15370 of the State Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act to avoid, minimize, eliminate, or compensate for adverse impacts to the environment.

Monitoring: The systematic collection of physical, biological, or economic data or a combination of these data in order to make decisions regarding project operation or to evaluate project performance. Monitoring is typically required for beach nourishment projects and habitat restoration projects.

Net Developable Area. The total area of land available for development, not necessarily the total area of a property itself. It does not include open space, drainage land, regional roads and land used for other public facilities.

Non-conforming Use: A use of a structure or land that was lawfully established and maintained, but which does not conform with the use regulations or required conditions for the district in which it is located by reason of adoption or amendment of this code or by reason of annexation of territory to the City.

Permit: Any license, certificate, approval, or other entitlement for use granted or denied by any public agency.

Prescriptive Rights: Prescriptive rights refer to public rights that are acquired over private lands through continuous use over the length of a “prescriptive period” of at least five years. This right of access is considered an “implied dedication” of a public easement, and can occur with or without the explicit consent of the property owner.

Public works: The following developments are considered public works:

1. All production, storage, transmission, and recovery facilities for water, sewerage, telephone, and other similar utilities owned or operated by any public agency or by any utility subject to the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Commission, except for energy facilities.
2. All public transportation facilities, including streets, roads, highways, public parking lots and structures, ports, harbors, airports, railroads, and mass transit facilities and stations, bridges, trolley wires, and other related facilities.
3. All publicly financed recreational facilities, all projects of the State Coastal Conservancy, and any development by a special district.
4. All community college facilities.

Qualified Biologist: A person who has earned a minimum of a Bachelor of Science degree in biology or a related field from an accredited college or university and has demonstrated field experience evaluating land use impacts on marine or wildlife species and their habitats. Biologists who conduct wetland delineations shall have completed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' "Reg IV" wetland delineation training, or the equivalent, and shall have the demonstrated ability to independently conduct wetland delineations.

Riparian: Consists of trees, shrubs, or herbs that occur along watercourses or water bodies. The vegetation is adapted to flooding and soil saturation during at least a portion of its growing season.

Riprap: A protective layer or facing of rock, concrete blocks or quarry stone, placed to prevent erosion, scour, or sloughing of an embankment or bluff.

Sea: The Pacific Ocean and all harbors, bays, channels, estuaries, salt marshes, sloughs, and other areas subject to tidal action through any connection with the Pacific Ocean, excluding non-estuarine rivers, streams, tributaries, creeks, and flood control and drainage channels. “Sea” does not include the area of jurisdiction of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, established pursuant to Title 7.2 (commencing with Section 66600) of the Government Code, including any river, stream, tributary, creek, or flood control or drainage channel flowing directly or indirectly into such area.

Sea Cliff: A vertical or very steep cliff or slope produced by wave action, situated at the seaward edge of the coast or the landward side of the wave-cut platform, and marking the inner limit of beach erosion.

Seawall: A structure separating land and water areas, primarily designed to prevent erosion and other damage due to wave action. It is usually a vertical wood or concrete wall as opposed to a sloped revetment.

Sediment: Grains of soil, sand, or rock that have been transported from one location and deposited at another.

Seiche: A standing wave in an enclosed body of water that may be caused by tidal action or a seismic event.

Shore: Narrow strip of land in immediate contact with the sea, including the zone between high and low water. A shore of unconsolidated material is usually called a beach.

Shore Protection: Structures or sand placed at or on the shore to reduce or eliminate upland damage from wave action or flooding during storms.

Shoreline: Intersection of the ocean or sea with land; the line delineating the shoreline on National Ocean Service nautical charts and surveys approximates the mean low water line from the time the chart was prepared.

Shoreline Armoring: Protective structures such as vertical seawalls, revetments, riprap, revetments, and bulkheads built parallel to the shoreline for the purposes of protecting a structure or other upland property.

Special Status Species: Plant and animal species designated as rare, threatened, or endangered under the Federal or State Endangered Species Acts; species that are candidates for listing under federal or state law; species designated as USFWS species of concern or species of local concern; species designated by CDFG as species of special concern; species protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald Eagle Protection Act; and species that may be considered rare or endangered pursuant to Section 15380(b) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Storm Surge: A rise above normal water level on the open coast due to the action of wind stress on the water surface. Storm surge resulting from a hurricane also includes the rise in level due to atmospheric pressure reduction as well as that due to wind stress.

Stream: A topographic feature that at least periodically conveys water through a bed or channel having banks. This includes watercourses having a surface or subsurface flow that supports or has supported riparian vegetation.

Structure: Anything construed or erected which requires a fixed location on the ground, or is attached to a building or other structure having a fixed location on the ground.

Subsidence: The sinking of a portion of the ground surface that may occur from immediate settlement, shrinkage of expansive soil, liquefaction, earthquakes, or excess extraction of groundwater.

Temporary Event: An activity or use that constitutes development as defined in Section 30106 of the California Coastal Act, but which is or will be of limited duration and involves the placement of non-permanent

structures; and/or involves the use of sandy beach, parkland, filled tidelands, water, streets, or parking areas which are otherwise open and available for general public use.

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL): The maximum amount of a pollutant that can be discharged into a water body from all sources (point and non-point) and still maintain water quality standards. Under Clean Water Act section 303(d), TMDLs must be developed for all water bodies that do not meet water quality standards after application of technology-based controls. TMDL also refers to the written, quantitative analysis and plan for attaining and maintaining water quality standards in all seasons for a specific water body and pollutant.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): A mechanism to relocate potential residential development from areas where environmental or land use impacts could be severe to other areas more appropriate for development, in order to preserve significant open space resources. Owners of environmentally sensitive sites may transfer residential development rights to other sites where higher-density development can be supported, or from one part of a site to another.

Tsunami: A wave generated by abrupt movement of the seabed, which can result from an earthquake or a significant landslide.

Watershed: The geographical area drained by a river and its connecting tributaries into a common source. A watershed may, and often does, cover a very large geographical region.

Wave Run-up: The distance or extent that water from a breaking wave will extend up a beach or structure.

Wetland: The Coastal Act defines wetland as land which may be covered periodically or permanently with shallow water and includes saltwater marshes, freshwater marshes, open or closed brackish water marshes, mudflats, and fens. The California Code of Regulations further defines wetland as land where the water table is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to promote the formation of hydric soils or to support the growth of hydrophytes, and shall also include those types of wetlands where vegetation is lacking and soil is poorly developed or absent as a result of frequent and drastic fluctuations of surface water levels, wave action, water flow, turbidity or high concentrations of salts or other substances in the substrate.

Wildlife Movement Corridor: Wildlife movement corridors link areas of suitable habitat that are otherwise separated by barriers such as rugged terrain, changes in vegetation, or areas of human disturbance or development, allowing wildlife to access additional areas with food, water, and other resources.

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