

Appendix K Glossary

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Action – An “action,” a federal term, is the construction or reconstruction, including associated activities, of a transportation facility. For the purposes of this Handbook, the terms “project”, “proposal” and “action” are used interchangeably unless otherwise specified. An action may be categorized as a “categorical exclusion” or a “major federal action.”

Area of Potential Effect – A term used in Section 106 to describe the area in which historic resources may be affected by a federal undertaking.

Attainment Area – An area that meets air quality standards.

Auxiliary Lane – A traffic lane downstream of an entrance ramp to accommodate merging traffic, a lane upstream of an exit ramp to accommodate diverging traffic, or a lane between two closely spaced interchanges to accommodate weaving traffic.

Beneficial Use – A use of a natural water resource that enhances the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the user. Twenty-one beneficial uses are defined for the waters of California, ranging from municipal and domestic supply to fisheries and wildlife habitat.

Best Management Practice (BMP) – Any program, technology, process, operating method, measure, or device that controls, prevents, removes, or reduces pollution.

California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) – The state agency that manages California’s wildlife and plant resources.

California Department of Transportation (Department) – Responsible for planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining California’s state highway system.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) – A California law that requires state, local, and other agencies to evaluate the environmental implications of their actions.

California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) – A comprehensive listing of documented cultural resources that meet the criteria for a “historical resource” (as defined in the California Administrative Code), maintained by the State Office of Historic Preservation. Any historic property determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places qualifies automatically for the CRHR.

Candidate Species – Any species of fish, wildlife, or plant which has been determined to be candidates for listing under Section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1972 (amended).

Clean Water Act – A federal law that regulates the discharge of pollutants into waters of the United States.

Cooperating Agency – Under NEPA, any agency other than the lead agency which has jurisdiction by law of special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a

proposal for any action significantly affecting the human environment. Under CEQA, the term “responsible agency” is used.

Corridor – A strip of land between two termini within which traffic, topography, environment, and other characteristics are evaluated for transportation purposes.

Criteria air pollutant – A pollutant that has standards that have been established to meet specific public health and welfare criteria.

Cultural Resources – Archaeological and historic resources, including buildings, sites, districts, structures, or objects having historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural association.

Cumulative Impact – The impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

dBA – A sound level in decibels, measured with a sound level meter, having metering characteristics and frequency weighting specified in American National Standard Specifications for sound level meters (ANSI S1.4-1971). It is common to refer to numerical units of an A-weighted sound level as “dBA”.

Decibel – A numerical expression of the relative loudness of a sound.

Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) – A draft report, circulated for public review, that analyzes potential environmental impacts of a proposed project in compliance with CEQA.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) – A draft report, circulated for public review, that analyzes environmental effects of a proposed project in compliance with NEPA.

Encroachment (floodplain) – An action within the limits of the 100-year floodplain.

Endangered Species – A plant or animal species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Environmental Document – A draft or final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), Environmental Assessment (EA), Initial Study (IS) or Negative Declaration (ND).

Equivalent Sound Level (L_{eq}) – A measure of sound energy over a period of time, or a sound level which, in a stated period of time, would contain the same acoustical energy as the time-varying sound during the same period.

Erosion – The wearing away of the land surface by running water, wind, ice, or other geologic agents.

4(f) Resources – Resources protected by Section 4 (f) of the Department of Transportation Act. These include public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and cultural resources eligible for listing or listed on the National Register.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – The federal agency that coordinates highway transportation programs in cooperation with states and other partners. It provides federal financial assistance to the states to construct and improve the National Highway System, urban and rural roads, and bridges.

Federal Register – A federal publication that provides official notice of Federal administrative hearings and issuance of proposed and final federal administrative rules and regulations.

Floodplain – The part of the ground surface inundated with water on a recurring basis, usually associated with the one percent recurrence interval (100-year) flow.

Freeway – A divided arterial highway with full control of access and with grade separations at intersections.

General Plan – A document that contains policies used to implement the goals of a community.

Geomorphic – Of the earth's surface configuration.

Geomorphic Province – A topographic-geologic grouping of land based on landforms, rock types, and geologic structure.

Groundwater – Water beneath the earth's surface between saturated soil and rock that supplies wells and springs.

Habitat – The place or type of site where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) – Vehicles occupied by two (sometimes three) or more persons such as carpools and busses.

High Occupancy Vehicle Lane (HOV Lane) – A system of exclusive lanes signed and striped for use by vehicles with multiple occupants (two or more, or three or more, persons). HOV lanes are designed on roadways to reduce traffic congestion, improve safety, reduce fuel consumption, and improve air quality.

Historic Property – Any prehistoric or historic sited, building, structure, object, or district included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) maintained by Secretary of the Interior.

Hot Spot – A location where air pollutant emissions from specific sources may expose individuals to elevate risks of adverse health effects.

Inversion – A layer of warm air over cooler air that traps air pollution below it.

Intactness – The visual integrity of the natural and built landscape.

L_{eq} – A unit used for evaluation of sound impacts; the measurement of the fluctuating sounds level received by a receptor averaged over a time interval (usually one hour).

Landscape Unit – A geographically distinct portion of an area that has a particular visual characteristics.

Lead Agency – The public agency which has primary responsibility for carrying out or approving a project and preparing the environmental document.

Level of Service (LOS) – The qualitative description of operating level of an intersection or roadway segment based on delay and maneuverability. It can range from “A,” representing free flow conditions, to “F,” representing gridlock.

Liquefaction – The loss of strength that can occur in loose, saturated soil during or following seismic shaking. This condition can produce a number of ground effects, including lateral spreading boils, ground lurching, and settlement of fill material.

Maintenance Area – An area that had previously been designated a non-attainment area, but now meets applicable air quality standards.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) – The transportation planning, coordinating, and financing agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. It functions as both the region’s metropolitan transportation planning agency and as the region’s metropolitan planning organization – state and federal designations, respectively.

Migratory Bird Act of 1918 – Reflects agreements involving the United States, Great Britain (for Canada), Mexico, Japan, and the former Soviet Union to protect migratory bird populations.

Mitigation – Compensation for an impact by replacement or provision of substitute resources or environments. Measures taken to minimize adverse environmental impacts. Mitigation could reduce the magnitude and extent of an impact from a level of significance to a level of insignificance.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – The United States’ basic national charger for protection of the environment. It established policy, sets goals, and provides means for carrying out the policy.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) – The primary federal law pertaining to protection of cultural resources.

National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit – A permit required by the Regional Water Quality Control Board that is required if more than one acre of original ground is graded to prevent harmful pollutants from being washed by storm water runoff into local water bodies. One condition of this permit is that the contractor must submit a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which is similar to the Water Pollution Control Plan required by Caltrans’ Standard Specification 7-1.01G.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) – A federal listing of historic resources protected under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) – In California, the NAHC consists of nine members appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate. The NAHC is authorized and charged to preserve and protect Native American cemeteries, sacred sites, and traditional cultural properties. One function of the NAHC is to identify the Most Likely Descendant (MLD) whenever Native American human remains are discovered, except on tribal or federal land in California.

Non-attainment Area – An area that does not meet air quality standards.

Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) – Noise level standards above which noise reducing actions should be considered.

Notice of Availability – A formal public notice under NEPA announcing the availability of a completed EA, DEIS or FEIS. Such a notice is to be published in local newspapers. For EISs, publication of such notice in the Federal Register is also required.

Notice of Completion – The CEQA notice submitted to the State Clearinghouse when an EIR is completed.

Notice of Determination (NOD) – A “Notice of Determination” is a formal written notice under CEQA filed by a lead state agency when approving any project subject to the preparation of an ND or EIR.

Notice of Intent (NOI) – A notice that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared and considered. The NOI is published in the Federal Register by the Lead Agency. The CEQA equivalent of this is called a Notice of Preparation.

Porter-Cologne Water Act of 1969 – A California law that provides a framework for protecting the quality of waters in California for the use and enjoyment of the people of the state.

Practicable – An action that is possible after taking into consideration cost, existing technology and logistics in light of overall project purposes.

Project – CEQA (Section 21065) defines a “project” as an activity which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment, or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and which is any of the following:

- An activity directly undertaken by any public agency.
- An activity undertaken by a person which is supported, in whole or in part, throughout contracts, grants, subsidies, loans, or other forms of assistance from one or more public agencies.
- An activity that involves the issuance to a person of a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use by one of more public agencies.

Receptors – Term used in air quality and noise studies that refers to houses or businesses that could be affected by a project.

Record of Decision (ROD) – A formal written statement, required under NEPA, wherein a federal lead agency must present the basis for its decision to approve a selected project alternative, summarize mitigation measures incorporated into the project, and document any required Section 4(f) approval.

Regulatory Agency – An agency that has jurisdiction by law.

Responsible Agency – A “public agency other than the lead agency which has responsibility for carrying out or approving a project” (PRC 21069). All public agencies which have discretionary approval power over the project (14 CCR 15381). State and local public agencies that have discretionary authority to issue permits, for example, fall into this category.

Right-of-way – A general term denoting land, property, or interest therein, usually in a strip, acquired for or devoted to transportation purposes.

Riparian – Pertaining to the banks and other adjacent terrestrial (as opposed to aquatic) environs of freshwater bodies, watercourses, estuaries, and surface-emergent aquifers, whose transported freshwater provides soil moisture sufficient in excess of that available through local precipitation to potentially support the growth of vegetation.

RTP – Regional Transportation Plan, prepared by the regional agency responsible for transportation planning and funding. In Solano County, the RTP is prepared by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to identify transportation improvement priorities.

San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) – An agency with the California Environmental Protection Agency that is responsible for regulating pollutants to protect the water resources of the Bay Area.

Scoping – The process of determining the scope, focus, and content of an EIR/S.

Section 106 – This section of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

Special Status Species – Any species of fish, wildlife, or plant that is officially listed as rare, threatened, endangered, or candidate for rare, threatened, or endangered species listing under the state or federal Endangered Species Acts.

State Implementation Plan – A plan for attaining national ambient air quality standards required by the Clean Air Act.

State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) – The official appointed or designated pursuant to Section 101 (b)(1) of the National Historic Preservation Act to administer the State historic

preservation program. In California, the SHPO manages the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and serves as executive secretary of the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC).

State Transportation Implementation Program (STIP) – Program updated every two years describes the California Transportation Commission’s priorities for improvement on and off the state highway system.

Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) – A plan to reduce the potential impacts of erosion and sedimentation from construction.

Surface Runoff – Water that runs off streets and land and enters a body of water.

Threatened Species – A species that is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future in the absence of special protection.

Transportation Management Plan (TMP) – A plan to manage traffic during construction of projects to reduce congestion.

Transportation System Management (TSM) – Changes to existing roadways and services, such as geometric and striping improvements and expanded transit service, to improve traffic operations.

Undertaking – A project, activity, or program funded in whole or in part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a federal agency, including: those carried out by or on behalf of a federal agency; those carried out with federal financial assistance; those requiring a federal permit, license or approval; and those subject to state or local regulation administered pursuant to a delegation or approval by a federal agency. Federal agencies must ensure that their undertakings comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Unity – The visual cohesion and compositional harmony of the viewshed.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) – Federal agency with jurisdiction over waters of the United States.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – The federal agency responsible for maintaining environmental quality, including air quality, noise, and hazardous waste management.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – The federal agency that administers the federal Endangered Species Act and is involved in protection of fish and wildlife habitat, including wetland areas.

Vividness – The visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in striking an distinctive visual patterns.

Waters of the United States – As defined by the ACOE in 33 Code of Federal Regulations 328.3(a):

1. All waters that are currently used , or were used in the past, or may be susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce, including all waters that are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide;
2. All interstate waters including interstate wetlands;
3. All other waters such as interstate lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds, the use degradation or destruction of which could affect interstate commerce, including any such waters:
 - i. Which are or could be used by interstate or foreign travelers for recreational or other purposes; or
 - ii. From which fish or shellfish are or could be taken and sold in interstate or foreign commerce; or
 - iii. Which are used or could be used for industrial purposes by industries in interstate commerce;
4. All impoundment of waters otherwise defined as waters of the United States under this definition;
5. Tributaries of waters identified in paragraphs 1-4;
6. The territorial seas; and
7. Wetlands adjacent to waters (waters that are not wetlands themselves) identified in paragraphs 1-6.

Watershed – The point of high ground dividing different drainage systems.

Weaving – The crossing of traffic streams, moving in the same general direction, accomplished by merging and diverging.

Wetlands – According to regulations of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, wetlands are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, under normal conditions, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, and similar areas and are subject to protection under Executive Order 11990 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.