

Glossary

Following is a list of terms used in this Comprehensive Plan and/or other planning documents which may not be familiar to the reader or which may have a more specific or slightly different meaning than when used in daily conversation.

Adequate. In conformance with established or relevant adopted County, State or Federal standards and policies.

Adjacent. Nearby but not necessarily adjoining or contiguous.

Adjoining. Next to; touching.

Affordable Housing. Typically defined as housing which requires no more than 35% of household income from households that earn 30% to 80% of the median household income of the jurisdiction.

Agriculture, Conventional. Farming activities which do not include confined livestock facilities.

Agriculture, Intensive. Confined livestock operations such as dairies, feedlots and poultry houses.

Agricultural and Forestal District. Voluntarily formed land areas, which are designated by the Board of Supervisors in accord with a State Code provision. Districts must have a core of 200 contiguous acres. Duration of the district is between four and ten years and may be renewed. The County may establish additional use restrictions. Use Value Assessment is guaranteed, to otherwise qualifying lands, within a district.

Area Plan. An element of the Comprehensive Plan which pertains to a specific geographic area of the County. It typically includes the full range of Comprehensive Plan provisions, but is focused on a single area and is more detailed than the Countywide Plan.

Arterial, Major. Corridors provide through movement between major land use areas.

Arterial, Minor. Interconnects with and augments the major arterial system. It accommodates trips of moderate length at a somewhat lower level of travel mobility than major arterials do. This system distributes travel to geographic areas smaller than those identified with the higher system.

ATU (Alternative Treatment Unit). Small-scale sewage treatment facilities, typically privately owned and maintained.

Best Management Practices (BMPs). Include a variety of methods approved by the State for reducing non-point source pollution and erosion from water run-off. Apply to construction and development practices as well as agricultural practices.

Buffer. Any device which shields one activity from another. Typically consists of landscaping or earthen berms, but may also include structures such as buildings or fences, as well as extra distances or setbacks.

Business. Commercial activity. Typically includes retail, office, and service activities, as well as moderate scale wholesale activities.

By-right Uses. Uses or structures which are allowed in a particular zoning district without the need for a Special Use Permit.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The County's five-year program for capital project expenditures, indicating which facilities the County plans to build and finance during the period. Updated annually. (It is sometimes called Capital Improvement Plan, although "plan" may be considered more general than "program".)

Cluster Development. The division of a tract into a group of smaller than normal lots, surrounded by a larger amount of open land. Overall density of the tract remains the same, but the smaller average lot size allows a large portion to remain open. In rural areas, the open land may be farmed or forested, in urban areas the open land is typically used for active or passive recreation purposes.

Collector, Major. Roads provide access and traffic circulation between arterials or between local streets serving residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas.

Commercial. Business.

Commission Permit. A requirement of Section 15.2-2232 of the Code of Virginia, which provides for public facility improvements to be reviewed by the Planning Commission to determine conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan. The official plan for future development of the County. Every jurisdiction in Virginia is required to have an adopted Comprehensive Plan and review it every five years. The Plan sets the goals and policies for guiding future growth so as to ensure orderly and harmonious development, conservation of resources and protection of public health and safety.

Conditional Zoning. A provision in the State Code that allows landowners to voluntarily offer conditions as part of a rezoning request. Such conditions, or proffers, may include public improvements, land or funding for improvements, and restrictions on uses. Upon approval of the rezoning request, conditions are binding to future owners of the property.

Conventional Development Patterns. See Suburban Development Patterns.

Density, Gross. The total area of a tract of land divided into the number of units built upon that tract. Typically expressed as a ratio of number of units per acre.

Density, Net. The total area of a tract of land minus the undeveloped portions such as environmentally sensitive areas, divided into the number of units built upon that tract. Also expressed as a ratio of number of units per acre.

Design Speed. The speed of traffic for which a road is designed to safely carry vehicles.

Design Capacity. The capacity or capability which a facility is designed to handle or support in a safe and efficient manner. Treatment plants, roads, schools and parks all are designed and built to a specific capacity of service.

Development Rights. That portion of the fee simple ownership interest in land that provides for the construction of buildings, roadways and other development. Development rights may be traded or sold through the use of restrictive easements.

Drainfield. See Septic System.

Easement. An interest in land owned by another party that entitles the holder to a specific and limited use or benefit. Commonly used for utility rights-of-way. A conservation easement removes the right to develop a property from the underlying deed of ownership and provides for that interest to be held by another party, typically for the purpose of protecting a natural, scenic or historic feature.

Extension. Adding to the length of a roadway or utility line so that it serves additional land.

Expansion. Adding to the capacity of a roadway, facility or utility plant so that it can process or handle greater volume.

Fee Simple Ownership. The complete ownership of a tract of real property; the ownership of the entire “bundle of rights” that constitute ownership of land.

Flex (Industrial). A light industrial/business use characterized by single or two story buildings used for a mix of warehouse, light assembly and office space.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR). The ratio of the enclosed floor area of a building on a given lot to the total land area of the lot. Also see Density.

Freeway. A high-volume, limited access highway. Freeways are often, but not necessarily, federal Interstate Highways. They may also include certain State Highways and Parkways.

Groundwater Recharge. The process whereby rainwater is absorbed into the ground, replenishing the groundwater supply.

Growth Management. The process of guiding the location, pattern, and timing of development so as to ensure minimum fiscal and environmental impacts.

Homeowners Association (HOA; also POA, Property Owners Association). A private organization of property owners created by the terms which establish a given subdivision or planned community. The purpose of the HOA is to fund, manage and maintain land in common ownership within the development, such as recreation areas and private roads.

Home Occupation. A business activity conducted in one’s place of residence.

Infill Development. The development of land which is mostly surrounded by previously developed land. Typically involves relatively small tracts.

Intensity. The level of energy and impact generated by the activities of the development on a site. Related to density but not identical. Intensity includes the impacts of vehicle traffic, noise, odors, fuel consumption, chemical processes and other activities that may be generated on a site without regard to the density of structures. Also see Density.

Industrial. Non-residential, non-commercial activities such as manufacturing, milling, mining and some larger scale distribution activities.

Land Trust. A public and/or private organization with the authority to buy, accept, hold and/or sell interests in real property for the purposes of land or building conservation.

Land Use. The activities for which a tract of land is used or which occur on the tract.

Land Use Category. A general category of similar types of land use activities, with distinct policy guidelines. This Plan establishes the following land use categories:

- Agricultural Reserve
- Urban Transition
- Environmental Resource Area
- Greenways
- Historic Preservation Area
- Community Residential
- Mixed Use Center
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Town / City
- Public Lands
- Other Areas (Urban Growth Areas, Special Corridors)

Land Use Tax. See Use Value Assessment.

Manufactured Home. Sometimes referred to as Mobile Home. A dwelling unit built in a factory in one or more sections, which is on a permanent chassis and transported on the highway to the site on which the unit will be placed. The unit is manufactured with plumbing, heating, air conditioning, and the electrical system.

Master Plan. The land use plan for a large tract of land. Also sometimes used to refer to a locality's Comprehensive Plan.

Mobile Home. See Manufactured Home.

Modular Home. A dwelling unit built in the factory, which is designed to be transported in sections and assembled on site. Typically built to similar specifications and standards as an on-site "stick built" units.

New Urbanism Development Patterns. See Traditional Development Patterns.

Overlay District. A zoning district which is superimposed over another district in order to apply special provisions.

Planned Development. A larger scale development project, which typically contains multiple uses or unit types, often arranged so as to create a coordinated development with relatively limited environmental impacts.

Planning Commission. A commission of citizens appointed by the Board of Supervisors and empowered to prepare the Comprehensive Plan and to evaluate and make recommendations to the Board regarding the conformance of proposed land use changes with the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan and land development ordinances.

PUD (Planned Unit Development). See Planned Development.

Policy Area. An area designated in a Comprehensive Plan in which specific land use policies apply.

Proffer (Proffered Condition). A voluntary promise or commitment made by a landowner/developer to the County to donate land, construct a facility or to develop the property subject to specific conditions that will mitigate impacts caused by the development. The proffer is a written binding agreement that becomes part of the zoning ordinance as it pertains to that property.

Public Facilities. Public works that facilitate a safe and harmonious community, typically provided by a government entity, including schools, roads, utilities, parks, libraries and fire stations.

Reverse Frontage. A site design technique in which lots are accessed by an on-site road, rather than directly onto a major collector or arterial road.

Rural Land. Land that does not have public sewer facilities and is generally located in an area of very low density development and/or undeveloped land. Sometimes defined as land that has neither public water nor public sewer. Also see Urban.

Septic Field. See Septic System.

Septic System. A subsurface sewage disposal system that uses the natural absorption of soil to treat wastewater. Typically only used for individual lots and structures of low intensity.

Setback. The distance a structure is located from a property line.

Site Plan. A plan, to scale, showing proposed structures and facilities for a parcel of land, including such information as streets, buildings, parking areas, landscaping, utility lines and topography.

Sprawl. A modern pattern of development characterized by low to moderate density, separated or isolated land uses, high consumption of land per unit of structure, motor-vehicle-oriented site access, and often geographically removed from historic downtown areas. Also see Suburban Development Patterns.

Steep Slope. Land forms with vertical inclines of greater than 25% or sufficient to cause significant erosion or flooding problems if disturbed by development activity.

Sub-Area Plan. See Area Plan.

Subdivision. The division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels.

Suburban Development Patterns. A pattern of development characterized chiefly by:

- wide lot frontages
- wide, curving streets
- a high proportion of cul-de-sacs
- large and uniform front yard setbacks
- garages at the front of the lot
- uniform dwelling types

Traditional Development Patterns. A pattern of development in towns, villages and hamlets that provides for comfortable pedestrian movement along public rights-of-way and features such elements as:

- human-scale buildings set close to the street
- interconnected street network (few, if any, cul-de-sacs)
- mixed uses
- on-street parking
- parking and garages to the side or rear of the lot
- narrow streets with space for pedestrians and bicycles

VDOT. Virginia Department of Transportation.

Urban Design. The arrangement and interrelationships of streets, structures and open spaces in developed areas in terms of the function of human activities that is established by such arrangements, and the visual character and identity that is created. Key aspects of urban design include the heights and setbacks of buildings in relationship to the public street; the placement, configuration and function of public open spaces; and the interrelationship of pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic.

Urban Growth Area. Land which is planned to be served by public water and sewer facilities in a particular time horizon (2010, 2020 or 2050) as shown on the Conceptual Land Use Plan maps.

Urban Land. Land which is served by public water and sewer facilities and/or which is within an area of mostly developed property. Also see Rural.

Use Value Assessment. A program authorized by the State, and adopted by localities at their option, in which qualifying agricultural, forestal or open space land is taxed at the value of its current use, rather than its fair market value for possible development. Also known as Land Use Tax.

Wetland. Area saturated by water sufficient to support vegetation that is adapted to saturated conditions. Includes but is not limited to swamps and marshes.

Zoning. The classification of land into districts which define and limit the allowed uses, lot sizes, building setbacks and other related land development features.