



XVI. GLOSSARY

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A

Accessory Use: This is a secondary use of property, which is in addition to, and secondary to another, primary land use. An example is a garage on a single-family lot.

Agri-Tourism: The practice of attracting visitors to experience farm operations. Tourists can pick fruit and vegetables, ride horses, taste honey, be educated on farming practice, cut Christmas trees, and participate in themed activities and events.

Affordable Housing: A housing unit (owned or rented) for individuals who qualify with income that is below the Federal Government Section 8 income limits. The qualifying individuals pay no more than 30% of their income for principal, interest, taxes and insurance.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): The Americans with Disabilities Act gives civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. The Title I employment provisions apply to private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies, and labor unions. Employers with 15 or more employees are covered.

Aquifer: An underground layer of rock, sand, or gravel capable of storing water within cracks and pore spaces, or between grains. When water contained within an aquifer is of sufficient quantity and quality, it can be tapped and used for drinking or other purposes. The water contained in the aquifer is called ground water.

Architectural Character: The distinguishing appearance of a building or structure's architectural features, such as roof slope, materials, openings, color, and scale. The character is based on historical and cultural influences.

Auto-Oriented Design: A form of development that depends on exposure to auto traffic and presumes people will use cars to travel to and from a site.

Assessed Value: The value of real estate or personal property as determined by a government unit, such as a city, for the purpose of determining taxes.

B

Best Management Practices (BMP): BMPs minimize the impact of development and other land use activities on the natural environment, such as reducing storm water.

Brownfield: Abandoned, idled, or under-utilized industrial and commercial property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination from past business practices. *See also Greenfield.*

Buffer: A type of landscaping treatment in which varied plant materials, including trees and evergreens, and earthen mounds buffer land uses from each other or from other impacting uses (i.e. roadway, parking lot, etc.).

Build Out: The point at which a community has completely built its land, typically based upon the capacity of infrastructure (especially water and wastewater).

Buildable Land: Land which lacks constraints that prevent it from being developed or redeveloped. This includes all vacant, partially used, or underutilized land zoned for commercial, industrial, or residential use. A single-family home built on a lot zoned for multi-family housing is an example of underutilized land. Parcels intended for public use or lots with limited building potential are not considered buildable lands.

Building Codes: City regulations that prescribe minimum standards for the construction and maintenance of buildings.

Building Permit: A permit issued for various types of building activity that authorizes structural, electrical, heating and cooling, plumbing, or demolition work.

Built Environment: The part of the environment formed and shaped by humans, including buildings, structures, landscaping, earth forms, roads, signs, trails, and utilities.

C

Central Business District (CBD): A term generally used to describe the heart of a downtown.

Charrette: An intensive design session (typically one week or less) conducted in a community interactive workshop atmosphere.

Clutter (Visual, Roadway): The proliferation of sign posts, utility lines and poles, regulatory signs, signals, advertising and lighting. The result is usually so visually confusing that the communicative intent is seriously undermined. Clutter interrupts the flow of communication from businesses and their signage to the motorist and walker, and is generally aesthetically unpleasant.

Community Character: The features that define the built and natural environment within the community and help to create its character. These include the historic buildings in the Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, themed architecture natural waterways or landforms that define parts of the City, woodlands, residential neighborhoods of different types, building density and orientation (auto- or pedestrian-oriented), and the scale and quantity of signage.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Federal government funded programs and projects that include a wide range of community and economic development activities aimed at revitalizing decayed urban areas and benefiting low- and moderate-income persons.

Community Impact Assessment (CIA): A CIA is a submittal requirement of the City's zoning code. It requires an assessment of the impacts of a new development on a community and is taken into account as part of the rezoning and development plan analysis.

Community Reinvestment Area (CRA): A CRA refers to areas designated by the legislative authorities of municipalities within which abatement of real estate taxes is available for remodeling of existing structures or new construction within the area. The legislative authority may stipulate in the authorizing resolution that only new structures or remodeling classifies as to use as commercial, industrial, or residential or some combination thereof, and otherwise satisfying the requirements of the State Code which are eligible for exemption under that section.

Community Supported Agriculture: A partnership between consumers and farmers in which consumers pay for farm products in advance and farmers commit to supplying sufficient quantity, quality and variety of products.

Comprehensive Plan: A Comprehensive Plan is the central organizing document for planning and managing growth. It consists of the City of Richmond's policies regarding long-term development, and land use maps, which indicate the types and densities of uses. The City requires that zoning ordinances and other City standards are guided by the policy direction set by the Comprehensive Plan.

Confined Animal Feed Lots: The confined feeding of animals for food, fur or pleasure in lots, pens, ponds, sheds or buildings, where animals are maintained for at least 45 days and ground cover is not maintained over a minimum of 50% of the animal confinement area.

Connections: It is critical for a community to build connections as it grows. Examples of connections are streets, sidewalks and bike paths that interlink neighborhoods, and that link neighborhoods with schools, parks, retail areas, and businesses. Major parts of the community should be linked to ensure a whole community is being developed.

Corridors: A corridor is a path used by people as they traverse the community. Corridors can include roads, sidewalks, bike paths, rivers, and streams. The quality of the experience of the traveler along these corridors helps to define the image of the community.

D

Density: For non-residential development, density may be expressed either as the gross square footage of a building per acre or as the floor area ratio (*See Floor Area Ratio*). For residential development, density is measured by the number of housing per acre and may be expressed in terms of either gross or net density. Gross density measures the density of a development using the entire site acreage whereas net density reduces the site acreages by an amount for right-of-way and any parkland dedication. From a community wide perspective, gross density is a more accurate measure since it recognizes the value of open-space set-asides while preserving the same development yield, thereby serving as an incentive in return for a public benefit.

District: Districts are unique parts of a community in which the uses, buildings and landscape share common features. The features of these districts that support their viability should be protected and enhanced. Examples of districts include the Downtown and unique historic neighborhoods.

District, Multiple Use: A multiple-use district is one in which multiple uses are programmed, such as housing, neighborhood scale retail, and office uses. This district provides multiple benefits to the community: it may encourage walking; less parking may be necessary because complementary day and evening uses reduce the overall need for parking; it creates synergistic effects that may enhance the value of the development and revenues to the City.

District, Single-Use: A single-use district is one in which one use dominates, such as an auto-oriented shopping center. This type of district is monotonous and does not provide synergistic benefits to the community that result when uses are mixed. Single-use districts increase traffic because trips cannot be shared (driver must visit many different single-use districts to conduct business or run errands).

Dwelling Units: A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms or a single room occupied as separate living quarters or, if vacant, intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those in which the occupants live and eat separately from any other persons in the building and which have direct access from outside the building or through a common hall.

E

Economic Base: The economic base of the City is defined by the variety of businesses and employers located in the community. A broad base of businesses and employers is critical to minimize impacts on the community from economic downturns, as well as the potential of businesses leaving the community. Another goal is job creation that ensures residents have a variety of employment opportunities, which also necessitates a well-trained work force and sufficient housing to ensure workers can live in the community.

F

Floodplain: The land adjacent to a stream, river or lake that is subject to flooding by storms whose severity and flooding effects can be measured. That is, a 100-year storm will occur on the average of once every 100 years and will be associated with a certain amount of rainfall and flooding and generate a 100-year floodplain that constitutes both the floodway and the floodway fringe.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR): The floor area ratio is the numerical value obtained by dividing the gross floor area of building or buildings by the total area of the lot or tract, less any public street right-of-way. It measures the intensity of development without regard to building height. Example: A FAR of 1.0 allows a 43,560 square foot building on a one-acre parcel. The building could be a two-story building with a 21,780 square foot footprint or a three-story building with a 14,520 square foot footprint.

G

Gateways: A gateway is a point at which someone enters the community, typically by automobile. Gateways are very important because the condition of the road, landscape, buildings and signage help to establish an identity for the community. Districts and corridors can also have gateways.

Geographic Information System (GIS): A means of producing, analyzing, and storing computerized maps and related data.

Goal: A goal statement is provided for each chapter addressed by the Comprehensive Plan (i.e. land use). The policies provide an overarching goal statement supported by a series of principles. This is the basic foundation of policies.

Greenfield: A site that has not been developed; typically it is under cultivation or a woodland.

Greenway: This can be a natural area or a pedestrian and bicycle path within a natural corridor, often associated with a stream. Frequently greenways provide a pedestrian network, which connects neighborhoods and parks in all parts of the City. The greenway system is also designed to limit inappropriate development in natural areas, protect floodplains, limit damage associated with flooding and protect the wildlife and plant life associated with these natural areas.

H

Historic District: An area designated by the City to be of historic value. Local districts are regulated through overlay zoning in such a way as to preserve its historic character. Exterior alterations are permitted only if they are in keeping with the historic character of the district. The National Register of Historic Places includes nationally recognized historic districts and places.

Household: A household includes all the persons who occupy a housing unit. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated persons who share living arrangements.

I

Impervious surfaces: Impervious surfaces are structures that hinder or block the absorption of water into the ground. Large amounts of impervious surfaces in the watershed will have negative effects on the health of bodies of water.

Infill: The development of vacant or underdeveloped land (i.e., land that is not developed to the intensity allowed by the existing zoning) in areas that are otherwise substantially developed. This may range from the construction of a new house on a vacant lot in a 50-year-old subdivision to a new commercial building on a vacant lot in the Downtown.

Infrastructure: The underlying foundation or basic framework of a City, including streets, parks, bridges, sewers, streetlights, and other utilities.

Incentives: Reward for a specific behavior, designed to encourage that behavior.

Intensity: Regarding land use, intensity is an indication of the amount and degree of development on a site and is a reflection of the effects generated by that development. These effects include traffic, stormwater runoff, noise and light, etc. *See also Density and Floor Area Ratio.*

Italianate: "Italianate" describes the style of architecture introduced in the United States by Alexander Jackson Davis in the 1840s as an alternative to Gothic or Greek revival styles, featuring a low-pitched or flat roof with a wide, emphatic eave supported by brackets, often with a contrasting tower feature at one corner.

L

Land Bank: A pool of acquired and assembled land in urban areas packaged into sites suitable for redevelopment.

Land Use Transitions: A means of buffering between higher and lower intensity uses. It is generally considered desirable to shield residential areas from the effects of intense land uses, such as noise, bright lights and traffic congestion. This goal can often be achieved by locating a transitional land use between intense and less intense land uses, such as low intensity offices between a shopping center and single-family houses, or through buffering and screening, and additional setbacks.

Landmark: Distinctive natural or built feature which provides orientation or recognition, helping to give a location some distinction from other places.

M

Mission Statement: The mission statement defines the core purpose of the Comprehensive Plan, why it exists. Effective missions are inspiring, long-term in nature, and easily understood and communicated.

Mixed Use: A building can include mixed uses either horizontally (first floor – retail, second floor – office, third floor –residential) or vertically (individual tenant spaces dedicated to retail, office, and residential uses).

N

Natural Buffer Areas: Areas where stream valleys, vegetation and /or grade changes are naturally occurring and not the result of planting or earth moving. These areas provide separation between land uses, particularly between land uses of differing intensity, such as residential and nonresidential uses.

Natural Corridors: Linear land areas left in a natural state, especially associated with streams and rivers. *See also Greenway.*

Natural Environment: Land characterized by having minimal to no alteration of appearance by people.

Natural Resource Areas and Preserves: Natural resource areas and preserves are open spaces or parkland that are set aside for preservation due to significant natural characteristics, as an open space buffer for other development, or to save remnants of landscapes that are unique to a particular place.

Neighborhood Business District (NBD): A concentration of small independent businesses that draw from the residential community which surrounds them.

Neo-Traditional: A design approach based on the characteristics of traditional neighborhood and community planning. This includes higher densities, smaller lots, shallow front yards, front porches, detached garages, and alleys. Retail and civic uses are clustered in nodes walkable from neighborhoods. Open space is formally set aside as centrally located parks. *See Traditional Neighborhood Design.*

O

Objective: A series of objectives along with supporting strategies help to further define the policies and guide implementation by addressing the means to implement the policies.

Open Space: Land reserved from development as a relief from the effects of urbanization. It is often intended to be used for passive recreation purposes, but may also include pedestrian plazas or active recreation areas.

Open Space Subdivision: A clustered development in which significant amounts of open space are preserved. Typically the gross density is compatible with nearby traditional subdivisions, but the net density is higher because of the preserved open space. Such open space can be in a natural state or developed for recreational uses, such as a golf course.

Overlay Zoning: A type of zoning district that modifies another, underlying zoning district. All property that has an overlay zoning district also has an underlying, basic zoning designation. Overlay zoning districts are usually concerned with only a few regulatory aspects of the total zoning of the property. An example is the Planned Business Overlay.

P

Pedestrian-Oriented Development: A kind of urban form and land development pattern that is conducive to pedestrian access and circulation rather than or in addition to automobile or transit service. Buildings connect to the sidewalk system and provide facilities for bikes. Density is often higher than suburban environments. These developments are typically higher in density to ensure there is sufficient development to encourage walking. Most people will not walk further than 10-minutes, which can be a distance of $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.

Planned Unit Development: A project consisting of individually owned parcels of land together with common areas and facilities that are owned by an association of which the owners of all the parcels are members.

Public Art: Art that is owned by the public or a non-profit organization and displayed in a public space. Public art is often utilized to add character to a community, emphasize something special or the history of a community or location, and can use a host of mediums (sculpture, landscaping, pavers, painted murals, etc.).

Q

Quality of Life: The attributes or amenities that combine to make an area a good place to live. Examples include the availability of political, educational, and social support systems; good relations among constituent groups; healthy built and natural environments; and economic opportunities for individuals and businesses.

R

Regulatory: The control of something by rules or governing actions controlled by the law originating from policy.

Retail, Big Box: A single-tenant, freestanding retail building that can range in size from 50,000 square feet to over 125,000 square feet in gross floor area.

Retail, Medium Box: A single-tenant, freestanding retail building that can range in size from 15,000 square feet to 50,000 square feet in gross floor area.

Retail, Small Box: A single-tenant, freestanding retail building in size less than 15,000 square feet in gross floor area.

Rezoning: A process whereby the zoning of a piece of property changes by City Council from one district to another.

Right of Way (ROW): The ROW is the total public strip of land within which there is public control and common right of passage and within which pavement, sidewalks, bike paths and some utility lines are located. The Thoroughfare Plan defines the width.

Roundabouts: Modern traffic circles that apply engineering principles to a circular intersection as opposed to a traffic signal controlled intersection. Provides for continuous traffic movement that is self-monitored to ensure safety. Roundabouts can result in fewer collisions and pedestrian conflicts than signalized intersections.

S

Scale: The size of a building or structure in relation to a human, varying from intimate to monumental.

Smart Growth: Environmentally-sensitive land development with the goals of minimizing dependence on auto transportation, reducing air pollution, and making infrastructure investments more efficient.

Strip Development: The tendency of land next to major roadways to develop commercially, on an individual, lot-by-lot basis, with few other land uses. Strip development may be small business, such as automobile shops, convenience stores and fast-food restaurants, one after another for blocks, or rows of shopping centers or combinations of the two. Usually strip development is associated with direct automobile access and visibility from the thoroughfare. It can result in visual clutter, traffic congestion and sprawl, and may create traffic conditions which lead to congestion, delays, high accident rates, air pollution and the like.

Suburban: Pertaining to low to medium density development patterns that surround the urban areas of a city. The suburbs are often residential in character, with single-family detached houses being the primary use of land. However, increasingly the suburbs contain employment and services centers, as well as residential areas.

Sustainability: (1) A concept that allows for a comfortable way of living by achieving a realistic and achievable balance between the resource demands of environmental, economic and social requirements. (2) An aspect of development and land use that minimizes the use of resources, conserves ecosystems, and creates healthy built environments and landscapes for present and future generations.

T

Tax Increment Financing (TIF): An infrastructure funding mechanism by which the net increase in property taxes resulting from private development is captured for a limited period of time and used to fund related public infrastructure, such as road and utility improvements.

TIF District: TIF districts are aimed at eliminating blight, rehabilitating declining property values, and promoting industry.

Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND): TND is a design approach that borrows from traditional city planning concepts, particularly those of the years 1900-1920, and applies them to modern living. New urbanism integrates housing, shops, workplaces, parks, and civic facilities into close-knit communities that are walkable and have ready access to transit. Also referred to as Neo-Traditionalism and New Urbanism.

Traffic Calming: Usually a component of traditional neighborhood design, traffic calming uses physical design features, such as street trees, landscaping bump outs, and textured pavement to slow automobile traffic passing through neighborhoods. The intention is to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods and to make them more pedestrian friendly by slowing or discouraging traffic.

Traffic Impact Study (TIS): An analysis of certain new developments to determine the impact on the surrounding transportation system.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): A program that allows landowners to transfer the right to develop one parcel of land to a more suitable parcel of land within the same jurisdiction. TDR programs establish "sending areas" and "receiving areas" for development rights.

Transit: The conveyance of people locally from one place to another in multi-passenger vehicles along determined routes on a fixed schedule. Usually this term applies to ground transportation other than the automobile. Buses, trains and trolleys are forms of transit. Autos and vans can also be used to provide transit service such as car- or vanpooling, if those vehicles contain more than one occupant.

Transportation Improvement District (TID): Fostering intergovernmental and public / private collaboration, the Transportation Improvement District (TID) provides a local structure which coordinates federal, state, and local resources in planning, financing, constructing, and operating transportation projects. The TID drives the responsibility for transportation improvements to the local level and serves a group of local governments collaborating to achieve common transportation goals. As the name implies, a TID is a "district," a geographic area organized for the purpose of improving the existing road system. The TID does not represent a single city, nor is it a large government agency. Innovative financing is the key to speeding up construction of much-needed projects for which traditional funding has been difficult to obtain since most local, state, and federal budgets are already stretched.

Transit-Oriented Design (TOD): A kind of urban form and land development pattern that is conducive to being served by transit, rather than by addition to the automobile. Usually transit-oriented development implies higher density, mixed-use developments within walking distance (usually within 1/2 mile) from a transit stop. To make transit operate efficiently, the number of people riding transit must be maximized, and transit-oriented development must emphasize pedestrian accessibility. Consequently, high density residential uses and concentrations of nonresidential uses, particularly high employment generating uses, are grouped within a half-mile of transit stops, with land use intensity increasing with closeness to the stop.

U

Urban sprawl: Urban sprawl is a term used to describe a pattern of low density, decentralized development spread over a wide area. Sprawl usually involves automobile-dependent development patterns, and less efficient use of land or capital facilities. It is costlier to maintain infrastructure and provide services to lower density development than to higher density development.

V

Value-Added Agriculture: As defined by the USDA is the result of the change in physical state or the manner in which the agricultural commodity or product is produced and segregated, the customer base for the commodity or product is expanded and a greater portion of revenue derived from the marketing, processing or physical segregation is made available to the producer of the commodity or product.

Variance: Exceptions to zoning laws.

Vision Statement: A vivid, imaginative conception of the future.

W

Watershed: The area that drains into a particular river, stream or lake.

Wayfinding: Wayfinding is the ability of a person to find his or her way to a given destination.

Wetlands: Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Some wetlands are not easily recognized, often because they are dry during part of the year. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

Well head: The surface and subsurface area which surrounds a water well or wellfield that supplies a potable water supply system.

Z

Zoning: Zoning is a map-based system of guiding land use development that divides a city into land-use zones. It specifies the types of land use, setbacks, lot sizes, and restrictions for each piece of property, and affects what an individual can do with the land and the way a neighborhood develops. For example, land can be zoned for residential, commercial, or industrial uses.