

Glossary

Accessory dwelling unit: An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a second residential unit that may be contained within an existing single-family home, garage, or carriage house. An ADU usually is required to be a complete housekeeping unit that can function independently, with separate access, kitchen, bedroom, and sanitary facilities. These units are sometimes also termed “granny flats,” “mother-in-law” apartments, or elder cottages.⁵⁵

Blue trail, blueway: Blue trails are the water equivalent to hiking trails. They are created to facilitate recreation in and along rivers and water bodies and are found in urban settings as well as remote environments. They may also be used for commuting purposes.⁵⁶

Brownfield: A brownfield is real property (e.g., a parcel of land), the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.⁵⁷

Business improvement district: Business improvement districts (BIDs) are an expansion of the Principal Shopping Districts Act of 1961. BIDs allow qualified downtown and commercial areas to levy a special assessment to fund improvements to the district.⁵⁸

Capital expenditure plan: Also called a capital improvement plan, a capital expenditure plan is a schedule or budget, usually covering five years and updated annually, for funding capital improvements. Capital improvements can include buildings, sanitary and storm sewer facilities, water systems, roads and highways, sidewalks, and parks and open space. A capital improvement plan is one of the major tools for implementing comprehensive plans. It includes a list of projects, priorities, estimated costs, financing methods, and time schedules for project completion.⁵⁹

Charrette: A charrette (sometimes spelled charette and often called “design charrette”) is a community planning and design technique for consulting with stakeholders and incorporating their concerns in final development designs. Charrettes are typically intense, possibly multi-day meetings that bring municipal officials, developers, community residents, and other local stakeholders together with planning, architecture, and design professionals. A charrette promotes joint ownership of the solution and attempts to diffuse traditional confrontation between communities and developers.⁵⁸

Clean Marina Program: A Clean Marina Program is a voluntary, incentive-based program promoted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and others that encourages marina operators and recreational boaters to protect coastal water quality by engaging in environmentally sound operating and maintenance procedures. While Clean Marina Programs vary from state to state, all programs offer information, guidance, and technical assistance to marina operators, local governments, and recreational boaters on best management practices that can be used to prevent or reduce pollution. Marinas that participate in the Clean Marina Program are recognized for their environmental stewardship.

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program: The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program is a land conservation program run by NOAA and established to protect coastal and estuarine lands considered important for their ecological, conservation, recreational, historical, or aesthetic values. The program provides matching funds to state and local governments to acquire outright, or protect through conservation easement, properties they have prioritized for

conservation. Lands may only be purchased from willing sellers and are protected in perpetuity.

Coastal county: A coastal county meets one of the following criteria: (1) a minimum of 15 percent of the county’s land area is located within a coastal watershed or (2) part of the county accounts for at least 15 percent of a “coastal cataloguing unit.” For more information see: NOAA, National Ocean Service. *Population Trends along the Coastal United States: 1980-2008*. U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, 2004.⁶⁰

Coastal viewshed: The coastal viewshed encompasses the area of coastal land and water that is visible from one or more viewing points.

Community asset inventory: A community asset inventory is a list of a community’s assets, including community-based service and advocacy organizations, religious institutions, public institutions, businesses, schools, locally owned real estate, and parks and public spaces where residents can socialize or just enjoy being outside. Developing an inventory of a community’s assets helps people understand the diversity of their community as well as what their friends and neighbors value and consider important to life in the community.⁶¹

Community land trust: Community land trusts are private non-profit corporations created to acquire and hold land for the benefit of a community and to provide affordable access to land and housing for community residents. Their missions are often shaped by the intent to meet the needs of residents least served by the prevailing market.⁶²

Community vulnerability assessment: A community vulnerability assessment assesses a community’s vulnerability to hazards. Vulnerability is the susceptibility of people, property, and resources to negative impacts from hazard events. A vulnerability assessment can be a guide for developing hazard mitigation strategies and prioritizing hazard mitigation projects. One approach to community vulnerability assessment is to evaluate a community’s physical, social, environmental, and economic vulnerabilities.⁶³

Concurrency policies: Concurrency policies require that adequate public facilities either are in place when new development is approved or will be in place within two years.⁶⁴

Condo-hotel: Condo-hotels typically are high-rise buildings developed and operated as luxury hotels, usually in major cities and resort areas. These hotels have condominium units that allow individual ownership of each unit. When property owners are not using their condo-hotel unit, they can let the hotel chain rent it out as if it were a hotel room.⁶⁵

Conservation easement: A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement between a private landowner and a municipal agency or qualified not-for-profit corporation to restrict the development, management, or use of the land. The agency holds the interest and is empowered to enforce the agreed-upon restrictions against the current landowner and all subsequent owners of the land.⁵⁵

Current use taxation program: Current use taxation designations give landowners a tax break when the “current use” of their land meets the criteria for farm/agricultural land, timber land, open space, or forest land. Current use lands are taxed according to the value of their current, existing use instead of the presumably higher market value of the land if it were developed for residential, commercial, or industrial use.⁶⁶

Deed restriction: A deed restriction is a requirement placed in a deed to restrict the current and future use of the land in some way.⁵⁵

Density bonus: A density bonus lets a developer build a larger number of market-rate units on a site than would otherwise be permitted in order to provide an incentive for the construction of affordable housing or another public good.⁵⁸

Ecological history: Ecological history “traces the ongoing dialectical relations between human acts and acts of nature, made manifest in the landscape.”⁶⁷

Fix it first policy: A fix it first policy makes upgrading existing public facilities a community’s first priority. Fix it first policies direct public investment to maintaining and upgrading the streets, highways, sidewalks, water and sewer systems, lighting, schools, and other civic buildings and facilities that have already been built in a community. This helps maintain the value of investments already made in the community by both public and private sources, and it can help attract additional investment in rehabilitation and redevelopment projects.⁶⁸

Floor-to-area ratio bonus: A floor-to-area ratio (FAR) bonus is an allowed increase in the amount of buildable space relative to the area of the land upon which the building is sited. This bonus can be negotiated on a floor-by-floor basis to permit buildings to cover more of the site at ground levels, and step back from the street at higher levels. FAR bonuses are particularly useful to support form-based codes because they allow the design of the building to be adjusted to both achieve higher density, and ensure adequate air flow, light, and visibility between buildings.

Geographic information system (GIS): A geographic information system (GIS) is a computerized database that integrates hardware, software, and data for capturing, storing, analyzing, and displaying locationally defined information. GIS allows users to view, question, and interpret data in ways that reveal relationships, patterns, and trends in the form of maps, reports, and charts. Commonly, a GIS portrays a portion of the earth’s surface in the form of a map on which this information is overlaid.⁶⁹

Green infrastructure: Green infrastructure is defined by a range of natural and built systems that can occur at the regional, community, and site scales. At the larger regional or watershed scale, green infrastructure is the interconnected network of preserved or restored natural lands and waters that provide essential environmental functions. Large-scale green infrastructure may include (but is not limited to) forested corridors and hubs that provide multiple services, including habitat and water resource protection. At the community and neighborhood scale, green infrastructure incorporates urban forestry practices that reduce impervious surfaces and help create walkable, attractive communities. At the site scale, green infrastructure mimics natural processes to help infiltrate, evapotranspire, capture, and reuse stormwater to maintain and restore natural hydrology. Site scale green infrastructure practices, sometimes referred to as low impact development (LID) techniques, include but are not limited to rain gardens, ecoroofs, permeable pavements, and cisterns or rain barrels.

Green roof: A green roof is a roof planted with vegetation. Intensive green roofs have thick layers of soil (6 to 12 inches or more) that can support a broad variety of plant or even tree species. Extensive roofs are simpler green roofs with a soil layer of 6 inches or less to support grasses or other ground cover.⁷⁰

Groin: A groin is a structure built perpendicular to the shore that traps sand to stabilize eroding shorelines.

Harbor management plan: Municipal harbor management plans are a means for communities to plan and manage uses in coastal

waters to support waterfront land use plans and regulations. The goals are to integrate the community’s land and water use objectives, promote water-dependent uses, minimize conflicts among competing users, coordinate multi-jurisdictional (state and municipal) decision-making, and protect coastal resources. Depending on the enabling authority, harbor management plans may cover just the water area and complement the community’s waterfront master plan or may include both the water and the adjacent land area.⁷¹

Hazard mitigation plan: A hazard mitigation plan is a plan that forms the foundation for a community’s long-term strategy to reduce impacts from future disasters. Hazard mitigation is sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and their property from hazards.⁷²

Historic district: Historic districts are officially designated by local ordinance or by state or federal government action. Historic districts have defined geographic boundaries, within which are properties or buildings that may or may not be landmarks, but which contribute to the overall historic character of the designated area. Historic districts are also referred to as “historic preservation districts.”⁵⁸

Hub-and-spoke: In a working port context, hub-and-spoke refers to transportation connections arranged like a wheel, where traffic moves along spokes connected to a hub in the center. In the marine transportation system, the working port is the hub.⁷³

Impervious surface: Impervious surfaces are mainly constructed surfaces—rooftops, sidewalks, roads, and parking lots—covered by impenetrable materials such as asphalt, concrete, brick, and stone. These materials seal surfaces, repel water, and prevent precipitation and meltwater from infiltrating soils. Soils compacted by urban development are also highly impervious.⁷⁴

Inclusionary zoning: Inclusionary zoning requires that some portion of every new housing development (e.g., 10%) beyond a given threshold size (e.g., 50 units) will be affordable to below-median-income residents to both increase the number of affordable units and create mixed income communities. Some inclusionary zoning programs permit developers to make “in lieu” contributions to a regional housing trust fund to construct affordable housing, rather than requiring units to be constructed on site.

Infill development: Infill development is development or re-development of land that has been bypassed, has remained vacant, or is underused as a result of the surrounding development process. Generally, infill areas or sites are not of prime quality; however, they are usually served by or are readily accessible to the infrastructure services and facilities provided by the applicable local governmental entity. Use of such lands for new housing or other urban development is considered a more desirable alternative than supporting continued extension of the development pattern laterally and horizontally out from the existing community, which would entail higher capital improvement costs than would be required for infill development. The use of infill development, among other strategies, promotes efficient use of resources and contributes to the economic health of existing communities.⁷⁵

Intertidal zone: The area along the shoreline that is submerged at high tide and exposed at low tide.

Live-near-your-work program: Live-near-your-work programs provide financial incentives that encourage people to live near their workplaces. The intention is to reduce traffic congestion and vehicle miles travelled, thus generating environmental benefits such as reduced air and water quality impacts. Incentives can include rent subsidies and special loans or grants to purchase homes.⁷⁶

Living shoreline: Living shorelines are stabilization techniques that restore, protect, and enhance the natural shoreline environment by mimicking nature. Nonstructural approaches include vegetative plantings and sand fill; hybrid techniques combine vegetative planting with low rock sills. These approaches can be effective alternatives to “hard” stabilization structures such as bulkheads, riprap, or groins.⁷⁷

Live-aboard housing: Live-aboard housing involves the use of a watercraft as a permanent or temporary residence, and is typically located in a marina, alongside a dock, or in a mooring field.

Local waterfront revitalization plan: A local waterfront revitalization plan is a locally prepared land and water use plan and strategy used in New York for a community’s waterfront that addresses critical issues and refines waterfront policies to reflect local conditions and circumstances.⁷⁸

LID (low impact development): Low impact development is an approach to land development, or redevelopment, that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible in order to maintain or restore natural hydrologic function. Recently, this term has come to be used interchangeably with the term “site-scale green infrastructure practices.”⁷⁹ (See Green Infrastructure.)

Marine conservation agreement: Marine conservation agreements are formal or informal agreements between parties to exchange benefits, take or refrain from certain actions, or transfer certain rights and responsibilities to restore and protect fragile coastal and marine ecosystems.⁸⁰

Natural hazard: A natural hazard is a natural process that threatens lives, property, and other assets. Often, a natural hazard can be predicted and tends to occur repeatedly in the same geographical location.⁸¹

Overlay district: An overlay district is a zoning technique that allows a jurisdiction to superimpose additional requirements over a basic use zoning district without disturbing the requirements of the basic use district. In the instance of conflicting requirements, the stricter of the conflicting requirements applies.⁵⁸

Park-once strategy: A park-once strategy is an approach to promoting “walkable communities” through which ample parking facilities are provided within safe walking distance and easy access of a variety of destinations, including waterfront areas and land-based transportation options. Park-once strategies let residents, workers, and visitors “park once,” leaving their car behind and using others means (e.g., walking, community shuttles, bicycle rentals) to get to their desired destination(s) within the community.⁸²

Pedestrian master plan: A pedestrian master plan provides the rationale, goals, objectives, strategies, standards, and maps for implementing a comprehensive approach to making a community safe and walkable for people travelling on foot. This includes approaches for linking sidewalks, walking paths, and pedestrian-related facilities and amenities.⁷⁵

Policy audit: A policy audit is typically a checklist that guides the review of a community’s land use and development policies to help evaluate whether those policies support the community’s vision for smarter growth. Policy audits can help identify areas in which a community’s intentions are at odds with existing policy statements and implementation rules (e.g., comprehensive plans, zoning codes, building codes, street design requirements, and infrastructure financing priorities).⁸³

Public trust doctrine: The Public Trust Doctrine provides that public trust lands, waters, and living resources in a state are held by the state

in trust for the benefit of the public, and establishes the rights of the public in public trust lands, waters, and living resources for a variety of uses. The public trust doctrine may be applicable whenever tidelands, navigable waters, or submerged lands are altered, developed, conveyed, or otherwise managed or preserved. It may apply whether the trust lands are publicly or privately owned. In addition to establishing the rights of the public in these lands and waters, the doctrine also imposes limitations on the states and the public and private owners, as well as establishing duties and responsibilities of the states when managing these public trust assets.⁸⁴

Purchase of development rights: Purchase of development rights (PDRs) programs place a permanent restriction on the land, protecting it from all future development. PDRs are typically used to protect and conserve natural lands (such as open meadows or forests) or rural lands (including farmland). Owning land conveys a set of rights, including the right to develop the land for residential, commercial, or industrial use (subject to applicable zoning restrictions). Under a PDR program, property owners can choose to sell their development rights to a land trust or other entity. A permanent deed restriction is then placed on the property.⁸⁵

Rehab code: A rehab code, also known as a “rehabilitation code” or a “building rehabilitation code,” is a code designed to permit, encourage, and facilitate the re-use of existing buildings by exempting them from new construction code requirements that are not necessary to renovation and might make the renovation and rehabilitation of existing buildings economically uncompetitive.⁸⁶

Riprap: Riprap consists of broken stone, cut stone blocks, or rubble that is placed on slopes to protect them from erosion or scour caused by floodwaters or wave action.⁸⁷

Riparian habitat: Riparian habitat refers to a stream or river, its bordering lands within the floodplain, and the areas that contribute leaves, wood, and other materials to the stream or river, including canopy cover. Riparian habitat provides home and shelter to animals, insects, and plants and often includes wetlands.⁸⁸

Rolling easement: A rolling easement is a policy approach that preserves natural habitats and public access to the coast as shorelines erode or retreat by requiring structures to be removed once they are no longer on dry land (because submerged land is publicly owned under the public trust doctrine). Usually, engineered shore protection measures are prohibited. As the sea advances, the easement automatically moves or “rolls” landward.⁸⁹

Special Area Management Plan: Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs) are resource management plans and implementation programs developed to better manage specific geographic areas, such as an urban waterfront. SAMPs also supplement existing management programs to help address complex multijurisdictional coastal issues. SAMPs have increased cooperation among coastal localities and provided a more comprehensive approach to addressing coastal issues. For example, the communities of New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts, developed a multijurisdictional SAMP for their harbor that protects water-dependent port uses and identifies areas for waterfront revitalization.

Smart Growth Network: The Smart Growth Network is a coalition of national and regional organizations united in the belief that where and how we grow matters. For additional information, see www.smartgrowth.org.

Stakeholder analysis: Stakeholder analysis is a technique for identifying and assessing the importance of key people, groups of people, or institutions that may significantly influence, or will be significantly influenced by, a proposed activity or project. It can be

used to identify people, groups, and institutions that will affect a proposed initiative or project (either positively or negatively), help anticipate the kind of influence to expect, and develop constructive strategies to get the most effective support, and most constructive involvement, possible.⁹⁰

Stormwater fee discount: A stormwater fee discount reduces stormwater fees for property owners who implement measures to manage and reduce stormwater runoff.⁹¹

Sustainable: Sustainable, from an ecological standpoint, is the ability to meet the needs of the present human generation without compromising the integrity of the ecosystems that future generations (human and other) will need to rely upon to meet their needs.⁹²

Tax abatement/exemption: Tax abatement/exemption is a strategy to lower, restrict, or otherwise reduce the tax burden associated with a piece of property in exchange for the provision of a desired public good. Tax exemptions make the property owner “exempt” from part or all of the taxes related to the improvements upon a property for a fixed period of time.⁹³

Tax increment financing district: A tax increment financing (TIF) district is a tool used by cities and other development authorities to finance certain types of development costs. The public purposes of a TIF are the redevelopment of blighted areas, construction of low- and moderate-income housing, provision of employment opportunities, and improvement of the tax base. With a TIF, the taxing entity “captures” the additional property taxes generated by the development over and above the pre-development tax revenue, and uses the resultant “tax increments” to finance the development costs.⁵⁸

Tiered development: Tiered development is development where the height of buildings increases as one moves away from the coast or waterfront. This optimizes panoramic water views for more buildings.

Transfer of development rights: Transfer of development rights programs create a market for selling development rights on one parcel of land and conveying them to another. These rights are transferred away from areas designated for preservation, such as agricultural and forestry lands, towards areas deemed appropriate for development and higher density.⁷⁵

Transit-oriented development: A transit-oriented development (TOD) is a development with a mix of land uses (e.g., residential, office, shopping, civic, and entertainment) within easy walking distance of a transit station. The close proximity of transit decreases people's dependence on driving for meeting their everyday needs. Reducing vehicle miles travelled in this way can help lower air emissions. TODs can also benefit regional water quality by concentrating development and reusing previously developed land, thereby reducing development pressure on open space. Reuse of previously developed land often means accommodating new development without any net increase in impervious surface or runoff.⁹⁴

Visioning exercise: Visioning is a participatory planning process that seeks to create a shared image of a desired future for a community. To do this, citizens and stakeholders actively engage in discussions and exercises about alternative futures. Successful visioning processes lead to broad agreement about a preferred future, which in turn lead to implementation strategies involving changes in public policy and actions.⁹⁵

Visual preference survey: A visual preference survey is a technique that helps a community determine what attributes they value in overall community design. As the name implies, the technique is based on the development of one or more visual concepts of a proposed plan or project. The actual technique may rely on sketches,

photographs, computer images, or similar techniques to provide the basis for participants to rate or assess each visual depiction. As a result, participants can express judgments and possibly reach a consensus about a visual design, architecture, site layout, landscape, and similar design features, which may be incorporated in the goals, objectives, design guidelines, enhancement/mitigation measures, or recommended standards for a study, plan, or project. Visual preference surveys can also be used at the beginning of a planning process to help participants identify what they value most about their community. In this application, a series of photographs are used, usually from the community itself but they can be from elsewhere, to help people identify what it is they like, and dislike, about various aspects of community design, including roads, buildings, and open space.⁹⁶

Visualization software: Visualization software is image editing software that digitally alters images of real places to create photo-realistic simulations of proposed changes. Digital images of the planning area are modified with proposed design features, such as new buildings, bike lanes, trolley cars, streetlights, or natural features like trees, to give the public, designers, and decision makers a better sense of the impact of proposed changes on the built or natural environment.⁹⁷

Walkability tour: A walkability tour is a tour (usually on foot) to evaluate how pedestrian friendly and walkable an area is. Through a walkability tour, the overall “feel” of the community's streets is assessed with regard to how comfortable and safe those streets feel to a person walking along them. Walkability tours look at many factors, including how parking is handled, how wide the streets are, how many “curb cuts” intersect the sidewalk, the location of street trees and street “furniture” (e.g., benches), as well as how buildings are designed and the ways in which buildings do or do not interact with the pedestrian environment.

Water-dependent uses: While the definition of water-dependent use varies among states and locales, a water-dependent activity typically requires the use of, location on, or direct access to navigable waters or submerged lands to achieve its primary purpose, whether it is recreational, commercial, or industrial. Such water-dependent uses include fishing facilities, marinas, and ports, and are important to maintaining the viability of working waterfronts.

Waterfront master plan: A waterfront master plan is a comprehensive long-range plan for the waterfront intended to guide growth and development.

*Glossary definitions are from a variety of sources. The numbers at the end of glossary entries correspond with the sources listed in the endnotes.