

Planning and Quality Growth Glossary

abiotic	Caused or produced by non-living things.
accessory dwelling unit	Garage apartments, granny flats, or similar secondary housing units located on the same lot with a single family residence.
adaptive reuse or adaptive use	The redevelopment of existing older or abandoned structures for new development opportunities. These activities provide for the revitalization and redevelopment of older urban areas by providing new uses for existing structures. (e.g., residential loft units in former warehouse buildings).
adequate public facilities ordinance	A requirement that infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, schools, etc.) be available to serve new development; sometimes called "concurrency."
agricultural districts	Areas designed to keep land in agriculture that are legally recognized. Enrolled areas may be considered for special benefits and protection from regulations.
agricultural zoning	Restricts land uses to farming and livestock, other kinds of open-space activities and limited home building.
alleys	Service easements running behind or between rows of houses. Alleys provide access to utilities and sanitation, garages, backyards and accessory units.
annexation	A change in existing community boundaries resulting from the incorporation of additional land.
aquifer	A water-bearing geologic formation. The source of ground water for drinking and irrigation.
big box retailer	Large, stand-alone discount stores, such as Wal-mart and Office Depot
biodegradation	Breakdown of organic material into innocuous products by the action of living organisms
biodiversity	The grand diversity of life on Earth and all the interconnections that support these myriad forms of life; includes variety of life at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels.
blight	Physical and economic conditions within an area that cause a reduction of or lack of proper utilization of that area. A blighted area is one that has deteriorated or has been arrested in its development by physical, economic, or social forces.
BMP	Best Management Practice; refers to the practice considered most effective to achieve a specific desired result for protection of water, air and land and to control the release of toxins.
board of commissioners	A county's legislative body. Board members are elected by popular vote and are responsible for enacting ordinances, imposing taxes, making appropriations and establishing county policy. The board adopts general

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	planning, zoning and subdivision regulations.
brownfields	Sites that are underutilized or not in active use, on land that is either contaminated or perceived to be contaminated.
buffer zone	A strip of land created to separate and protect one type of land use from another.
built environment	The urban environment consisting of buildings, roads, fixtures, parks and all other improvements that form the physical character of a city.
bus lanes	A lane on a street or highway reserved primarily, or exclusively, for buses.
bus rapid transit (BRT)	BRT combines the quality of rail transit and the flexibility of buses. It can operate on bus lanes, HOV lanes, expressways or ordinary streets.
capital facilities (Infrastructure)	Public facilities characterized by a one-time cost, a useful life generally exceeding five years, significant land acquisition, site preparation, development planning, engineering and construction costs and long-term financing requirements.
central business district (CBD)	The downtown retail trade and commercial area of a city or town, or an area of very high land valuation, traffic flow and concentration of retail business offices, theaters, hotels and services.
certified local government (CLG)	A local government that protects local historic resources with a preservation ordinance, preservation commission and local designation.
charrette	Intensive workshop designed to involve a project's stakeholders in a facilitated process to gain consensus on policy and physical elements of a development plan.
charter city	A city, which has been incorporated under its own charter rather than under the general laws of the state. Charter cities have broader powers to enact land use regulations that do general law cities.
choice	The availability of a wide variety of housing, transportation and shopping options that meet the needs of community residents from different economic levels and age groups.
city council	A city's legislative body. The popularly elected city council is responsible for enacting ordinances, imposing taxes, making appropriations, establishing policy and hiring some city officials. The council adopts local general planning, zoning and subdivision ordinances.
cluster development	A pattern of development in which industrial and commercial facilities and homes are grouped together on parcels of land in order to leave parts of the land

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	undeveloped. Cluster development is often used in areas that require large lot sizes, and typically involves density transfer. Zoning ordinances permit cluster development by allowing smaller lot sizes when part of the land is left as open space.
commercial	Land use that is primarily for businesses, which may include shopping, restaurants, gas stations, etc.
community design factors	Factors that influence the way a community is laid out and how it looks. This may include such things as the street grid pattern, the presence of sidewalks, the mix of land uses and the physical character of the buildings.
community identity	Physical, natural or cultural assets that represent distinctive qualities unique to an individual community. A community's identity is enhanced by embracing and respecting the history and character of those existing features that nurture a sense of attachment and uniqueness within the area.
community plan	A portion of the local general plan that focuses on a particular area or community within the local government. Community plans supplement the policies of the general plan.
community services	Services provided to citizens by a local government that may include police, fire, hospital, schools, trash removal, water treatment, recycling, etc. These services are paid for by local taxes and user fees.
community transportation centers	These centers serve as an origin or major stopping point for community-based services.
community-based service	Provides curb-to-curb or short-distance mobility within communities and feeder connections to bus routes and rail services.
commuter rail	Train service that takes suburban commuters to jobs close in and back again
compact building design	The act of constructing buildings vertically rather than horizontally, configuring them on a block or neighborhood scale that makes efficient use of land and resources, and is consistent with neighborhood character and scale. Compact building design reduces the footprint of new construction, thus preserving greenspace to absorb and filter rain water, reduce flooding and stormwater drainage needs, and lower the amount of pollution washing into our streams, rivers and lakes.
comprehensive plan	Regional, state or local documents that describe community visions for future growth. Comprehensive plans describe general plans and policies for how communities will grow and the tools that are used to guide land use decisions, and give general, long-range recommendations for community growth. Typical elements include, land use, housing, transportation,

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	environment, economic development and community facilities.
conditional use permit (CUP)	Pursuant to the zoning ordinance, a conditional use permit (CUP) may authorize uses not routinely allowed on a particular site. CUPs require a public hearing and, if approval is granted, are usually subject to the fulfillment of certain conditions by the developer. Approval of a CUP is not a change in zoning.
conservation easements	Conservation easements are voluntary, legally binding agreements for landowners that limit parcels of land or pieces of property to certain uses. Land under conservation easements remains privately owned and most easements are permanent.
conservation subdivision	Residential areas where at least half of the area is designated as open space.
context sensitive design (CSD)	A collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources. CSD is an approach that considers the total context within which a project will exist.
corridor	A connecting strip of habitat that facilitates the migration and movement of species between core habitat areas, preventing the isolation of populations and enhancing the chances of survival.
cross-acceptance	A negotiated process by which jurisdictions reach agreement on the location and the nature of planned development; its purpose is to ensure consistency among the comprehensive plans and the growth management programs of individual local governments within a region.
CZMA (Coastal Zone Management Act)	National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provides funding for implementation and sets standards (including prevention of non-point source pollution) for states to comply with when they develop a plan to protect their coastal areas.
density	The average number of people, families, or housing units on one unit of land. Density is also expressed as dwelling units per acre.
density bonus	Allows developers to build in specified areas densities that are higher than normally allowed.
design flexibility	Allows for flexibility in parking and open space designations, setbacks and height limitations in order to facilitate the production of a range of affordable housing types.
design standards	Guidelines which serve as a community's expression to control its appearance, from within and without, through a series of standards that govern site planning

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	policies, densities, building heights, traffic and lighting.
development fees	Fees charged to developers or builders as a prerequisite to construction or development approval. The most common are: (1) impact fees (such as parkland acquisition fees, school facilities fees, or street construction fees) related to funding public improvements which are necessitated in part or in whole by the development; (2) connection fees (such as water line fees) to cover the cost of installing public services to the development; (3) permit fees (such as building permits, grading permits, sign permits) for the administrative costs of processing development plans; and, (4) application fees (rezoning, CUP, variance, etc.) for the administrative costs of reviewing and hearing development proposals.
development rights	Development rights give property owners the right to develop land in ways that comply with local land use regulation.
disinvestment	The withdrawal of taxes, capital, jobs and other resources from a community.
Down-zoning	A change in zoning classification to less intensive use and/or development.
ecosystem	The species and natural communities of a specific location interacting with one another and with the physical environment.
ecosystem services	The natural processes within an ecosystem that cycle nutrients through the system, convert and disperse energy, purify water and generate air
edge city	Suburban "down towns" that began to spring up on the edges of metropolitan areas in the 1980s, usually at the intersection of a radial freeway and a bypass or beltway.
EIR or Environmental Impact Report	A detailed review of a proposed project, its potential adverse impacts upon the environment, measures that may avoid or reduce those impacts, and alternatives to the project.
eminent domain	The legal right of government to take private property for public use provided the owner is offered just compensation for the taking of property.
endangered	Species that are in danger of extinction. It also is a category that denotes protection under federal law (Endangered Species Act).
EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)	The federal body charged with responsibility for natural resource protection and oversight of the release of toxins and other threats to the environment.
ERI (Environmental Resource Inventory)	A listing and description of natural resources and general environmental characteristics of a given geographic area.

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estuary	A water body where salt and fresh water meet resulting in brackish water. These areas usually have associated marshlands and are critical nursery and feeding habitat for a variety of marine species.
eutrophication	The natural aging process of water bodies, by siltation and organic decomposition, which reduces both water volume and oxygen levels. Surface run-off or airborne deposition of nitrogen and phosphorus accelerate this.
exotic species	A species that has invaded an ecosystem in which it does not normally occur, usually through accidental (or intentional) human introduction
express routes	Bus service with a limited number of stops.
fair-share housing	A program for equitable and balanced distribution of low- and moderate-income housing among the jurisdictions within a region.
final map subdivision	Land divisions, which create five or more lots. Such requirements may include installing road improvements, the construction of drainage and sewer facilities, parkland dedications and more.
fiscal impact analysis	The analysis of the estimated taxes that a development project would generate in comparison to the cost of providing municipal services required by that project.
flexible routes	Routes that will provide curb-to-curb service within a defined corridor, generally within 1/2 to 1 mile of the route.
flood hazard area	Total stream and adjacent area periodically covered by overflow from the stream channel containing 1) the floodway which is the channel itself and portions of the immediately adjacent overbank that carry the major portion of flood flow, and 2) the flood fringe beyond it which is inundated to a lesser degree.
flood plain	Nearly level area adjacent to a water body, subject to inundation under heavy rain or blockage conditions (overflow area).
floor area ratio (FAR)	A measure of development intensity. FAR is the ratio of the amount of floor area of a building to the amount of area of its site. For instance, a one-story building that covers an entire lot has an FAR of 1. Similarly, a one-story building that covers 1/2 of a lot has an FAR of 0.5.
general plan	A statement of policies, including text and diagrams setting forth objectives, principles, standards and plan proposals, for the future physical development of the city or county.
genetic diversity	A variation in the inherited characteristics (such as coloration and height) of individuals within and between populations of a species.
GIS (Graphic Information	GIS technology is used to develop maps that depict

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Systems)	resources or features such as soil types, population densities, land uses, transportation corridors, waterways, etc. GIS computer programs link features commonly seen on maps (such as roads, town boundaries, water bodies) with related information not usually presented on maps, such as type of road surface, population, type of agriculture, type of vegetation, or water quality information. A GIS is a unique information system in which individual observations can be spatially referenced to each other.
"granny units" housing	Typically, this refers to a second dwelling attached to or near the main residence.
green building or green design	Building design that yields environmental benefits, such as savings in energy, building materials and water consumption, or reduced waste generation.
green infrastructure	A strategically planned and managed network of parks, greenways, conservation easements and working lands with conservation value that supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources and contributes to the health and quality of life for communities and people.
green spaces and/or open spaces	Areas left relatively natural and undeveloped in urban and suburban settings, such as parks, bicycle and pedestrian trails and natural wildlife areas. Also includes the living environment of a species, that provides whatever that species needs for its survival, such as nutrients, water and living space
Greenfields	Newly developed commercial real estate on what was previously undeveloped open space.
greenspace	Permanently protected land and water, including agricultural and forestry land, that is in its undeveloped, natural state.
greenway	A linear open space; a corridor composed of natural vegetation. Greenways can be used to create connected networks of open space that include traditional parks and natural areas.
groundwater	All water below the surface of the land. It is water found in the pore spaces of bedrock or soil, and it reaches the land surface through springs or it can be pumped using wells.
growth management	A term that encompasses a whole range of policies designed to control, guide, or mitigate the effects of growth.
habitat	The living environment of a species, that provides whatever that species needs for its survival, such as nutrients, water and living space.
habitat fragmentation	The division of large tracts of natural habitat into smaller, disjunct parcels.

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high density development overlay	Creates a new high-density overlay zoning to encourage the production of rental, workforce homeownership and special needs housing. Applies to locations with appropriate infrastructure and transportation, such as rezoned commercial properties or multi-family residential sites. The overlay zone would mandate minimum higher densities in special overlay and other zones in exchange for provision of a range of needed community housing.
high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes	A lane or lanes on a highway, freeway, separate right of way, or arterial street restricted for use by vehicles carrying more than one person.
historic area	An area or building in which historic events occurred, or one which has special value due to architectural or cultural features relating to the heritage of the community. Elements in historic areas have significance that necessitates preservation or conservation.
housing element	A comprehensive assessment of current and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community. It sets forth local housing policies and programs to implement those policies.
impact fees	Costs imposed on new development to fund public facility improvements required by new development and ease fiscal burdens on localities.
impact fees or taxes	Assessments levied on new development to help pay for construction of parks and the infrastructure (schools, roads, and other public facilities) needed to serve the new population; impact taxes differ from fees in that they allow assessments to be proportional to the size of the new house or business.
impervious surface	Any surface through which rainfall cannot pass or be effectively absorbed. (Roads, buildings, paved parking lots, sidewalks etc.)
imperviousness overlay zoning	One form of the overlay zoning process. Environmental aspects of future imperviousness are estimated based on the future zoning build-out conditions. Estimated impacts are compared with environmental protection goals to determine the limit for total impervious surfaces in the watershed.
incentive zoning	Provides for give and take compromise on zoning restrictions, allowing for more flexibility to provide environmental protection. Incentive zoning allows a developer to exceed a zoning ordinance's limitations if the developer agrees to fulfill conditions specified in the ordinance. The developer may be allowed to exceed height limits by a specified amount in exchange for providing open spaces or plazas adjacent to the building.
inclusionary zoning	A system that requires a minimum percentage of lower

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	and moderate income housing to be provided in new developments.
industrial	Land use that is primarily for businesses, such as warehouses, manufacturing plants, automobile service shops, etc.
infill	Development that occurs on previously developed land within established communities.
infill development	The reuse of urban land or vacant lots in developed neighborhoods and urban areas. Infill development (buildings, parking, other uses) is most successful when it is accomplished at a scale and with design features that are compatible with the existing and surrounding neighborhoods.
infrastructure	A general term describing public and quasi-public utilities and facilities such as roads, bridges, sewers and sewer plants, water lines, power lines, fire stations, etc.
initial study	An analysis of a project's potential environmental effects and their relative significance.
initiative	A ballot measure which has been placed on the election ballot as a result of voter signatures and which addresses a legislative action.
intermodal	Those issues or activities which involve or affect more than one mode of transportation, including transportation connections, choices, cooperation and coordination of various modes. Also known as "multimodal."
ISTEA/TEA-21 (Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century)	Federal legislation that encompasses all transportation regulation and funding (Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act was the original title).
jitney	Privately-owned, small or medium-sized, vehicle usually operated on a fixed route but not on a fixed schedule.
land trust	Nonprofit organization interested in the protection of natural resources and historic areas.
land use	The manner in which a parcel of land is used or occupied.
leapfrog development	Development that occurs beyond the limits of existing development and creates areas of vacant land between areas of developed land.
level of service (LOS)	A qualitative measure describing operational conditions within a traffic stream in terms of speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience and safety.
light rail	The modern version of a streetcar or tram.
line-haul service	A fixed-route bus system that operates on arterial streets or on tollways or expressways.
linkages	Features that promote the interconnectedness of

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	neighborhoods, commercial and office areas, open space resources and public places, and provide convenient access between these different uses.
live-work unit	Buildings that offer the opportunity for individuals to live and work in the same structure. Units may be rental or condominium. Purchase of home and office may be accomplished through a single mortgage.
location efficient mortgage	A lending program that allows homebuyers to borrow more money, based on the transportation cost savings of living near mass transit
lot area	Lot area is the total square footage of horizontal area included within the property lines.
metropolitan planning organization (MPO)	The organization designated by local elected officials as being responsible for carrying out the urban transportation and other planning processes for an area.
minimum density standards	Standards that establish minimum higher densities to ensure that existing land available for development is not underutilized.
mitigation	Process or projects replacing lost or degraded resources, such as wetlands or habitat, at another location.
mixed use	Development that combines two or more of the types of development: residential, commercial, office, industrial or institutional.
mixed use development	Development that is created in response to patterns of separate uses that are typical in suburban areas necessitating reliance on cars. Mixed use developments include residential, commercial and business accommodations in one area.
modal split	A term that describes how many people use alternative forms of transportation. Frequently used to describe the percentage of people using private automobiles as opposed to the percentage using public transportation.
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)	A comprehensive federal law requiring analysis of the environmental impacts of federal actions such as the approval of grants; also requiring preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for every major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.
negative declaration	The negative declaration is an informational document that describes the reasons why the project will not have a significant effect and proposes measures to mitigate or avoid any possible effects.
neo-traditional development	A traditional neighborhood, where a mix of different types of residential and commercial developments form a tightly knit unit. Residents can walk or bike to more of the places they need to go and municipal services

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	costs are lower due to the close proximity of residences. A more compact development also reduces the amount of rural land that must be converted to serve urban needs.
new urbanism	A planning and design movement that promotes artfully designed urban neighborhoods that host diverse income groups and races, a mix of homes, stores, and restaurants, and useful public spaces.
niche	The unique function and place of a species in its ecosystem.
NIMBY ("Not In My Backyard")	NIMBY is an acronym for the sentiment that exists among some people who do not want any type of change in their neighborhood.
non-point source pollution (NPS)	Pollution that cannot be identified as coming from a specific source and thus cannot be controlled through the issuing of permits. Storm water runoff and some deposits from the air fall into this category.
nonporous surface	A surface that water cannot permeate.
overlay zone	A set of zoning requirements that is superimposed upon a base zone. Overlay zones are generally used when a particular area requires special protection (as in a historic preservation district) or has a special problem (such as steep slopes, flooding or earthquake faults). Development of land subject to overlay zoning requires compliance with the regulations of both the base and overlay zones.
parcel map	A minor subdivision resulting in fewer than five lots. The city or county may approve a parcel map when it meets the requirements of the general plan and all applicable ordinances.
pedestrian-friendly	A term used to describe streets or areas that are laid out in an interconnected network providing convenient and safe pedestrian access between important destinations. Areas that are pedestrian-friendly, are attractively landscaped, provide visual interest and a sense of security to encourage walking.
performance zoning	Establishes minimum criteria to be used when assessing whether a particular project is appropriate for a certain area; ensures that the end result adheres to an acceptable level of performance or compatibility.
plan	A statement of policies, including text and diagrams, setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals for the future physical development of the city or county.
planned unit development (PUD)	PUDs are areas that are planned and developed as one entity, by a single group. Planned unit developments usually include a variety of uses, including different housing types of varying densities, open space, and

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	commercial uses. Project planning and density is calculated for the entire development rather than individual lots.
planning	The process of setting development goals and policy, gathering and evaluating information, and developing alternatives for future actions based on the evaluation of the information.
planning commission	A group of residents appointed by the city council or board of commissioners to consider land use planning matters. The commission's duties and powers are established by the local legislative body and might include hearing proposals to amend the general plan or rezone land, initiating planning studies (road alignments, identification of seismic hazards, etc.), and taking action on proposed subdivisions.
public spaces	Places that create community identity, foster social interaction and add community vitality. They may include major sites in central locations such as urban riverfronts, downtown plazas and parks, shopping streets and historic districts. Public spaces may be libraries, post offices or other civic building areas. Smaller, less central sites include neighborhood streets and parks, playgrounds, gardens, neighborhood squares and older suburban commercial centers.
public-private partnerships	A collaborative arrangement between public and private entities in which resources and information are shared in order to serve a particular public purpose. Public-private partnerships specify joint rights and responsibilities and imply some sharing of risks, costs or assets, thereby allowing parties to effectively achieve common goals.
purchase of development rights (PDR)	Programs through which local governments may purchase development rights and dedicate the land for conservation easements, protecting it as open space or agricultural areas.
pyramid zoning	Allows residential development in any area of a jurisdiction except where zoned for recreation, open space and heavy manufacturing/industrial
qualified local government (QLG)	A county or municipality which has a comprehensive plan in conformity with the minimum standards and procedures and has established regulations consistent with its comprehensive plan with the minimum standards and procedures.
quality of life	Those aspects of the economic, social and physical environment that make a community a desirable place in which to live or do business. Quality of life factors include those such as climate and natural features,

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	access to schools, housing, employment opportunities, medical facilities, cultural and recreational amenities and public services.
redevelopment	Reinvestment in older elements of a region – a historic structure, long-time residential community, brownfield, shopping center or main street – offers an opportunity to revitalize communities while preserving social and environmental values.
referendum	A ballot measure challenging a legislative action by the city council or county board of commissioners. Referenda petitions must be filed before the action becomes final and may lead to an election on the matter.
regional transportation centers	Large transit centers typically located near major shopping centers, community downtowns, or large rail stations.
rehabilitation	In communities with a large stock of older housing or other structures that could lend themselves more easily to conversion into residential units, rehabilitation can be a very affordable and environmentally-friendly way to provide more housing, commercial areas and offices.
residential	Land use that is primarily for houses, townhouses, apartments or other dwelling types.
resource efficiency	The efficient use of natural resources maximizes productivity while minimizing waste and environmental impact. For example, buildings that incorporate energy efficient technologies are typically more comfortable, have lower utility bills and have less impact on the environment. Resource efficiencies garnered through sensitive design, increased densities, integration of land uses and a balanced transportation system may improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and save money.
reverse commute	A trip that is running in the opposite direction of the heaviest traffic. The reverse commute generally involves travel between employment locations in the outlying suburban areas and residence locations closer to the urban core of the metropolitan area.
riparian area	Vegetated ecosystems along a waterbody through which energy, materials, and water pass. Riparian areas characteristically have a high water table and are subject to periodic flooding.
runoff	The water that flows off the surface of the land, ultimately into our streams and water bodies, without being absorbed into the soil.
rural character	Rural character consists of qualities such as horse farms, lakes, pastures, farms, estates and undisturbed roadsides. Areas contain mature and natural landscape

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	with informal placement of trees and indigenous vegetation is characteristic of the area.
scale	Urban designers typically emphasize the importance of human scale in successful environments. Considerations of human scale include building height and bulk regulations to ensure that new development and redevelopment efforts are pedestrian-oriented and compatible with the existing built environment.
scenic byway	Any designated highway, street, road or route which features certain resources (cultural, natural, archaeological, historical and recreational) that should be protected or enhanced (Georgia Scenic Byways Project: 1998, p. 2)
sediment and erosion control	Practices and processes that effectively protect the soil surface from the erosive force of rain, storm water runoff and, in some cases, wind. Higher rates of erosion and sediment loss typically accompany urban development. A variety of planning, design and engineering practices are used to minimize the negative impacts of erosion on urban streams.
sedimentation	Build up of soils in streams and lakes via runoff from surrounding land, especially land cleared of vegetation.
sense of place	A feeling of attachment and belonging to a particular place or environment having a special character and familiarity.
setback	A minimum distance required by zoning to be maintained between two structures or between a structure and property lines.
shared parking	Parking area that is utilized by more than one business, development or property to minimize parking surfaces in an area. Shared parking works best when the various users have customers with parking needs at different times of the day.
siltation	Process by which loose soil is transferred and builds up in streams, rivers, and lakes, causing changes in stream channels and in depth. It may result in filling in an area and/or causing flooding.
site plan	A scaled plan showing proposed uses and structures for a parcel of land. A site plan could also show the location of lot lines, the layout of buildings, open space, parking areas, landscape features, and utility lines.
smart growth	Well-planned, environmentally-sensitive land development that protects open space and farmland, revitalizes communities, keeps housing affordable and provides more transportation choices.
special districts	Geographic areas in which fees or taxes are collected to fund investments or services benefiting properties

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	within the district.
specific plan	A plan addressing land use distribution, open space availability, infrastructure and infrastructure financing for a portion of the community.
sprawl	Out-of-control, poorly planned development that destroys habitat and open space and diverts resources from existing communities.
stream	A body of water flowing in a channel.
stream corridor	The area (containing wetlands, flood plains, woodlands, unique habitats, and steep slopes) which lies between relatively level uplands and stream banks and through which water, draining from the uplands, flows and is naturally cleansed and stored. Base flow for streams comes from ground water as springs and seeps.
streetscape	The space between the buildings on either side of a street that defines its character. The elements of a streetscape include: building frontage/façade; landscaping (trees, yards, bushes, plantings, etc.); sidewalks; street paving; street furniture (benches, kiosks, trash receptacles, fountains, etc.); signs; awnings; and street lighting.
subdivision	A subdivision occurs as the result of dividing land into lots for sale or development.
subsidy	Direct or indirect financial aid from government to businesses or individuals
sustainable development	Development with the goal of preserving environmental quality, natural resources and livability for present and future generations. Sustainable initiatives work to ensure efficient use of resources.
SWAP (Source Water Assessment Plan)	A requirement of the 1996 amendments to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act that an assessment and protection plan be developed for each surface water source used for drinking water.
taking	A taking occurs when a government action violates the 5th Amendment property rights of a landowner by taking a piece of property without offering fair compensation. "Takings" include physical acquisitions of land, and may include regulations that unduly deprive landowners of certain uses of their property or have the effect of diminishing the value of property.
tax increment financing	A program designed to leverage private investment for economic development projects in a manner that enhances the benefits accrued to the public interest.
tax-base sharing	redistribution of a portion of revenue resulting from growth in the property tax base of individual jurisdictions to a taxing district in which multiple jurisdictions share in regional economic development; the purpose is to spread the benefits of growth equitably throughout a region.

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TEA-21 (Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century)	Federal legislation that encompasses all transportation regulation and funding (Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act was the original title).
tentative map	The map or drawing illustrating a subdivision proposal. The city or county will approve or deny the proposed subdivision based upon the design depicted by the tentative map. A subdivision is not complete until the conditions of approval imposed upon the tentative map have been satisfied and a final map has been certified by the city or county and recorded with the county recorder.
traditional neighborhood development (TND)	A combination of mixed uses and integrated street designs to create a land use pattern that minimizes travel distance and makes it easier for residents to travel by foot between their houses, jobs and commercial services.
traditional neighborhood design	A development pattern that reflects the characteristics of small, older communities of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The focus of the community shifts from the automobile to the pedestrian. Traditional communities are characterized by mixed land uses, grid street patterns, pedestrian circulation, intensively-used open spaces, architectural character, and a sense of community.
traditional neighborhoods	Traditional neighborhood design is a development approach that reflects historic settlement patterns and town planning concepts such as gridded, narrow streets, reduced front and side setbacks, and an orientation of streets and neighborhoods around a pedestrian oriented "town center." Such an approach usually requires modifications to zoning and subdivision regulations.
traffic calming	Street design measures that slow traffic down, restrict the areas in which cars are allowed, and otherwise manage the flow of traffic to make other forms of transportation such as walking and bicycling more attractive and feasible options.
traffic signal priority systems	System of traffic controls in which buses are given an advantage over other general-purpose traffic by use of early or extended green time to avoid delays at intersections. Systems are sometimes combined with traffic signal preemption systems used by emergency vehicles.
transfer of development rights (TDR)	A system that assigns development rights to parcels of land and gives landowners the option of using those rights to develop or to sell their land. TDRs are used to promote conservation and protection of land by giving landowners the right to transfer the development rights of one parcel to another parcel. By selling development

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	rights, a landowner gives up the right to develop his/her property, but the buyer could use the rights to develop another piece of land at a greater intensity than would otherwise be permitted.
transit nodes	Stops along a public transportation route where people board and disembark, often where one or more routes intersect with each other. These sites can provide ideal locations for mixed-use development as well as transit-oriented development.
transit-oriented development (TOD)	The development of housing, commercial space, services, and job opportunities in close proximity to public transportation. Reduces dependency on cars and time spent in traffic, which protects the environment and can ease traffic congestion, as well as increasing opportunity by linking residents to jobs and services.
transit-supportive development	A development pattern that reinforces the use of public transportation through efficient, pedestrian-oriented land use design and higher densities. The development, within walking distance of the transit station, center or stop, offers a variety of housing and commercial activities.
transportation demand management (TDM)	A transportation plan that coordinates many forms of transportation (car, bus, carpool, rapid transit, bicycle, walking, etc.) in order to distribute the traffic impacts of new development. Rather than emphasizing road expansion or construction (as does traditional transportation planning), TDM examines methods of increasing the efficiency of road use.
upzone	To change the zoning of a tract or parcel of land from a lesser to greater intensity of usage. An example would be a change in zoning from single family to multi-family or mixed use.
urban growth boundary	A boundary designating specific areas for development over a given period of time (e.g., as protected green space; it ensures that new development makes the most efficient use of available land and encourages more livable urban spaces
use permits	Zoning permits issued for "special" or "conditional" uses (as opposed to uses "allowed by right") that must be reviewed and approved by a public body and may have to meet extra requirements or standards.
use value taxation	Land assessments according to the value of the present use rather than the speculative value.
USGS (United States Geological Survey)	A federal agency which provides mapping of topography, aquifer levels and areas where aquifers are recharged.
variance	The relaxation of requirements of a zoning district for a specific parcel or tract of land. Variances are often issued to avoid unnecessary hardships to a landowner.

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walkability	Areas that are walkable and are safe, comfortable, interesting and accessible. They offer amenities such as wide sidewalks, attractive storefronts that face the sidewalk, shade, shelter and a sense of spatial enclosure provided through landscaping and streetscape elements. These areas are inviting to pedestrians for shopping, recreation and relaxation.
watershed	Watersheds are nature's boundaries - they are the land areas that drain to surface water bodies such as lakes and streams. Watershed management seeks to prevent flooding and water pollution, to conserve or restore natural systems and to protect human health through integrated land and water management practices.
wetlands	Area having specific hydric soil and water table characteristics supporting or capable of supporting wetlands vegetation.
zoning	Local codes regulating the use and development of property. The zoning ordinance divides the city or county into land use districts or "zones", represented on zoning maps, and specifies the allowable uses within each of those zones. It establishes development standards such as minimum lot size, maximum height of structures, building setbacks, and yard size.
zoning adjustment board	A group appointed by the local legislative body to consider minor zoning adjustments, such as conditional use permits and variances. It is empowered to conduct public hearings and to impose conditions of approval.
zoning administrator	A planning department staff member responsible for hearing minor zoning permits.
zoning and subdivision regulations	Regulations controlling the use, placement, spacing and size of lots and buildings within specified districts (zoning) and regulations controlling the conversion of land into building lots, including provisions for supporting infrastructure (subdivision);

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FREQUENTLY USED ACRONYMS

Governmental communications are loaded with an “alphabet soup” that can be frustrating to anyone not familiar with the popular acronyms which have created government’s own jargon. Here are the ones local officials may encounter most often.

AAE	Advanced Academy Education
ACCG	Association County Commissioners of Georgia
ACIR	Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
AFROHM	Agency for Removal of Hazardous Materials
AG	Attorney General
AGRI	Georgia Department of Agriculture
AOC	Administrative Office of the Courts
APEG	Adequate Program of Education for Georgia (replaced by QBE)
ARC	Appalachian Regional Commission or Atlanta Regional Commission
ARM	Associate in Risk Management
BMPs	Best Management Practices (environmental protection)
BOAG	Building Officials Association of Georgia (building inspectors)
BREP	Business Retention and Expansion Program
BRIP	Bridge Replacement and Expansion Program
CAD/CAM	Computer-assisted Drafting and/or Mapping System
CAFO	Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
CATV	Cable Television
CCC	Certified County Clerk
CD	Certificate of Deposit
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CDL	Commercial Drivers License
CEDO	Council of Economic Development Organization
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (a.k.a. Superfund)
CES	Cooperative Extension Service or “Extension”
CFO	Certified Finance Officer
CI	Correctional Institution
CJCC	Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
CLE	Continuing Legal Education
CLG	Certified Local Government
CMC	Certified Municipal Clerk
COAG	County Officers Association of Georgia
COG	Council of Governments
COLA	Cost-of-living Adjustment
CON	Certificate of Need (for hospital)
COPs	Certificates of Participation
CPCU	Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter
CSG	Council of State Governments
CVIOG	Carl Vinson Institute of Government

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CWA	Clean Water Act
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
DCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
DEcD	Georgia Department of Economic Development
DFACS	Local Department of Family and Children Services
DHR	Department of Human Resources
DJJ	Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
DMA	Georgia Department of Medical Assistance
DNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
DOAS	Georgia Department of Administrative Services
DOC	Georgia Department of Corrections (also GDC)
DOD	Georgia Department of Defense (National Guard)
DOL	Georgia Department of Labor
DOR	Georgia Department of Revenue
DOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
DPS	Georgia Department of Public Safety (State Patrol)
DRI	Development of Regional Impact
DTAE	Georgia Department of Adult Education
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
EDL	Economic Development Laboratory, Georgia Tech
EDP	Electronic Data Processing
EDUC	Georgia Department of Education
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EFT	Equivalent Full Time
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMA	Emergency Management Agency
EMS	Emergency Medical Service
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (federal)
EPD	Environmental Protection Division of state DNR
ERS	Employees' Retirement System
FHA	Federal Housing Administration
FLSA	Fair Labor Standards Act
FMSA	Financial Management Standards Act
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GAE	Georgia Association of Educators
GATO	Georgia Association of Tax Officials (tax commissioners)
GBA	Georgia Building Authority
GBI	Georgia Bureau of Investigation
GCI	Georgia Correctional Industries
GCIC	Georgia Crime Information Center
GDA	Georgia Department of Agriculture
GED	General Equivalency Diploma
GEFA	Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority
GEMA	Georgia Emergency Management Agency
GFA	Georgia Fire Academy
GFOA	Government Finance Officers Association
GGFOA	Georgia Governmental Finance Officers Association
GFC	Georgia Forestry Commission

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GIS	Geographic Information System
GIST	Georgia Intrastate Telecommunications
GMA	Georgia Municipal Association
GO	General Obligation bond
GPA	Georgia Police Academy, Georgia Ports Authority or Georgia Planning Association
GPS	Global Positioning System
GPSTC	Georgia Public Safety Training Center
GRPA	Georgia Recreation and Park Association
GSA	General Services Administration (federal)
GSP	Georgia State Patrol
GSWCC	Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission
GTRI	Georgia Tech Research Institute
GWPCA	Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association
HazMat	Hazardous Material emergency response team
HB	House Bill
HMO	Health Maintenance Organization
HPD	Historic Preservation Division, DNR
HR	House Resolution
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development (federal)
ICC	Interstate Commerce Commission (federal)
ICMA	International City–County Management Association
IED	Industrial Extension Division at Georgia Tech
ISO	Insurance Services Office
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
LARP	Local Assistance Road Program (under DOT)
LGIP	Local Government Investment Pool, now Georgia Fund One
LIS	Land Information System
LULU	Locally unwanted land use
MAG	Medical Association of Georgia
MARTA	Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
M/O	Maintenance and Operations
NACo	National Association of Counties
NCSL	National Conference of State Legislatures
NIMBY	Not in my backyard
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPS	Non-point Source or National Park Service
NSWMA	National Solid Waste Management Association
OCA	Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs
OCGA	Official Code of Georgia Annotated
OCI	Office of Commissioner of Insurance
OHS	Governor's Office of Highway Safety
OMB	Office of Management and Budget (federal)
OPB	Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Act
PIC	Private Industry Council (under JTPA)
POST	Peace Officer Standards and Training Council

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PPO	Preferred Provider Organization
PSC	Public Service Commission
PZ	Planning and Zoning
OBE	Quality Basic Education
QLG	Qualified Local Government
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RDC	Regional Development Center or Rural Development Center at UGA
RFP	Request for Proposal
RFQ	Request for Qualifications
RIR	Regionally Important Resource
RYDC	Regional Youth Development Center
SB	Senate Bill
SBCCI	Southern Building Code Congress International
SBDC	Small Business Development Center at UGA
SBWC	State Board of Workers' Compensation
SDA	JTPA Service Delivery Area
SHPA	State Health Planning Agency
SOS	Secretary of State
SR	Senate Resolution
TAN	Tax Anticipation Note
UGA	University of Georgia
USCA	United States Code Annotated
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USGS	United States Geological Survey
UST	Underground Storage Tank
VO-TECH	Vocational-Technical School
WIN	Work Incentive Program
WRP	Wetlands Reserve Program
WWW	World-wide Web