

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accessory use means a use customarily incidental and subordinate to the principal use or building and located on the same lot with such principal use or building.

Accessory dwelling units are residential dwelling units which are subordinate in size, location, and appearance to the principal dwelling unit.

Advanced Life Support (ALS) is a Cardiac Rescue Technician (CRT) or paramedic who can perform evasive skills in the field, e.g., use a defibrillator, etc.

Aesthetics relates to the pleasantness of the total environment and the perceptual aspects of the physical surroundings--their appearance to the eye and the comfort and enjoyment offered to the other senses.

Affordable housing means housing that is affordable to persons and families who have low or moderate incomes as established by the municipal corporation in which the housing is located.

Agriculture means the use of land for agricultural purposes, including farming, dairying, pasturage, horticulture, floriculture, viticulture, fish culture and animal and poultry husbandry, provided that the above uses shall not include the business of garbage-feeding of hogs, fur farms or the raising of animals for use in medical or other tests or experiments.

Amend or Amendment means any repeal, modification, or addition to a regulation, any new regulation, any change in the number, shape, boundary or area of a zone or any repeal or abolition of any map, part thereof or addition thereto.

Available Threshold Capacity (ATC) is the amount of capacity available for future development based on the adopted Facility Concurrency Threshold. Capacity is calculated by the agency of State or local government responsible for funding the facility or service involved and by taking into account any local area or countywide housing allocation established as part of the Concurrency Management Program.

Basic Life Support (BLS) is a beginning level firefighter-first responder or an emergency medical technician (EMT) who provides basic first-aid skills such as CPR and treatment of illnesses and injuries.

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) are residents of the County appointed by the County Commissioners to a board to hear and decide appeals where it is alleged there is an error in any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by the Zoning Administrator in the administration and enforcement of the zoning ordinance. The BZA may also hear and decide when requests for a special exception to the zoning ordinance may be approved. The power to authorize variances from the zoning ordinance, upon appeal, in specific cases is also given to the Board when this action will not jeopardize the public health, safety, and welfare.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a six-year timetable for the installation of permanent public structures, facilities, roads, and other public improvements based upon budget projections.

Census data is the information published every 10 years by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for each state, incorporated towns and cities over 2,500 persons, and for all counties. There is a wide range of data available, including populations, ages, sexes, ethnic groups, housing conditions, property ownership, incomes, and commuting patterns, to mention but a few. The Agricultural Census is taken every 5 years (1987, 1992, 1997, etc.). Information includes farm size, crops, animal types, etc.

Cluster development means a development that groups residential, commercial, or industrial uses on a specific portion of a development site in order to provide for a reduction in permitted lot size and an increase in resulting open space, environmental or landscape resources, or recreation or other public facilities for the development.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a grant of funds from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) passed through the State of Maryland for the purpose of meeting local community needs for housing, infrastructure, and economic development. Projects must meet one of the following three national objectives: 1) benefit low and moderate income persons; 2) aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight; or 3) meet community development needs having a particular urgency. Jurisdictions compete for these funds, and projects awarded a grant must proceed in accordance with HUD regulations as well as any State guidelines.

Community Planning Area (CPA) is an area on the Countywide Master Plan for which a more detailed comprehensive plan has been prepared. Most of the CPAs have a municipality at their center. These are the areas in the County where the majority of residential, commercial, and industrial development is concentrated, as they are generally also the areas where public and private services are available. Directing growth into the CPAs helps to reduce sprawl, preserve farmland, and maintain the rural character surrounding the towns.

Community Viability Thresholds refer to the type of threshold which apply to factors or variables that affect the quality of life in Carroll County. They also represent the maximum or minimum quantities or percentages of a factor that the community is willing to pay for beyond what is required by law. They serve as a numerical goal toward which to strive. These thresholds could include factors such as the total amount of agricultural land to be preserved, the percentage of County tax base represented by industrial and/or commercial uses, or the amount of parkland that should be available in the County per 1,000 residents.

Concept plan, also referred to as a sketch plan, is a pre-application proposal submitted by a subdivider to the Planning Commission to find out what changes and improvements the Commission would require for approval of a formal subdivision. Review for Available Threshold Capacity is performed at this time.

Concurrency Management is a program of timing growth and the provision of public facilities by connecting it to the Capital Improvements Program and the ability of the County to fund improvement.

Conditional approval is granted by the Planning Commission in response to an application for development when the Planning Commission is willing to approve the application/plan provided that certain conditions are met before or during the development process.

Conditional use means a use which may be permitted in a district, through the granting by the BZA upon a finding by the BZA that it meets specified conditions.

Connection Charge is a one-time fee levied when a sewer or water transmission line is made available to a dwelling or business. The proceeds are used to fund future capital improvements and to upgrade existing facilities.

Covenant (or restrictive covenant or deed restrictions) means a private land use control which is included in the chain of title of property. A valid covenant restricts the certain uses of the property against the recorded deed. It is only enforceable by a limited group of people, such as other homeowners in the same subdivision or other landowners with similar restrictions on their property. These covenants are not enforceable by the municipal government. In addition, covenants have no effect on zoning or vice versa. Generally, whichever is more restrictive must be followed, although the covenant cannot be in conflict with the zoning.

Cul-de-sac is a turnaround at the end of a dead-end street. Generally, it is circular in shape, and is wide enough to allow an emergency vehicle or school bus to turn around.

Dedication means an “offer” of private land to a public agency for public use. Dedications are often used to obtain roads and parkland needed to serve a project. A public body must officially “accept” a dedication before it can utilize same.

Demographics are the characteristics of the population, such as average household size, density, growth rate, birth rate, etc.

Density means the number of buildings, offices, or housing units on a particular area of land.

Development means any activity, other than normal agricultural activity, which materially affects the existing condition or use of any land or structure.

Downzone is a change in a property's zone designation to require a lower density or a less intense use (for example, from multi-family residential to single-family residential).

Dwelling means a building or portion thereof arranged or designed to provide living facilities for one or more families, but not including a tent, cabin, mobile home, bus or a room in a motel or hotel.

Easement is the right to use property owned by another for a specific purpose, such as power line easements, or the property owner gives up the right to some of the uses he or she may otherwise have of that property.

Environmental Resources Element (ERE) is the sensitive areas element of the master plan which was required under the 1992 Planning Act and which was adopted by the County Commissioners on January 16, 1997. This element of the Master Plan is under separate cover from this document.

Exaction means a fee or dedication required as a condition of development permit approval.

Facility Concurrency Thresholds refer to a type of threshold which represents the maximum or minimum acceptable level for a facility. The level of service for the facility developed through community consensus is based on 1) cost, 2) current laws and regulations, and 3) community desires. The threshold, specified in numerical terms, represents the most a community is willing to commit in dollars beyond what is required by law. These thresholds provide a standard to determine adequacy of a public facility and yearly funding levels needed to move closer toward that numerical figure. Facility Concurrency Thresholds apply to such items as schools, roads, water and sewer (where applicable), fire, and police.

Final plat or plan refers to the final application proposal submitted by a subdivider to the Planning Commission. The final plat should include all recommended changes to the preliminary plan and signed approval of the final plat, along with certification of title and filing the plat, means the legal creation of a subdivision.

Floodplain, 100-year, is that area which, after ultimate development of its watershed based on current zoning, would be inundated by water runoff from the 100-year storm.

Goals identify the purpose toward which an endeavor is directed. They are broad statements of intended accomplishments which, if accomplished as a whole, would bring the community closer to meeting its overall vision of the future. They do not identify specific activities that will be undertaken.

Growth management is a conscious program intended to influence the rate, amount, type, location, and/or quality of future development within a local jurisdiction. Recommendations vary, but they can include capping the annual number of building permits, relating allowable development intensity to certain levels of infrastructure service, or limiting the location of new development.

Hook-up Fees refer to the fee that is charged to a homeowner for the actual construction of a lateral water or sewer line and tying it into the main transmission line.

Impact fees are fees charged as a precondition to construction or development approval which are related to funding public improvements necessitated in part or in whole by the development.

Improvements refer to facilities which aid in land development, such as streets, sewer and water lines, curbs, sidewalks, street lights, fire hydrants, and street signs.

Industrial Park means a tract of land eminently suitable for industrial use, subdivided and developed according to a comprehensive plan for occupancy by a group of industries and equipped with streets and necessary utilities. Industries must agree to accept certain standards of performance that are designed to protect the environment of the community.

Infrastructure is a general term for public and quasi-public utilities and facilities such as roads, bridges, sewer plants, water lines, power lines, fire stations, etc.

Infill development refers to development that occurs on vacant land which is scattered throughout an area which is already mostly developed. It does not refer to development that occurs on the fringes of a growth area.

Jurisdiction means the territory of a county or municipality within which its powers may be exercised.

Local executive means the chief executive(s) of the political subdivision whether the official designation of this office be elected executive head, county commissioner, or similar term.

Lot means a parcel of land occupied or to be occupied by a building and its accessory buildings, together with such open spaces as required and having frontage on a public right-of-way, unless where accepted elsewhere in this chapter.

Master plan means a *comprehensive plan* or any portion of the general plan which may consist of maps, data and other descriptive matter as a guide for the physical development of the County or any portion thereof, including any amendments, extensions, or additions thereto adopted by the Commission, indicating the general locations for major roads, parks or other public open spaces, public building sites, routes for public utilities, zoning districts or other similar information.

Mixed-use development means a single, relatively high-density development project, usually commercial in nature, which includes two or more types of uses. Zoning approvals for a mixed-use development may require the approval of a schematic or other development plan at the time of zoning.

Moratorium is a halt to new development or the issuance of permits. Moratoria are often imposed while a new comprehensive plan or zoning ordinance is written or when sewer or water facilities are inadequate to serve additional development.

Overlay zone is a zone which is superimposed upon other zoning. Overlay zones are used in areas which need special protection or have special problems. Development of land subject to an overlay must comply with the regulations of both zones.

Parcel is a contiguous lot or tract of land owned and recorded as the property of the same persons or controlled by a single entity.

Plan means the policies, statements, goals, and interrelated plans for private and public land use, transportation, and community facilities documented in texts and maps which constitute the guide for the area's future development. "Plan" includes general plan, master plan, comprehensive plan, and the like as adopted in accordance with §§3.01 through 3.09 of Article 66B.

Planned unit development (PUD) means a development comprised of a combination of land uses or varying intensities of the same land use in accordance with an integrated plan that provides flexibility in land use design approved by the local jurisdiction with at least 20 percent of the land permanently dedicated to open space. Zoning approvals for a planned unit development may require the approval of a schematic or other development plan at the time of zoning.

Planning Commission refers to an official body appointed by the governing body of a city or county that is responsible for making the comprehensive plan. In addition, the Planning Commission makes recommendations to the governing body on the zoning ordinance and zoning decisions as well as subdivision regulations. The Planning Commission has authority over approval of development proposals.

Plat means a map of land subject to a common development or sales plan that shows the location and boundaries of streets, individual lots or parcels, and other site information. In Carroll County, an owner/developer is required to record a plat with the office of Land Records located in the basement of the Courthouse Annex on Court Street in Westminster.

Policies identify the course of action to be taken when presented with a decision to be made on a given issue. To fulfill its role as a guidance tool, policy statements are included in the plan. These policy statements express the community's desires for future decisions and help to guide the achievement of the goals they have developed. The policies indicate the direction that decision-makers would take when decisions are to be made regarding County services and land use development. The policy statements are based on an overall set of goals for the community and its future.

Preliminary plan refers to the formal application proposal submitted by a subdivider to the Planning Commission. The preliminary plan should contain the Commission's recommended changes to the concept/sketch plan. The preliminary plan shows the property to be subdivided, lots, all roads, and easements. The Planning Commission may impose restrictions and exactions at this stage.

Public Works Agreement (PWA) means a legal agreement between the government and the owner and developer of land for the construction of water and sewer facilities, storm drains, streets, bridges, culverts, and other public improvements as well as use-in-common driveways.

Recommendations are optional courses of action which assist in the achievement of goals. Goals and thresholds help to identify where a community wants to be and toward what they are striving. However, they do not identify specific things that can be done to help the community get there. Recommendations are planning, land use, and general government-related activities that can be pursued, ideally as a whole, to help the community meet its goals and thresholds. Recommendations can also be described as implementation measures.

Regulation means any rule of general applicability and future effect including any map or plan.

Restrictive covenants or simply "covenants" or "deed restrictions" are private land use controls included in the chain of title of property. A valid covenant restricts the use of the property against which it is recorded and is enforceable by a limited group of persons -- usually landowners in the same subdivision and with similar restrictions on their properties. Zoning and covenants have no effect on each other, and zoning officials do not have the authority to enforce covenants.

Right-of-Way means the right to cross over property. A right-of-way (ROW) usually refers to public land. For example, public land on which a street is built is a right-of-way. The ROW includes not only the street, but the land between the street and sidewalk and the sidewalk. Rights-of-way across private property are usually for utility lines or driveways.

Spot zoning is the zoning of an isolated parcel in a manner which is inconsistent or incompatible with surrounding zoning or land uses or the adopted master plan, particularly if done to favor a particular landowner. A conditional use permit is not a spot zone.

Stream means part of a watercourse, either naturally or artificially created, that contains intermittent or perennial base flow of groundwater origin. Ditches that convey surface runoff exclusively from storm events are not included in this definition.

Stream buffers are areas which extend a minimum of 100 feet from the top of each stream bank along both sides of a stream unless modified by the Planning Commission.

Strip development is commercial and high-density residential development located adjacent to major streets. This type of development is characterized by its shallow depth, street-oriented layout, orientation or vehicles rather than pedestrians, lack of unified design (especially one which reflects the character of the community), and numerous points of street access. It impedes smooth traffic flow.

Subdivision means the division of a lot, tract, or parcel of land into two or more lots, plats, sites, or other divisions of land for the purpose, whether immediate or future, of sale or of building development. Subdivision includes resubdivision and, when appropriate to the context, relates to the process of resubdividing or to the land or territory subdivided.

Subdivision plat (final) is the final map or drawing on which the developer's plan of subdivision is set forth in detail and that has been approved by the Planning Commission for recordation among the land records of the County.

Subdivision regulations are the controls that government exercises over the development and construction of houses on lots which have been created as a result of the subdivision process. It specifies who will finance capital improvements needed to serve new growth. They also help to ensure the creation and preservation of adequate land records. Another key function is to ensure that subdivisions are properly designed as well as providing consumer protection measures.

Threshold means the minimum or maximum acceptable level allowed for a service, facility, or quality of life variable.

Tischler & Associates, Inc. (TA) is the fiscal consulting firm hired by the County Commissioners to look at the cost to County government of implementing some of the key thresholds and to identify additional funding sources that would help pay for services at the level desired by County residents.

Townhouse means one of a group of multi-family dwelling units in the same structure, each of which units is separated by a party wall from any adjacent unit and each of which dwelling units has its own entrance directly from the outside.

Tract refers to an area, parcel, site, piece of land, or property that is the subject of a development application.

User Charges (for water or sewer service) are fees billed to individual homes or businesses which receive public water and/or sewer service from the local government.

Variance means a modification only of density, bulk, or area requirements in the zoning ordinance where such modification will not be contrary to the public interest and where owing to conditions peculiar to the property, and not the results of any action taken by the applicant, a literal enforcement of the ordinance would result in either, as specified by the local governing body in a zoning ordinance, unnecessary hardship or practical difficulty.

Vision or Vision Statement refers to a statement that defines a community's preferred future.

Zone means an area within which certain uses of land and buildings are permitted and certain others are prohibited, yards and other open space are required and lot areas, building height limits and other requirements are established, all of the foregoing being identical for the zone in which they apply.

Zoning Administrator means an officer of the town, appointed by the Mayor, who administers the zoning regulations and acts as Secretary to the Board of Appeals.

Zoning Capacity is the maximum number of dwelling units or businesses that are actually allowed in an area based on the zoning.