Glossary

Adaptive Reuse:
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).

Alleys:
Slow speed (10 mph) service easements running behind and sometimes between rows of houses. Alleys (10 – 12 feet wide) provide access to utilities and sanitation, garages, backyards and accessory units.

Brownfields:
Abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination (US EPA).

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.

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.

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.

Density:
The average number of persons, households or dwellings per acre of land. Developments at higher densities may be beneficial to a community if quality design features are utilized. Higher density development may make transit service more effective and maximize public infrastructure costs.

Green Building:
Environmentally-sensitive design and construction practices which conserve natural resources such as energy, building materials, water, soil and air quality, producing broad economic, community and environmental benefits.
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.

Incentive Zoning:
Provisions that encourage but do not require developers to provide certain amenities or qualities in their projects in return for identified benefits, such as rapid processing of applications or increased density.

Infill Development:
The reuse of urban land or vacant lots in developed neighborhoods and urban areas. Infill development is most successful when it is accomplished at a scale and with design features that are compatible with the existing and surrounding neighborhoods.

Linkages:
Features that promote the interconnectedness of 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.

Mixed–Use Development:
Projects that integrate different land uses such as retail stores, restaurants, residences, civic buildings, offices and parks within a defined area.

Multi–Modal Transportation System:
A transportation system that accommodates a variety of transportation options including automobiles, public transit, public safety vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles in a balanced way to maximize access and mobility and to minimize congestion throughout the community.

New Urbanism:
Architecture and urban design movement that promotes a return to pre–automobile precepts of community building, including neighborhoods with a generous network of streets and sidewalks; homes with front doors and porches; a mix of housing types and prices; and connections to shops, parks and other amenities.

Open Space Conservation:
Protection of undeveloped areas located within or beyond city boundaries for the purposes of providing recreational, environmental or civic benefits.
**Overlay Zoning:**
A zoning district applied over one or more other districts that contains additional provisions for special features or conditions, such as historic buildings, wetland or steep slope protection, or a mix of land uses.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Sense of Place:**
A feeling of attachment and belonging to a particular place or environment having a special character and familiarity.

**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.

**Traditional Neighborhood Development:**
Planned neighborhoods that offer alternatives to conventional, use-segregated developments by providing greater variety in type, design and layout of residential and nonresidential uses. This mixed-use development pattern seeks to connect people to places by combining a variety of housing types with limited office, retail and civic uses into a pedestrian-friendly setting.

**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.

**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.

**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.