Glossary of Terms

(Note: these definitions and terms are associated with the planning concepts and practices associated with creating and incentivizing mixed use compact development; they may have other meanings and applications for other purposes)

COMPACT DEVELOPMENT, MIXED USE, WALKABILITY AND FORM-BASED CODE TERMINOLOGY

Form-Based Code Terms (from the SmartCode Version 9.2)

A-Grid – cumulatively, those Thoroughfares that by virtue of their pre-existing pedestrian-supportive qualities, or their future importance to pedestrian connectivity, are held to the highest standards.

Allee – a regularly spaced and aligned row of trees usually planted along a Thoroughfare or Path.

Arcade – a Private Frontage conventional for Retail use wherein the Facade is a colonnade supporting habitable space that overlaps the Sidewalk, while the Facade at Sidewalk level remains at the Frontage Line.

Avenue (AV) – a Thoroughfare of high vehicular capacity and low to moderate speed, acting as a short distance connector between urban centers, and usually equipped with a landscaped median.

Backbuilding – a single-story structure connecting a Principal Building to an Outbuilding.

Base Density – the number of dwelling units per acre before adjustment for other Functions and/or TDR.

B-Grid – cumulatively, those Thoroughfares that by virtue of their use, location, or absence of pre-existing pedestrian-supportive qualities, may meet a standard lower than that of the A-Grid.

Bicycle Lane (BL) – a dedicated lane for cycling within a moderate-speed vehicular Thoroughfare, demarcated by striping.

Bicycle Route (BR) – a Thoroughfare suitable for the shared use of bicycles and automobiles moving at low speeds.

Bicycle Trail (BT) – a bicycle way running independently of a vehicular Thoroughfare.

Block Depth – Block depth in a village center or neighborhood is a primary factor in determining an area’s scale, feel and degree of pedestrian mobility. Block depth also helps to define lot size on the block.

Block Face – the aggregate of all the building Facades on one side of a Block.

Block Length – Block length plays a key role in creating an area’s form and character. Specifically, the walkability of a village center or neighborhood is directly related to block size. Blocks that are too long can create neighborhoods that feel distant and disconnected, and may deter people from walking. The existing range of block length in Amherst varies greatly.
Block – the aggregate of private Lots, Passages, Rear Alleys and Rear Lanes, circumscribed by Thoroughfares.

Boulevard (BV) – a Thoroughfare designed for high vehicular capacity and moderate speed, traversing an Urbanized area. Boulevards are usually equipped with Slip Roads buffering Sidewalks and buildings.

Building Deposition – The location of primary buildings, outbuildings, and accessory uses relative to the boundaries of an individual lot. Building placement can impact the context of the site in a given area and are often controlled by building setback and coverage standards.

Building Height Stepbacks – The design objective of a building stepback is to reduce the shadowing effect on public streets and surrounding buildings and prevent a “canyon” effect when taller buildings are located directly across the street or adjacent from one another. At the same time, street enclosure (or the “Street Wall”) is an important design element in establishing or reinforcing surrounding development patterns. A typical building stepback requirement would specify that building height within a certain distance of the street r-o-w line not exceed a certain limit (stories or vertical feet). This height at the street r-o-w line may then be increased by a prescribed amount (in stories or feet) for interior portions of the building that are setback a further distance from the street r-o-w line. Building setback requirements may also specify certain roof styles, directional orientation and pitch facing to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area and established building patterns. Building stepback requirements may also specify that those portions of the roof in the stepback area may be used for certain specified accessory uses such as rooftop gardens, dining areas, terraces, or similar uses.

Building Setbacks – The creative use of setbacks area, particularly the front and side yards, can be designed to enhance pedestrian access, outdoor accessory uses, or to facilitate access to rear of the lot for parking and loading. Parking should typically not be included in the front setback when possible. Conceptual Site Plans should demonstrate that the setback area design accomplish the community’s planning objectives and creates an inviting environment for pedestrians. Where rear yard setbacks are necessary, Conceptual Site Plans should demonstrate that appropriate screening is provided (i.e. trees, shrubbery and fencing as needed).

Build-To-Line – A line established within a given Lot indicating where the outer edge of a

Bus Rapid Transit – a rubber tire system with its own right-of-way or dedicated lane along at least 70% of its route, providing transit service that is faster than a regular bus.

By Right – characterizing a proposal or component of a proposal for a Community Plan or Building Scale Plan that complies with the Code and is permitted and processed administratively, without public hearing.

Calibration – A form-based code must be calibrated for local character and metrics. Calibration should be done in the context of a public charrette with the advice of urban designers, architects, landscape architects, planners, civil engineers and land use attorneys familiar with transect-based codes. A calibrator’s SmartCode Manual is available at www.newurbannews.com.

Civic Building – a building operated by not-for-profit organizations dedicated to arts, culture, education, recreation, government, transit, and municipal parking, or for use approved by the legislative body.
Civic Parking Reserve – Parking Structure or parking lot within a quarter-mile of the site that it serves.

Civic Space – an outdoor area dedicated for public use. Civic Space types are defined by the combination of certain physical constants including the relationships among their intended use, their size, their landscaping and their enfronting buildings.

Civic Zone – designation for public sites dedicated for Civic Buildings and Civic Space.

Civic – the term defining not-for-profit organizations dedicated to arts, culture, education, recreation, government, transit, and municipal parking.

Clustered Land Development – a Community Unit type structured by a Standard Pedestrian Shed oriented toward a Common Destination such as a general store, Meeting Hall, schoolhouse, or church. CLD takes the form of a small settlement standing free in the countryside.

Commercial – the term collectively defining workplace, Office, Retail, and Lodging Functions.

Common Destination – An area of focused community activity, usually defining the approximate center of a Pedestrian Shed. It may include without limitation one or more of the following: a Civic Space, a Civic Building, a Commercial center, or a transit station, and may act as the social center of a neighborhood.

Common Yard – a planted Private Frontage wherein the Facade is set back from the Frontage line. It is visually continuous with adjacent yards.

Community Unit – a regulatory category defining the physical form, Density, and extent of a settlement.

Configuration – the form of a building, based on its massing, Private Frontage, and height.

Consolidated Review Committee (CRC) – Usually part of the Planning Office, a CRC is comprised of a representative from each of the various regulatory agencies that have jurisdiction over the permitting of a project, as well as a representative of the Development and Design Center.

Cottage – an edgyard building type. A single-family dwelling, on a regular Lot, often shared with an Accessory Building in the back yard.

Courtyard Building – a building that occupies the boundaries of its Lot while internally defining one or more private patios.

Curb – the edge of the vehicular pavement that may be raised or flush to a Swale. It usually incorporates the drainage system.

Design of the Overhead – Elements above the viewers head have an important effect in the visual environment yet are often neglected in the design process. Overhead elements include utilities, lighting, and overhead wiring. Overhead elements should add to a sense of enclosure and at least provide visual interest. Substituting negative visual elements (i.e. wiring) for positive ones (trees and lighting) will enhance an areas overall visual quality.

Design Treatments of the Edge – An edge is a physical element which defines or separates space. Edges identify areas of different or conflicting activities, changes of urban scale or character, and areas of different landscape qualities. The edge is the most important element when designing and exterior space. Weak edge definition lacks separation of activities or views. Visual and spatial
interest is also reduced. Strengthening of edges (including curbing, shrubs, screening, and street trees) enhances the overall visual experience. Plant materials have been used extensively to enhance the visual quality of urban settings. They can provide visual relief, define space, and add aesthetic character to urban areas. They also provide shade, reduce surface heat and help filter air pollution.

**Directional Expression** – Building facades and other architectural and landscape design elements should be generally compatible with surrounding patterns, or those desired for the area by the municipality with regard to the dominant vertical or horizontal expression or direction related to use and historical or cultural character, as appropriate.

**Dooryard** – a Private Frontage type with a shallow Setback and front garden or patio, usually with a low wall at the Frontage Line.

**Drive** – a Thoroughfare along the boundary between an Urbanized and a natural condition, usually along a waterfront, Park, or promontory. One side has the urban character of a Thoroughfare, with Sidewalk and building, while the other has the qualities of a Road or parkway, with naturalistic planting and rural details.

**Edgeyard Building** – a building that occupies the center of its Lot with Setbacks on all sides.

**Effective Parking** – the amount of parking required for Mixed Use after adjustment by the Shared Parking Factor.

**Effective Turning Radius** – the measurement of the inside Turning Radius taking parked cars into account.

**Encroach** – to break the plane of a vertical or horizontal regulatory limit with a structural element, so that it extends into a Setback, into the Public Frontage, or above a height limit.

**Encroachment** – any structural element that breaks the plane of a vertical or horizontal regulatory limit, extending into a Setback, into the Public Frontage, or above a height limit.

**Enfront** – to place an element along a Frontage, as in “porches Enfront the street.”

**Estate House** – an Edgeyard building type. A single-family dwelling on a very large Lot of rural character, often shared by one or more Accessory Buildings. (Syn: country house, villa)

**Expression Line** – a line prescribed at a certain level of a building for the major part of the width of a Facade, expressed by a variation in material or by a limited projection such as a molding or balcony.

**Façade Length and Articulation** – Buildings or portions of a building with wide elevations can be divided into smaller parts through pronounced variation in wall plane articulation and materials and variations in the cornice/roofline to accomplish the desired divisions of elevations into smaller parts. This design technique is an effective way of breaking up the horizontal massing of the building.

**Facade** – the exterior wall of a building that is set along a Frontage Line.
**Forecourt** – a Private Frontage wherein a portion of the Facade is close to the Frontage Line and the central portion is set back.

**Front Setback** – The front setback is the distance the primary structure is located from the property front line. Consistent setbacks help to create a defined streetwall and sense of enclosure. This is an important design characteristic for village centers and neighborhoods. Streetwall is also strongly determined by building placement.

**Frontage Line** – a Lot line bordering a Public Frontage. Facades facing Frontage Lines define the public realm and are therefore more regulated than the Elevations facing other Lot Lines.

**Function** – the use or uses accommodated by a building and its Lot, categorized as Restricted, Limited, or Open, according to the intensity of the use.

**Gallery** – a Private Frontage conventional for Retail use wherein the Facade is aligned close to the Frontage Line with an attached cantilevered shed or lightweight colonnade overlapping the Sidewalk.

**Green** – a Civic Space type for unstructured recreation, spatially defined by landscaping rather than building Frontages.

**Greenfield** – an area that consists of open or wooded land or farmland that has not been previously developed.

**Greenway** – an Open Space Corridor in largely natural conditions which may include trails for bicycles and pedestrians.

**Greyfield** – an area previously used primarily as a parking lot. Shopping centers and shopping malls are typical Greyfield sites.

**Growth Sector** – one of four Sectors where development is permitted By Right in the SmartCode, three for New Communities and one for Infill.

**Highway** – a rural and suburban Thoroughfare of high vehicular speed and capacity. This type is allocated to the more rural Transect Zones

**Infill** – New development on land that had been previously developed, including most Greyfield and Brownfield sites and cleared land within urbanized areas.

**Interior Sideyard Setback** – This defines the distance between structures in a given area which affects the walkability of a district.

**Layer** – a range of depth of a Lot within which certain elements are permitted. See Table 17.

**Lightwell** – A Private Frontage type that is a below-grade entrance or recess designed to allow light into basements.

**Liner Building** – a building specifically designed to mask a parking lot or a Parking Structure from a Frontage.
**Live-Work** – a Mixed Use unit consisting of a Commercial and Residential Function. The Commercial Function may be anywhere in the unit. It is intended to be occupied by a business operator who lives in the same structure that contains the Commercial activity or industry.

**Long Pedestrian Shed, Long** – a Pedestrian Shed that is an average 1/2 mile radius or 2640 feet, used when a transit stop (bus or rail) is present or proposed as the Common Destination. A Long Pedestrian Shed represents approximately a ten-minute walk at a leisurely pace.

**Lot Width** – Lot width is a site characteristic that has a significant impact on the character of a neighborhood. Lot width also helps to establish a district’s market viability and potential, and appearance through its relationship to building width, purpose, sideyard setback, and orientation to pedestrians and the street.

**Lot** – a parcel of land accommodating a building or buildings of unified design. The size of a Lot is controlled by its width in order to determine the grain (i.e., fine grain or coarse grain) of the urban fabric.

**Main Civic Space** – the primary outdoor gathering place for a community. The Main Civic Space is often, but not always, associated with an important Civic Building.

**Mixed Use** – Multiple functions within the same building through superimposition or adjacency, or in multiple buildings by adjacency, or at a proximity determined by warrant.

**Net Site Area** – all developable land within a site including Thoroughfares but excluding land allocated as Civic Zones.

**Network Pedestrian Shed** – a Pedestrian Shed adjusted for average walk times along Thoroughfares. This type may be used to structure Infill Community Plans.

**Open Space** – land intended to remain undeveloped; it may be for Civic Space.

**Outbuilding** – an Accessory Building, usually located toward the rear of the same Lot as a Principal Building, and sometimes connected to the Principal Building by a Backbuilding.

**Park** – a Civic Space type that is a natural preserve available for unstructured recreation.

**Parking Structure** – a building containing one or more Stories of parking above grade.

**Passage (PS)** – a pedestrian connector, open or roofed, that passes between buildings to provide shortcuts through long Blocks and connect rear parking areas to Frontages.

**Path (PT)** – a pedestrian way traversing a Park or rural area, with landscape matching the contiguous Open Space, ideally connecting directly with the urban Sidewalk network.

**Pedestrian Shed, Linear** – A Pedestrian Shed that is elongated along an important Mixed Use Corridor such as a main street. A Linear Pedestrian Shed extends approximately 1/4 mile from each side of the Corridor for the length of its Mixed Use portion.

**Pedestrian Shed, Standard** – a Pedestrian Shed that is an average 1/4 mile radius or 1320 feet, about the distance of a five-minute walk at a leisurely pace. See Pedestrian Shed.
**Pedestrian Shed** – An area that is centered on a Common Destination. Its size is related to average walking distances for the applicable Community Unit type. Pedestrian Sheds are applied to structure Communities.

**Planter** – the element of the Public Frontage which accommodates street trees, whether continuous or individual.

**Plaza** – a Civic Space type designed for Civic purposes and Commercial activities in the more urban Transect Zones, generally paved and spatially defined by building Frontages.

**Principal Building** – the main building on a Lot, usually located toward the Frontage.

**Principal Entrance** – the main point of access for pedestrians into a building.

**Principal Frontage** – On corner Lots, the Private Frontage designated to bear the address and Principal Entrance to the building, and the measure of minimum Lot width. Prescriptions for the parking Layers pertain only to the Principal Frontage. Prescriptions for the first Layer pertain to both Frontages of a corner Lot.

**Private Frontage** – The area between the building and the lot lines. Specifying private frontage is important as it determines the manner in which the building facade is presented to the pedestrian.

**Public Frontage** – The area between the private lot line and the edge of the vehicular lane. A public frontage usually includes walkways, planters and lighting (i.e. such as the public sidewalk).

**Public Realm** – Public and civic spaces, facilities and infrastructure such as streets, parks and open spaces, and civic buildings and places. FBC addresses the form and mass of buildings in relationship to one another as well as the scale and type of streets, blocks, open spaces and other elements of the public realm.

**Rear Alley (RA)** – a vehicular way located to the rear of Lots providing access to service areas, parking, and Outbuildings and containing utility easements. Rear Alleys should be paved from building face to building face, with drainage by inverted crown at the center or with roll Curbs at the edges.

**Rear Lane (RL)** – a vehicular way located to the rear of Lots providing access to service areas, parking, and Outbuildings and containing utility easements. Rear Lanes may be paved lightly to Driveway standards. The streetscape consists of gravel or landscaped edges, has no raised Curb, and is drained by percolation.

**Rearyard Building** – a building that occupies the full Frontage Line, leaving the rear of the Lot as the sole yard.

**Recess Line** – a line prescribed for the full width of a Facade, above which there is a Stepback of a minimum distance, such that the height to this line (not the overall building height) effectively defines the enclosure of the Enfronting public space.

**Regulating Plan** – The regulations in form-based codes are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form, scale and placement of development, streets, and civic spaces. The regulating plan is usually a detailed master plan or zoning map of the district (or transect)
designating the locations where different building form standards apply, based on clear community intentions regarding the physical character of the area being coded. The Regulating Plan also provides the structure for the public realm including the size and location of blocks, appropriate locations and types of thoroughfares, and location and forms of public and civic spaces.

**Retail Frontage** – Frontage designated on a Regulating Plan that requires or recommends the provision of a Shopfront, encouraging the ground level to be available for Retail use.

**Road (RD)** – a local, rural and suburban Thoroughfare of low-to-moderate vehicular speed and capacity. This type is allocated to the more rural Transect Zones (T1-T3).

**Rowhouse** – a single-family dwelling that shares a party wall with another of the same type and occupies the full Frontage Line.

**Rural Boundary Line** – the extent of potential urban growth as determined by existing geographical determinants. The Rural Boundary Line is permanent.

**Secondary Frontage** – on corner Lots, the Private Frontage that is not the Principal Frontage. As it affects the public realm, its First Layer is regulated.

**Sector** – A neutral term for a geographic area. In the SmartCode there are six specific Sectors for regional planning that establish the legal boundaries for Open Space and development.

**Separation of Pedestrian and vehicle activities** – Paving is often used to integrate pedestrian crossing zones with sidewalk construction. Without base materials, different activities are less defined. Contrasting paving materials help identify individual activities or use areas.

**Setback** – the area of a Lot measured from the Lot line to a building Facade or Elevation that is maintained clear of permanent structures, with the exception of certain encroachments.

**Shared Parking Factor** – An accounting for parking spaces that are available to more than one Function.

**Shopfront** – a Private Frontage conventional for Retail use, with substantial glazing and an awning, wherein the Facade is aligned close to the Frontage Line with the building entrance at Sidewalk grade.

**Sidewalk** – the paved section of the Public Frontage dedicated exclusively to pedestrian activity.

**Sideyard Building** – a building that occupies one side of the Lot with a Setback on the other side. This type can be a Single or Twin depending on whether it abuts the neighboring house.

**Slip Road** – an outer vehicular lane or lanes of a Thoroughfare, designed for slow speeds while inner lanes carry higher speed traffic, and separated from them by a planted median.

**SmartCode** – A model transect-based (of “form-based”) development code created by Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company (DPZ) in 2003 based on two decades of research and implementation. The model SmartCode is an open source document available for public use and applicable to all scales of land planning and regulation.

**Special District (SD)** – an area that, by its intrinsic Function, Disposition, or Configuration, cannot or should not conform to one or more of the normative Community Unit types or Transect Zones
specified by the form-based code. Special Districts may be mapped and regulated at the regional scale or the community scale.

**Specialized Building** – a building that is not subject to Residential, Commercial, or Lodging classification.

**Square** – a Civic Space type designed for unstructured recreation and Civic purposes, spatially defined by building Frontages and consisting of Paths, lawns and trees, formally disposed.

**Stepback** – A building Setback of a specified distance that occurs at a prescribed number of Stories above the ground.

**Stoop** – a Private Frontage wherein the Facade is aligned close to the Frontage Line with the first Story elevated from the Sidewalk for privacy, with an exterior stair and landing at the entrance.

**Story** – a habitable level within a building, excluding an Attic or raised basement.

**Street (ST)** – a local urban Thoroughfare of low speed and capacity.

**Street Line** – The edge of the layout of a public or private street right-of-way.

**Streetscreen** – a freestanding wall built along the Frontage Line, or coplanar with the Facade. It may mask a parking lot from the Thoroughfare, provide privacy to a side yard, and/or strengthen the spatial definition of the public realm.

**TDR Receiving Area** – an area intended for development that may be made more dense by the purchase of development rights from TDR Sending Areas.

**TDR Sending Area** – an area previously zoned for development within a designated Reserved Open Sector (O-2), from which development rights may be transferred to a Growth Sector.

**TDR** – Transfer of Development Rights, a method of relocating existing zoning rights from areas to be preserved as Open Space to areas to be more densely urbanized.

**Terminated Vista** – A location at the axial conclusion of a Thoroughfare. A building located at a Terminated Vista designated on a Regulating Plan is required or recommended to be designed in response to the axis.

**Thoroughfare** – a way for use by vehicular and pedestrian traffic and to provide access to Lots and Open Spaces, consisting of Vehicular Lanes and the Public Frontage.

**TND** – Traditional Neighborhood Development, a Community Unit type structured by a Standard Pedestrian Shed oriented toward a Common Destination consisting of a Mixed Use center or Corridor, and in the form of a medium-sized settlement near a transportation route.

**TOD** – Transit Oriented Development. TOD is created by an overlay on all or part of a TND or RCD, or by designation on a Regional Plan, permitting increased Density to support rail or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

**Transect** – A Transect is a system of ordering human habitats in a range from the most natural to the most urban. The Transect defines common physical characteristics of place and scale, density and intensity of land use, and urbanism.
**Transect Zone (T-zone)** – One of several areas on a Zoning Map regulated by the SmartCode. Transect Zones are administratively similar to the land use zones in conventional codes, except that in addition to the usual building use, Density, height, and Setback requirements, other elements of the intended habitat are integrated, including those of the private Lot and building and Public Frontage.

**Turning Radius** – the curved edge of a Thoroughfare at an intersection, measured at the inside edge of the vehicular tracking. The smaller the Turning Radius, the smaller the pedestrian crossing distance and the more slowly the vehicle is forced to make the turn.

**Urban Boundary Line** – the extent of potential urban growth as determined by the projected demographic needs of a region. The Urban Boundary Line may be adjusted from time to time.

**Urbanism** – collective term for the condition of a compact, Mixed Use settlement, including the physical form of its development and its environmental, functional, economic, and socio-cultural aspects.

**Urbanized** – generally, developed. Specific to the SmartCode, developed at T-3 (Sub-Urban) Density or higher.

**Work-Live** – a Mixed Use unit consisting of a Commercial and Residential Function. It typically has a substantial Commercial component that may accommodate employees and walk-in trade. The unit is intended to function predominantly as work space with incidental Residential accommodations that meet basic habitability requirements.

**Yield** – characterizing a Thoroughfare that has two-way traffic but only one effective travel lane because of parked cars, necessitating slow movement and driver negotiation. Also, characterizing parking on such a Thoroughfare.
Compact, Mixed Use and Walkability Terminology

Balance – There are two types of balance – Symmetry is created when elements are arranged equally and identically on either side of a central access; Asymmetry occurs when elements are arranged without regard to specific axis or exact equality. However, the overall composition is balanced in terms of mass and weight.

Benchmark – A point of reference of a standard against with measurements can be compared. The origin of the term benchmark can be traced historically to woodworking on a bench or table, where a mark was placed as a point of reference from which relative lengths could be measured. Its contemporary use refers to a land surveyor’s starting reference point, which is officially recognized as the location and elevation at that point from which the surveyor can determine another location and elevation. In the context of indicators, a benchmark is an accurate data point, which is used as a reference for future comparisons (similar to a baseline). Sometimes it also refers to “best practices” in a particular field, and communities compare themselves against those standards. For example, if the best recycling rate for communities in the state of Illinois is 33% of all homes in the jurisdiction or other communities in the state may use that figure as a benchmark to work towards or surpass. (Many groups use benchmarks as a synonym for Indicator or Target.)

Best Management Practices – Best Management Practices (BMPs), used her in terms of protecting water quality, are an effective way of addressing existing high-risk land uses, non-point sources of pollution and development practices and are the best available methods to prevent or mitigate a contaminated release to the environment. BMPs can be structural, non-structural or managerial techniques used to prevent and reduce non-point source pollution. Many BMPs are low or no cost efforts as they focus on a change in general practices. An example of BMP initiative for Sheffield would be to provide nurseries with information related to proper fertilizer and pesticide application that could be distributed to customers.

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.

Brownfields – An abandoned, idled, or underused property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination. Brownfield sites include abandoned factories and other industrial facilities, gasoline stations, oil storage facilities, dry cleaning stores, and other businesses that formerly dealt with polluting substances.

Building Heights – Building height is the vertical distance from grade to highest point of a roof. For the purposes of this analysis, building height is estimated by the number of stories per structure.

Built Environment – The urban environment consisting of buildings, roads, fixtures, parks, and all other improvements that form the physical character of a city.

Cap or Roof Type – The cap type is the type of structure covering over any portion of a structure. Surveying this element allows for a determination of the dominant cap type in the area.
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.

Charrette – A Charrette is a planning session in which participants brainstorm and visualize solutions to a design issue. Charrettes provide a forum for ideas and offer the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to designers while giving mutual authorship to the plan by all those who participate. The term "charrette" comes from the French term for "little cart" and refers to the final intense work effort expended by architects to meet a project deadline. At the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris during the 19th century, proctors circulated with little carts to collect final drawings, and students would jump on the charrette to put finishing touches on their presentations minutes before their deadlines.

Color – Color is building and site design can influence the perception of size. Light colored areas tend to appear larger than dark colored areas. Color can be used to emphasis important areas.

Commutershed – The general geographic area in which commuters will travel for the purposes of working

Compact Building Design – Refers to the act of constructing buildings vertically rather than horizontally, and 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. Compact building design is necessary to sustain transit ridership at levels necessary to make public transit a viable transportation option.

Complete Street – Streets designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a complete street. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations

Context and Continuity – Context is the degree of appropriateness or fit within the environment. Taller objects among smaller ones (i.e. downtown buildings) break the continuity of other objects and may be considered to be out of context.

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.

Contrast – Contrast is used to express areas of importance or significance, thereby creating a center of interest or dominance. This may be achieved by the use of materials with different colors, forms, or textures.

Density bonus – Allows developers to build in specified areas densities that are higher than normally allowed.
Density – The average number of people, families, or housing units on one unit of land. Density is also expressed as dwelling units per acre.

Design Standards – Design standards or guidelines can serve as a community's desire to control its appearance, from within and without, through a series of standards that govern site planning policies, densities, building heights, traffic and lighting.

Development Rights – Development rights give property owners the right to develop land in ways that comply with local land use regulation.

District Improvement Financing (DIF) – Economic tool that promotes redevelopment by channeling dollars into targeted redevelopment districts.

Downzoning – A change in zoning classification to less intensive use and/or development.

Ecological Footprint – The impact of humans on ecosystems created by their use of land, water, and other natural resources. Ecological footprint used as a complex sustainability indicator that answers the question: How much of the Earth’s resources does your lifestyle require?

Enclosure – The degree to which a space is contained. Unity may be achieved when the edge and overhead (see definition below) are well defined to create a feeling of enclosed space. Enclosure can define a place of arrival or signify a route to that destination. Strip developments are examples of weak roadway enclosure with open parking areas and lack of vegetation to add little to the sense of space. Typical design methods of improving enclosure in this case may include tree and parking lot plantings, burying overhead wires, and bringing buildings closer to the roadway.

Floor Area Ratio – The general purpose of the Floor Area Ratio standards is to regulate the amount of use (the intensity) allowed on a building lot. FAR provides a means to match the potential amount of uses with the desired character of a given area. FAR also influences height, setback, and building coverage standards to control the overall bulk of development.

Form – The profile or silhouette of mass as it appears to the viewer (e.g. mountains are natural forms; trees are angular; buildings are horizontal and rectangular forms).

Grade Plane – A horizontal plane representing the natural, undisturbed ground level adjoining the proposed building at all exterior walls. Where the ground level slopes away from the exterior walls, the grade plane is typically established by the lowest points within the area between the building and a given distance from the building, or between the building and the lot line.

Green Building – A whole-building and systems approach to design and construction that employs building techniques that minimize environmental impacts and reduce the energy consumption of buildings while contributing to the health and productivity of its occupants.

Green Design – Building design that yields environmental benefits, such as savings in energy, building materials, and water consumption, or reduced waste generation.

Green Development – Development that uses environmentally friendly building practices and energy efficiency. There are a number of public and private incentives for green development, and increasingly, nonprofit developers use green construction as a way of increasing the expendable resources of lower income persons.
Historic
Inclusionary
Healthy
Greyfields
Incentive
Impervious
Indicator
Habitat
Growth
Greenfields
Development
Management

Greenfields – Undeveloped land. Smart Growth principles dictate that new development be steered away from greenfields to the maximum extent possible and toward sites where infrastructure and public transportation already exist, or to contaminated and/or underutilized sites that can be reclaimed to accommodate new development.

Greenhouse Gas – Some greenhouse gases, which contribute to the greenhouse effect, occur naturally in the atmosphere while others result from human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone.

Greyfields – Term coined by the Congress for the New Urbanism for failing retail properties (shopping centers) that require significant public and private-sector intervention to stem decline and redevelop into mixed use neighborhoods.

Growth Management – A central tenet of sustainable development that espouses the idea that uncontrolled growth cannot be sustained over time and that communities should intentionally plan the ways they want to develop.

Habitat – Living environment of a species, that provides whatever that species needs for its survival, such as nutrients, water and living space.

Harmony – This principle is closely related to unity with an emphasis on variety. When elements used to achieve variety go well together then they are also harmonious. This can be accomplished by the use of materials, with similar colors, forms, or textures.

Healthy and Sustainable Community – A community that develops and maintains a strong quality of life for its residents through consideration of long-term economic, ecological, social and political well-being.

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.

Impervious Surface – Any surface through which rainfall cannot pass or be effectively absorbed. (Roads, buildings, paved parking lots, sidewalks etc.)

Incentive Zoning – 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 increased density or expedited processing.

Inclusionary zoning – A system that requires a minimum percentage of lower and moderate income housing to be provided in new developments. Inclusionary programs are based on mandatory requirements or development incentives, such as density bonuses.

Indicator – A measurement that reflects the status of some social, economic, or environmental system over time. The term Indicator is derived from the Latin verb indicate, meaning “to point out or proclaim.” Generally an indicator focuses on a small, manageable, tangible and telling piece of a system to give people a sense of the bigger picture.

Infill Development – The practice of building on vacant or undeveloped parcels in dense areas, especially urban and inner suburban neighborhoods. Promotes compact development, which in turn allows undeveloped land to remain open and green.
**Infrastructure** – Water and sewer lines, roads, urban transit lines, schools and other public facilities needed to support developed areas.

**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."

**Laborshed** – The general geographic area in which a regional employment center draws most of its workforce.

**Leapfrog Development** – Development that occurs beyond the limits of existing development and creates areas of vacant land between areas of developed land.

**LEED** – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System is a nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings. Administered by the U.S. Green Building Council LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality.

**Low Impact Development (LID)** – An approach to environmentally friendly land use planning. It includes a suite of landscaping and design techniques that attempt to maintain the natural, pre-developed ability of a site to manage rainfall. LID techniques capture water on site, filter it through vegetation, and let it soak into the ground where it can recharge the local water table rather than being lost as surface runoff. An important LID principle includes the idea that stormwater is not merely a waste product to be disposed of, but rather that rainwater is a resource.

**Mass** – The visual and physical quality of an object which is perceived as a solid in the viewer’s field of vision

**Mass/Space Relationship** – The interaction of physical and spatial elements relative to the formation of an environment. Mass and space interact to form an enclosed environment (i.e. a village).

**Mixed Use Development** – Projects that combine different types of development such as residential, commercial, office, industrial and institutional into one project. Mixed-use redevelopment of neighborhoods promotes comprehensive revitalization through retention or addition of housing, services and jobs.

**Mobility** – The ability to move or be moved easily.

**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.

**Mode** – A way people or goods get from one place to another, such as using cars and trucks, freight and passenger trains, walking, bicycling, and riding buses.

**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 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 movement to build and rebuild communities on a human scale with interconnecting streets, homes with porches, pedestrian friendly traffic patterns, shared open space and greenways, local retail businesses that are near housing and services, and construction practices that are environmentally sensitive. In suburbia, may be a new town center or in cities, may be called an urban village.

**Node Development** – Nodes are small scale mixed use districts that provide basic services and conveniences to the surrounding neighborhood such as a small grocery, restaurant, pharmacy, or cleaning service.

**Open Space** – Used to describe undeveloped land or land that is used for recreation. Farmland as well as all natural habitats (forests, fields, wetlands etc.) is lumped in this category.

**Overlay Districts** – Zoning districts in which additional regulatory standards are superimposed on existing zoning. Overlay districts provide a method of placing special restrictions in addition to those required by basic zoning ordinances.

**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, affordable housing, or wetlands.

**Passive Recreational Use** – Public or private conservation lands with selected amenities set aside for low-impact non-intrusive public use. (i.e. trails and picnic areas).

**Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)** – Generally refers to arrangements under which governments exempt certain properties (e.g. public housing) or entities from real property or other taxes, but entity agrees to make some type of annual payment to the taxing entity, usually at a lower level than would be due under full taxation.

**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. This type of zoning provides flexibility with the well-defined goals and rules found in conventional zoning.

**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 commercial uses. Project planning and density is calculated for the entire development rather than individual lots.

**Proportions** – The proportions and relationships of height to width between windows, doors, signs, and other architectural elements should be generally compatible with prevailing architectural styles and characteristics of existing building or structure, or that desired for the area by the municipality as demonstrated by local plans and regulations.
**Purchase of Development Rights** – Programs through which local governments may purchase development rights and dedicate the land for conservation easements, protecting it as open space or agricultural areas.

**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, access to schools, housing, employment opportunities, medical facilities, cultural and recreational amenities, and public services.

**Receiving District** – An overlay zoning district established by the Town Meeting/Town Council upon recommendation from the Planning Board as an area suitable to receive transferred development rights.

**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.

**Rhythm** – The arrangement of elements or objects so that the viewer’s eye is directed in a certain sequence. Those materials that repeat the same pattern, create a continuous flowing rhythm, and have strong directional movement. This may be achieved by the use of materials which repeat similar colors, forms, or textures.

**Scale** – The scale of a structure or landscape alteration should be compatible with its architectural or landscape design style and character and that desired for the community. The scale of ground-level design elements such as building entryways, windows, porches, plazas, parks, pedestrian furniture, plantings, and other street and site elements should be determined by and directed toward the user (i.e. building inhabitants), and enjoyment of pedestrians.

**Sending District** – An overlay zoning district established by the Town Meeting/Town Council upon recommendation from the Planning Board as an area in which use or development rights should be restricted and from which development rights may be transferred to a Receiving District.

**Shape** – The shape of roofs, windows, doors, and other design elements should be compatible with the architectural style and character of a building or site, or that desired for the area by the municipality as demonstrated by local plans and regulations.

**Smart Growth** – A land use planning technique in response to the problems associated with unplanned, unlimited suburban development. Smart growth principles call for more efficient land use, compact development patterns, less dependence on the automobile, a range of diverse housing opportunities and choices, equitable allocation of costs and benefits of development, and an improved job/housing balance.

**Space** – A median that contains all three dimensions. Applied to urban design, creating outdoor space occurs through the conscious arrangement of mass to articulate the desired form of space.

**Special Districts** – Geographic areas in which fees or taxes are collected to fund investments or services benefiting properties within the district.

**Sprawl** – Development patterns where rural land is converted to urban/suburban uses more quickly than needed to house new residents and support new businesses, and people become more
dependent on automobiles. Sprawl defines patterns of urban growth that includes large acreage of low-density residential development, rigid separation between residential and commercial uses, residential and commercial development in rural areas away from urban centers, minimal support for non-motorized transportation methods, and a lack of integrated transportation and land use planning.

**Street Classifications** – Residential streets are classified according to their design, use (actual or intended), their relationship to other streets in the hierarchy and their residential character in the following categories: Arterial Street; Collector Streets; Lanes; Minor Streets.

**Streetscape** – The surface vehicle and pedestrian components of a public right of way including roadway pavement and curbing, parking areas, sidewalks, street trees and pits, public signage and traffic control devices, cross-walk treatments, and street furniture such as benches, trash receptacles, and lighting fixtures.

**Strip Development** – A commercial or retail development, usually one-store deep, that fronts on a major street.

**Sustainability** – A sustainable society is one that is healthy, vital, resilient, and able to creatively adapt to changing conditions over the long-term. Sustainable Seattle defines it as the long-term health and vitality of cultural, economic, environmental and social systems.

**Sustainable Development** – The United Nations Commission on Environment and Development defines it as “development which meets the needs of the present without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Our Common Future, 1987). Sustainable Seattle describes it as economic and social changes that promote human prosperity and quality of life without causing ecological or social damage.

**Texture** – A quality which ranges from smooth to rough, and is perceived by site and touch. Smooth textures tend to be inviting while rough textures attract attention and slow down activity.

**Traditional Neighborhood Development** – Traditional neighborhood development emphasizes two broad goals: to reduce the destruction of habitat and natural resources, and to reduce dependency on automobiles and their associated impacts; and to reduce polluting emissions, excessive use of energy and fragmentation of the landscape. Traditional neighborhood design is a development approach that reflects historic settlement patterns and town planning concepts such as grided, 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** – Measures to reduce the negative effects of vehicles, and improve conditions for walking or bicycling. A familiar example is the orange barrels with the warning to stop for pedestrians.

**Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)** – The conveyance of development rights by deed, easement or other legal instrument from one parcel of land to another. It is a mechanism used to encourage development in certain areas and not in others.
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) – Mixed-use, higher density development centered on existing or new transportation facilities (including bus, rail, automobile, bicycle and pedestrian). In many cities, neighborhood redevelopment strategies are increasingly centered on TOD.

Transportation demand management strategies (TDM) – TDM is a general term for strategies that result in more efficient use of transportation resources, including incentives to reduce driving, use alternative options, and improve transit.

Universal Design – Products and buildings that are accessible and usable by everyone, including people with disabilities.

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 (UGB) – A locally designated boundary for projected growth that restricts zoning and services inside the boundary. Inner city neighborhoods are often found within UGBs, which may in turn help concentrate resources inside growth neighborhoods.

Use Value Taxation – Land assessments according to the value of the present use rather than the speculative value.

Zero-lot-line Development – A development option where side yard restrictions are reduced and the building abuts a side lot line. Overall unit-lot densities are therefore increased. Zero-lot-line development can result in increased protection of natural resources.

Zoning – Classification of land in a community into different areas and districts. Zoning is a legislative process that regulates building dimensions, density, design, placement and use within each district.