



RHODE ISLAND CITIZENS' GUIDE TO

smart growth terms and concepts



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GUIDE DEVELOPED BY

Grow Smart RI Land-Use Training Collaborative

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Rhode Island Division of Planning/Statewide Planning Program
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John H. Chafee
BLACKSTONE RIVER VALLEY
National Heritage Corridor Commission

ABOUT GROW SMART

Grow Smart Rhode Island is a diverse non-profit alliance of community leaders from the business, labor, academic, environmental, housing, development and other sectors promoting sustainable and prosperous growth and development. In its ten years of existence, the organization has championed a number of incentives and tools to steer future growth to revitalized urban, town and village centers and to reduce development pressures on farms, forestland and the environmentally fragile areas of our coastline. Grow Smart Rhode Island's work has been honored with awards from the U.S. EPA, the RI Chapter of the American Planning Association, Rhode Island Housing, Preserve Rhode Island, the Providence Preservation Society and the Environmental Business Council of New England.

RHODE ISLAND CITIZENS' GUIDE TO smart growth terms and concepts

INTRODUCTION:

The following guide was developed for two purposes. First, it provides a resource for citizens who want to better understand various terms that are used in discussions about smart growth and land-use planning. Second, since a number of terms have taken on somewhat different meanings in different parts of the county and in various publications, we hope that this guide will help planners, officials, developers and citizens in Rhode Island to move towards a common understanding and use of terms.

In most cases where a term has both a commonly understood meaning and a specific definition under Rhode Island state law, we have provided both the commonly understood meaning and the definition found in Rhode Island law. Citations from Rhode Island law are printed in italics.

The explanations of terms provided in this glossary should not be used as legal definitions for the purposes of drafting zoning ordinances or other legal materials.

ADAPTIVE RE-USE

The conversion of outmoded buildings, including old school buildings and mills, to economically viable new uses.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Generally, under U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development guidelines, a household's housing costs are considered to be affordable when they are equal to or less than 30% of gross household income.

RI Law § 42-128-8.1. Residential housing that has a sales price or rental amount that is within the means of a household that is moderate income or less. In the case of dwelling units for sale, housing that is affordable means housing in which principal, interest, taxes (which may be adjusted by state and local programs for property tax relief), and insurance constitute no more than thirty percent (30%) of the gross household income for a household with less than one hundred and twenty percent (120%) of area median income, adjusted for family size. In the case of dwelling units for rent, housing that is affordable means housing for which the rent, heat, and utilities other than telephone constitute no more than thirty percent (30%) of median income, adjusted for family size.

Affordable housing shall include all types of year-round housing, including but not limited to, manufactured housing, housing originally constructed for workers and their families, accessory dwelling units, housing accepting rental vouchers and/or tenant-based certificates under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, as amended, and assisted living housing, where the sales or rental amount of such housing, adjusted for any federal, state, or municipal government subsidy, is less than or equal to thirty percent (30%) of the gross household income of the low and/or moderate income occupants of the housing.

See also: Low & Moderate Income Housing

AMENITY

A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, recreational facilities, historic buildings or less tangible factors such as tranquility could all be considered as amenities.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA), TITLE III

The Americans with Disabilities Act gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities and guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications. Title III of the Act covers public accommodations, which include facilities such as restaurants, hotels, grocery stores, retail stores, etc., as well as privately owned transportation systems. The ADA requires that all new public construction and modifications must be accessible to individuals with

disabilities. For existing municipal facilities, barriers to services must be removed if readily achievable.

BROWNFIELD

Property for which expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Many large brownfield properties in Rhode Island are former industrial sites, while sites such as gas stations, dry cleaning plants and community landfills may also be brownfields.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)

Designated city or town center management area in which property owners agree to pay additional rates to fund improvements to the general retail environment. The creation of a BID is often a collaborative effort between local merchants/property owners and the municipality. Also known as a Downtown Improvement District.

CENTER

Traditionally, the “heart” of a community, consisting of a cohesive, relatively dense core of commercial, civic, religious and residential buildings arranged along a main street and intersecting streets. Depending on the scale of the community, the center may also contain local and/or regional commercial and public transit hubs, including train stations and bus stations. Village centers, community centers, town centers and city centers vary in level and number of amenities according to population concentrations.

The term “center” is also used to refer to an area of concentrated activity devoted to a single use or a more limited mix of uses, such as a shopping center, a business and industrial center or an educational center.

See also: Growth Center

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (CBD)

The city center, downtown hub, or traditional downtown containing most of a city's retail, financial, community/municipal services, legal and office functions, plus many transport foci and public transport stations.

CITY

Rhode Island has 39 municipalities—8 cities and 31 towns, and all land in Rhode Island, with the exception of Narragansett Tribal Land, is incorporated within one of those 39 municipalities. Rhode Island's eight cities are: Providence, East Providence, Newport, Warwick, Cranston, Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket. In Rhode Island, “cities” do not differ in legally authorized powers from towns. Nor is there a form of government unique to cities. Rhode Island's 8 cities all operate under either the mayor-council or council-manager form of government, but several towns also

operate under each of those forms of government. Rather, the eight cities in Rhode Island are primarily distinguished from the towns by the historical circumstances surrounding their incorporations.

See also: Town

CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

RI Law § 45-24-31. A site planning technique that concentrates buildings in specific areas on the site to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, common open space, and/or preservation of environmentally, historically, culturally, or other sensitive features and/or structures. The techniques used to concentrate buildings shall be specified in the ordinance and may include, but are not limited to, reduction in lot areas, setback requirements, and/or bulk requirements, with the resultant open land being devoted by deed restrictions for one or more uses. Under cluster development there is no increase in the number of lots that would be permitted under conventional development except where ordinance provisions include incentive bonuses for certain types or conditions of development.

While some of the early projects developed under cluster development ordinances in Rhode Island were designed to protect and take advantage of environmental and cultural assets, others were less successful in their treatment of open space. In recent years, Rhode Island communities have begun to adopt a new generation of ordinances known as Conservation Development, which incorporate an approach that places increased emphasis on evaluation and protection of environmental and cultural assets and on the creation of meaningful open space.

See also: Conservation Development

COMMERCIAL

The term commercial encompasses a range of land uses including retail, office, service, hotel/conference, and commercial recreation (including golf).

COMMUNITY ASSET

A physical or social resource that adds value and gives identity to a neighborhood or to a larger community. A community asset can be natural resource, such as a stream valley, a built resource, such as a landmark building, or a social resource, such as a long-standing community organization. Neighborhoods have unique combinations of assets which should be identified and built upon.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The image and perception of a community as defined by its built environment, landscaping, natural features and open space, types and style of housing, and number and size of roads and sidewalks.

See also: Sense of Place

COMMUNITY PLANNING

A strategic planning process that addresses the needs of communities in a purposeful way, with the implicit notion of varying levels of community involvement in the process.

COMPACT DEVELOPMENT

A development model achieved by locating buildings more closely together and building multi-story structures so that square footage needed is accommodated vertically rather than spread out on the land in single-story buildings. Model includes mixed uses on smaller lot sizes with reduced distance between buildings. The limited distance between buildings encourages utilization of a range of transportation options including public transit, walking, and biking, as alternatives to private automobiles.

COMPATIBILITY OF SCALE

The generally harmonious relationship of size, height, shape and setback of development in comparison to adjacent buildings, architectural elements, landscaping and human form.

CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT

A creative land use technique that allows a community to guide growth to the most appropriate areas within a parcel of land to avoid impacts to the environment and to protect the character-defining features of the property. The goal is to accommodate growth while preserving at least 50% of the parcel as meaningful open space in perpetuity. There need be no reduction in the number of lots that could be supported by conventional development; instead the lots are carefully situated to protect natural and cultural resources and lot sizes may be smaller than lots required by underlying zoning.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE

This concept is frequently used to describe design that discourages crime. The creation of defensible space involves structuring the physical layout of communities to allow residents to control the areas around their homes. This includes the streets and grounds outside their buildings and the lobbies and corridors within them. Defensible spaces are visible from surrounding buildings; they are well-lit (but not over lit, so as not to create glare); they give outsiders the sense of entering a private zone; and they provide clear paths from inside to outside.

DENSITY

RI Law § 45-24-31. *The number of dwelling units per unit of land, e.g. 4 units per acre.*

DEVELOPMENT

RI Law § 45-24-31. *The construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation, or enlargement of any structure; any mining, excavation, landfill or land disturbance; or any change in use, or alteration or extension of the use, of land.*

DEVELOPMENT CENTER

See: Growth Center

DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

The legal right to develop land under applicable zoning and subdivision ordinances and regulations currently in effect.

DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS, PURCHASE OF

Often known as PDR. The act of paying a property owner in return for the owner's giving up his/her rights to develop a piece of land. While the property owner retains ownership of the land, the purchased development rights are permanently "extinguished." Used as a land conservation strategy, purchase of development rights offers a less costly alternative to outright land acquisition.

DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS, TRANSFER OF

Often known as TDR. A land use tool under which development rights can be severed from a tract of land and sold in a market transaction. The parcel from which the rights are transferred is then permanently restricted as to its future development. The purchaser of the rights may assign them to a different parcel to gain additional density. Usually, TDR programs designate sending areas from which rights may be transferred, and receiving areas to which the rights may be sent.

DISTRICT

See: Zoning Use District

DOWNZONING

The process of changing the zoning of an area, usually to allow less density. Since the term is sometimes used to mean the opposite—changing the zoning to increase density—it is important to clarify which way the term is being used.
See also: Upzoning

FLOATING ZONE

RI Law § 45-24-31. *An unmapped zoning district adopted within the ordinance which is established on the zoning map only when an application for development, meeting the zone requirements, is approved.*

FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)

The gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the net area of the site expressed in decimals of one or two places.

FORM-BASED CODES

Form-based zoning codes place a primary emphasis on building type, dimensions, parking location and façade features, and less emphasis on uses. They stress the appearance of the streetscape, or public realm, over long lists of different use types. Characteristics that distinguish form-based codes from conventional zoning include:

Zoning Districts:

Form-based codes are defined around districts, neighborhoods and corridors whereas conventional zoning districts may bear no relationship to the transportation framework or the larger area.

Regulatory Focus:

Form-based codes de-emphasize density and use regulation in favor of rules for building form. They recognize that uses may change over time, but the building will endure.

Uses:

Form-based codes promote mixed use in order to bring workplaces, retail and community services into close proximity with housing and promote a mix of housing types in order to meet individuals' varying housing needs at different points in their lives.

Design:

Greater attention is given to streetscape and the design of the public realm, and the role of individual buildings in shaping the public realm. Form-based codes recognize how critical these public spaces are to defining and creating a "place."

Public Participation:

A design-focused public participation process is essential to assure thorough discussion of land uses as the code is created. This helps reduce conflict, misunderstanding and the need for hearings as individual projects are reviewed.

GREEN BUILDING

A green building is a building that has been constructed or renovated to incorporate design techniques, technologies, and materials that minimize its overall environmental impacts. Among these reduced impacts are reduced fossil fuel use for electricity and heat, minimal site disruption, lower water consumption, and fewer pollutants used and released during construction and occupation. The term "high-performance building" is often used when referring specifically to the energy efficiency and productivity benefits of a building, whereas "green building" refers to the broader environmental considerations of a building, including high-performance aspects.

See also: LEED certified

GREENFIELD

A site in a rural or urban area that has not experienced previous development. The term includes forest and agricultural land and buildings, as well as previously developed sites which have now blended back into the natural landscape over time.

GREENSPACE

In Rhode Island, “greenspace” refers to land and water that is: (1) Legally restricted or otherwise dedicated for purposes of conservation of natural resources and which is reserved in an undeveloped state; or (2) Legally restricted or otherwise reserved for purposes of public recreation and where development is limited to structures and facilities essential to support public recreational usage.

GREENWAY

A corridor of protected open space managed for conservation, recreation and/or transportation purposes.

GROWTH CENTER

In Rhode Island, the term Growth Center is used to describe a compact developed area to which a community intends to direct growth. Development in and adjacent to the growth center draws development pressure away from critical or unique natural, cultural, and historic resources located outside of the growth center.

Growth centers can be divided into two categories: those that are already developed centers and those that are planned for development. They are characterized by a defined central core that provides many of the functions needed by the residents of the town and its economic region and whose built landmarks and boundaries provide a sense of place. Growth centers are generally developed with a human scale of blocks, streets and open spaces, offering easy walking and access to transit where available. Uses include commercial, office, cultural and governmental uses and a diverse housing stock. Residential densities in growth centers will be at the high end of the range of residential densities in the community. Residential density and development intensity will vary greatly among different centers, depending on the communities in which they are located,

HISTORIC DISTRICT

RI Law § 42-22.2. *One or more historic sites and intervening or surrounding property significantly affecting or affected by the quality and character of the historic site or sites, and has been registered, or is deemed eligible to be included, on the state register of historical places pursuant to RI Law § 42-45-5. These places are also eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places—Historic Districts.*

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The process of preserving part of a community, from an individual building or part of a building to a whole neighborhood (including roadways and waterways), because of its historical importance.

IMPERVIOUS SURFACE

Surface that prevents or significantly reduces the entry of water into the underlying soil, resulting in runoff from the surface in greater quantities and/or at an increased rate when compared to natural conditions prior to development. (As opposed to pervious surface.) Examples of places that commonly exhibit impervious surfaces include parking lots, driveways, roadways, storage areas, and rooftops. The imperviousness of these areas commonly results from paving, compacted gravel, compacted earth, and oiled earth.

INCENTIVE ZONING

RI Law § 45-24-31. The process whereby the local authority may grant additional development capacity in exchange for the developer's provision of a public benefit or amenity as specified in local ordinances.

INCLUSIONARY ZONING

A technique applied to housing developments (new construction or re-use projects) in which a certain portion of the units being constructed are set aside to be affordable to low- and moderate-income home buyers.

RI Law § 45-24-46.1. A zoning ordinance requiring the inclusion of affordable housing as part of a development shall provide that the housing will be affordable housing, as defined in § 42-128-8.1(d)(1), that the affordable housing will constitute not less than ten percent (10%) of the total units in the development, and that the units will remain affordable for a period of not less than thirty (30) years from initial occupancy enforced through a land lease and/or deed restriction enforceable by the municipality and the state of Rhode Island.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Development that takes place within built-up areas on under-utilized or vacant sites. Interest in infill development stems from a desire to channel development into areas that are already served by public facilities, including police, fire, utilities, schools, and transit, to make more efficient use of existing land and infrastructure.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Facilities and services needed to sustain residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and other activities. Includes public water, sewer, transportation, utilities, and fiber-optic cables.

INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

The mix and distribution of uses within a given area that determines the impact on public facilities and infrastructure and on transportation systems.

LAND USE

Land use describes how a piece of land is managed or used by human beings. Common land uses include residential, retail, industrial, recreation, institutional, and agricultural. Assigning permanent conservation status to a parcel is also a land use, as is allowing land to remain vacant or fallow.

LAND-USE PLAN

A plan which establishes strategies for the use of land to meet identified community needs.

LAND-USE REGULATION

RI Law § 45-22-2.4. *A rule or statute of general application adopted by the municipal legislative body which controls, directs, or delineates allowable uses of land and the standards for these uses.*

LAND USE 2025

The abbreviated, and more commonly used, title of Rhode Island's official land use plan. The full title is *Land Use 2025: State Land Use Policies and Plan*. It is *Element 121* in the State Guide Plan. *Land Use 2025* is the state's plan for conservation and development in the 21st century.

LEED CERTIFIED

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings.

See also: [Green Building](#)

LIFESTYLE CENTER

A shopping center with an outdoor traditional streetscape layout with sit-down restaurants and a collection of specialty retailers. Also may include entertainment, civic uses, and residential use with both outdoor and indoor centers of attraction.

LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The plan adopted by each municipal agency and approved pursuant to RI Law § 45-22.2 specifying the future development of a community.

LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID)

An innovative stormwater management approach with a basic principle that is modeled after nature: manage rainfall using design techniques that infiltrate, filter,

store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source. Instead of conveying, managing, and treating stormwater in large, costly end-of-pipe facilities located at the bottom of drainage areas, LID addresses stormwater through small, cost-effective landscape features located at the lot level, including open space, rooftops, streetscapes, parking lots, sidewalks, and medians. LID is a versatile approach that can be applied equally well to new development, urban retrofits, and redevelopment/revitalization projects.

LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING

RI Law § 45-53-3 (5). "Low or moderate income housing" means any housing whether built or operated by any public agency or any nonprofit organization or by any limited equity housing cooperative or any private developer, that is subsidized by a federal, state, or municipal government subsidy under any program to assist the construction or rehabilitation of housing affordable to low or moderate income households, as defined in the applicable federal or state statute, or local ordinance and that will remain affordable through a land lease and/or deed restriction for ninety-nine (99) years or such other period that is either agreed to by the applicant and town or prescribed by the federal, state, or municipal government subsidy program but that is not less than thirty (30) years from initial occupancy.

MAIN STREET

The generic term for, and often the official name of, the primary retail street of a village, town, or small city. It most often used in reference to retailing. In some larger cities, there may be several Main Streets, each relating to a specific neighborhood rather than the city as a whole.

Also the name of a community revitalization program begun by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the late 1970s. The Trust's Main Street Program focuses on a holistic "4-point" approach to revitalization that includes design, promotions, economic restructuring, and organization. Originally targeted at small, traditional downtowns, over the years the program has expanded to include towns of various sizes and now even includes neighborhood districts of several large urban centers.

MASTER PLAN

An overall plan for a proposed project site outlining general, rather than detailed, development intentions. It describes the basic parameters of a major development proposal, rather than giving full engineering details. Required in major land development or major subdivision review.

In other states, the term master plan is used to mean a comprehensive long range plan intended to guide growth and development of a community or region. In Rhode Island, we use the term Local Comprehensive Plan.

METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA (MSA)

A geographic entity designated by the federal Office of Management and Budget for use by federal statistical agencies. A metropolitan statistical area (MSA) is a metropolitan area (MA) that is not closely associated with another MA. An MSA consists of one or more counties, except in New England, where MSAs are defined in terms of county subdivisions (primarily cities and towns). Also referred to as the central city, consolidated metropolitan statistical area, metropolitan area, New England County Metropolitan Area, primary metropolitan statistical area, statistical entity. The Providence-Fall River, MA-Warwick MSA contains 37 of Rhode Island's cities and towns and 12 municipalities in Massachusetts. Westerly is considered part of the Norwich-New London, CT metropolitan statistical area. New Shoreham, RI is not included in the MSA.

MIXED USE

The combination of residential, commercial, and/or office uses in one zone, development or building. For example, a mixed-use building might have ground-floor space dedicated to retail or offices and upper floors with apartments or condominiums. A mixed-use district might allow residential, commercial, and retail development.

RI Law § 45-24-31. *Mixture of land uses within a single development, building, or tract.*

MIXED-USE ZONING

Zoning that permits a combination of uses. Many zoning districts specify permitted combinations of, for example, residential and office/commercial uses.

MUNICIPALITY

A political unit, such as a city or town, incorporated for local self-government. There are 39 cities and towns in Rhode Island.

NEIGHBORHOOD

The term neighborhood has many meanings and uses. For example, neighborhood can be used to refer to the small group of houses in the immediate vicinity of one's house or to a larger area with similar housing types and market values. Neighborhood is also used to describe an area surrounding a local institution patronized by residents, such as a church, school, or social agency. The concept of neighborhood includes both geographic (place-oriented) and social (people-oriented) components. These many interpretations lead to a healthy debate on what boundaries are most useful in neighborhood planning efforts. Academically, every field has a different logic for their definition. Neighborhood associations and community groups offer their interpretations. City Planning departments often designate neighborhood boundaries along census tract boundaries. And, in fact,

community residents quite frequently have a very different mental map of their neighborhood than the officially designated neighborhood areas used by planners and policymakers. All definitions are important and meaningful.

NEW URBANISM

A design-oriented movement that (a) supports communities that are town-centered and transit and pedestrian oriented, with a mix of housing, commercial and retail uses and (b) supports preserving open lands and achieving other environmental goals.

OPEN SPACE

RI Law § 45-22.2-4. *Any parcel or area of land or water set aside, dedicated, designated, or reserved for public or private use or enjoyment or for the use and enjoyment of owners and occupants of land adjoining or neighboring the open space; provided that the area may be improved with only those buildings, structures, streets, and off-street parking, and other improvements that are designed to be incidental to the natural openness of the land.*

PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED DESIGN

The arrangement of land-use activities in a way that encourages travel on foot rather than by car. Elements include compact, mixed-use development patterns with facilities and design that enhance the environment for pedestrians in terms of safety, walking distances, comfort, and the visual appeal of the surroundings. Pedestrian-oriented environments can be created by locating buildings close to the sidewalk, by lining the street with trees, by buffering the sidewalk from traffic with planting strips or parked cars, small shops, street-level lighting and signs, and public art or displays. Also called pedestrian-friendly design.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Generally zoning regulations that permit uses based on a particular set of standards of operation rather than on a particular type of use. For example, performance standards provide specific criteria limiting noise, air pollution, traffic impacts, and the visual impact of a use.

PERVIOUS SURFACE

A surface that allows water to soak into it. (As opposed to impervious surface.)

PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (PDR)

See: Development Rights, Purchase of

REHABILITATION

The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration that makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those features of the property significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural values.

RENOVATION

Modernization of an old or historic building that may produce inappropriate alterations or eliminate important features and details.

RURAL

A term generally used to describe areas characterized by agricultural land, forest and woodlands, open space, and very low-density residential development (e.g., less than one dwelling unit per acre.) Rural areas generally do not have public water or sewer service.

In *Land Use 2025*, the Rhode Island State Guide Plan's Land-Use Element, the term rural refers to the area outside the Urban Services Boundary. *Land Use 2025* calls for a "rural approach" that "acknowledges and accommodates a level of residential and recreational land use consistent with preserving the natural resources and retaining the open space character of these areas."

SCATTERED SITE

Identification of multiple key parcels in a neighborhood for development, which may or may not be adjacent to each other. Scattered site housing refers to an affordable housing development project in which the units are not located in a single location, but are dispersed throughout a neighborhood or town. The term generally involves one- to three-unit buildings

SENSE OF PLACE

Sense of place is a component of "cultural identity." Sense of place is an intensely personal response to the environment, social and natural, which the individual experiences in daily life.

SMART GROWTH

A movement that supports (1) well-planned development directed mainly toward compact, mixed-use city, town and village centers and (2) preserving open space and farmland and achieving other environmental goals. Smart growth promotes development that will lead to more transportation choices, housing choice and affordability, efficient use of infrastructure, protection of the environment, and the expansion of economic opportunity.

The term smart growth is also used to describe developments reflecting the characteristics that the smart growth movement advocates.

SPRAWL

The process in which the spread of development across the landscape far outpaces population growth. The landscape that sprawl creates has four dimensions: (1) a population that is widely dispersed in low-density development; (2) rigidly separated homes, shops, and workplaces; (3) a network of roads marked by huge blocks and

poor access; and (4) a lack of well-defined, thriving activity centers, such as downtowns and town centers.

STREETSCAPE

The environment of the public right-of-way as defined by adjacent private and public buildings and the roadway. Includes but is not limited to roadway, landscaping, streetlighting, sidewalks and street furniture.

SUBDIVISION

The process of laying out a parcel of raw land into lots, blocks, streets, and public areas. Its purpose is the transformation of raw land into building sites.

SUBURBAN

A term that describes a municipality in close proximity to a central city. Suburban municipalities are largely residential, and many are largely dependent on the city for employment and support services. Suburban municipalities are generally characterized by low-density development relative to the city, and, while they may include one or more town and village centers, they generally also include large separated areas of single-use development, such as residential subdivisions, shopping malls and industrial parks, that must be accessed by automobile.

SUSTAINABILITY

A term used to describe land use activities that meet the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

TOWN (GOV. STRUCTURE)

Rhode Island has 39 municipalities—8 cities and 31 towns, and all land in Rhode Island, with the exception of Narragansett Tribal Land, is incorporated within one of those 39 municipalities. Rhode Island's 31 towns are: Barrington, Bristol, Burrillville, Charlestown, Coventry, Cumberland, East Greenwich, Exeter, Foster, Gloucester, Hopkinton, Jamestown, Johnston, Lincoln, Little Compton, Middletown, Narragansett, New Shoreham, North Kingstown, North Providence, North Smithfield, Portsmouth, Richmond, Scituate, Smithfield, South Kingstown, Tiverton, Warren, West Greenwich, West Warwick, and Westerly. In Rhode Island, "towns" do not differ in legally authorized powers from cities. Rather, the cities and towns are primarily distinguished by the historical circumstances surrounding the incorporation of the cities. Towns in Rhode Island operate under one of the following 4 forms of government: (1) mayor-council, (2) council-manager, (3) administrator-council and (4) town council-town meeting.

See also: City

TOWN CENTER

See: Center

TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWN

See: Central Business District

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT (TND)

A term used to describe new development that uses a number of land-use strategies to promote public interaction and the use of transit, pedestrian, and other alternatives to single-occupant motor vehicles. Such developments are characterized by compact neighborhoods, where the distance from the center to the edge of a neighborhood can be walked at an easy pace in 10 minutes. Public interaction is fostered through sidewalks and the creation of parks or plazas located close to housing. Circulation systems in these developments stress returning to the grid (or modified grid) pattern to provide more direct connections within the community and narrowing roads to slow traffic. Also called Neo-Traditional Design.

TRANSECT

A framework that identifies a continuous range of habitats from the most natural to the most urban. It integrates environmental and zoning methodologies, enabling environmentalists to assess the design of social habitats and urbanists to support the viability of natural ones.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR)

See: Development Rights, Transfer of

TRANSIT (PUBLIC)

Transportation that uses any of a number of high occupant vehicle (HOV) transportation alternatives, including but not limited to fixed and flex route Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) bus service, carpools, vanpools, shuttle bus service, ferry service, and commuter rail.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

Transit-oriented development (TOD) and transit supportive development (TSD) land use planning creates an environment around a transit stop or station that supports pedestrian activities and transit use by providing a mix of uses and relatively dense residential development. This density of development encourages and enables local residents to decrease their dependence on driving by walking, accomplishing multiple errands in a single trip, and increasing their use of public transit.

UPZONING

The process of changing the zoning in an area, usually to allow greater density or commercial use. Since the term is sometimes used to mean the opposite—changing the zoning in a broad area to limit growth and density—it is important to clarify which way the term is being used.

See also: Downzoning

URBAN

A term that describes areas generally characterized by moderate and higher density residential development (5 or more dwelling units per acre), commercial development, and industrial development.

In *Land Use 2025*, the Rhode Island State Guide Plan's Land-Use Element, the term urban broadly refers to the area inside the Urban Services Boundary.

URBAN CENTER

See: Center

URBAN CORE

A term generally used in Rhode Island to refer to the state's five historic cities: Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

URBAN RING

A term generally used in Rhode Island to identify municipalities that surround the urban core. These municipalities are Cranston, East Providence, North Providence, Warwick, West Warwick.

URBAN SERVICES BOUNDARY

In Rhode Island, the term Urban Services Boundary refers specifically to the line on the *Land Use 2025* Future State Land Use Plan Map that generally denotes the boundary between the areas of the state that should be more urban in character and the areas of the state that should retain a more rural character. Areas inside the Urban Services Boundary are generally anticipated to have a high level of public service, and most particularly to have sewer and/or public water, and to be the optimum areas for accommodating the bulk of the state's development needs through 2025. Areas outside the Urban Services Boundary are anticipated to have a lower level of public services and, with the exception of potential centers, are proposed for lower intensities of development or for reservation as conservation and productive rural resource lands.

VILLAGE

A village is a group of houses, shops and other buildings that is smaller than a town. In Rhode Island there are two particularly common types of villages—the mill village and the rural village. Mill villages generally consist of a mill and a collection of houses, shops and other buildings built by mill owners to house and meet the needs of the mill workers. Some villages also include homes originally built for mill managers and owners. The land and buildings in the mill villages were originally the property of the mill owners, but over time individual buildings were sold off to private owners. Rural villages often grew up at a transportation point such as a port or the intersection of main roads. Today, many of these historic villages have

been swallowed up by urbanized areas. Nevertheless, their historic names are still commonly used to denote a general area.

Note: In some other states, a village may have a form of government. However, in Rhode Island, a village is only a place.

VILLAGE CENTER

See: Center

VISIONING

A method for defining a community's hopes and aspirations through an intensive participatory public process, resulting in a documented community vision to be used as a guide for future planning efforts.

WALKABILITY

The following factors are commonly used when judging "walkability": proximity to destinations, aesthetics of the environment, availability of sidewalks, sidewalk width, separation from traffic, the presence of other pedestrians, the condition and availability of crosswalks, street lighting, presence of street trees, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD

A place where people live within walking distance to most places they visit on a regular basis, including schools, workplaces, grocery stores, banks, retail stores, and churches. The environment is pedestrian-friendly, including the presence of continuous sidewalks, well-marked street crossings, street lamps, and physical buffers from vehicle traffic such as street trees and tree planters. A commonly accepted measure of scale for walkability is 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius from the center of the neighborhood to most amenities.

ZONING USE DISTRICT

RI Law § 45-24-31. The basic unit in zoning, either mapped or unmapped, to which a uniform set of regulations applies, or a uniform set of regulations for a specified use. Zoning use districts include, but are not limited to: agricultural, commercial, industrial, institutional, open space, and residential. Each district may include sub-districts. Districts may be combined.

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