

## Some Useful Terms Related to Neighborhoods and Schools

*Note: Italicized terms are defined further under separate headings.*

### **Adaptive Reuse**

See *Redevelopment*.

### **Alignment**

See *Zoning*.

### **Brownfield**

Technically, a brownfield is a parcel of property previously used for industrial or commercial purposes with relatively low levels of contamination that, with some degree of environmental remediation, can be made suitable for *redevelopment*. However, in more generally applied usage, a brownfield is any parcel of previously developed property. A brownfield may be compared to a *greyfield* or a *greenfield*.

### **Capital Improvement Program**

A capital improvement program (CIP) is a local government's plan for matching the cost of large-scale improvements to anticipated revenues.

### **Closure**

The closure of a school facility results in discontinuing its use, either mothballing the facility or divesting of the property. In some cases, when a facility is no longer used for a school, the district may choose *repurposing* it rather than closing it entirely.

### **Collocation**

Collocation (or multi-purposing, or joint use) is the location of two or more different functions at one facility, such as an elementary school and a community health center.

### **Conditional Use**

Conditional use is a land use that is inconsistent with current *zoning* for the location but is allowed on a discretionary or conditional basis by a *local government*.

### **Consolidation**

School consolidation is the combination or merger of one or more schools, usually related to low enrollments and/or cost savings.

### **Density**

Density refers to the ratio of dwellers or occupants to a specific land area, or to the ratio of construction units to a specific land area. In many cases, density may be related to *floor-to-area ratio*.

### **Floor-to-Area Ratio**

Floor-to-area ratio (FAR) is the total square footage of a building on all floors (building area) divided by the square footage of the property (site area). For example, an FAR of

2.0 would indicate that the total floor area of a building is two times the area of the plot on which it is constructed. In many cases, FAR may be related to *density*.

### **Future Land Use Map**

A future land use map (FLUM) is a graphic representation of recommendations for future growth patterns, depicting where certain types of land use or development should occur.

### **Gentrification**

Gentrification is a process whereby parcels of land owned or occupied by persons of relatively low income are purchased by wealthier individuals and renovated, resulting in an often marked increase in property values. Gentrification may result in *revitalization*, but negative effects of gentrification may include the displacement of certain populations and the loss of traditional neighborhood character.

### **Greenfield**

A greenfield is a parcel of agricultural or previously undeveloped land. Greenfield development may be a major factor in *urban sprawl*. A greenfield may be compared to a *brownfield* or a *greyfield*.

### **Greyfield**

A greyfield is a parcel of property previously used for retail or commercial purposes consisting largely of asphalt or other paved surfaces, usually requiring no environmental remediation to be made suitable for *redevelopment*. A greyfield may be compared to a *brownfield* or a *greenfield*.

### **Impervious Cover**

Impervious cover is any type of surface that will not allow rainfall or runoff to soak into the ground (e.g., pavement or buildings). Local ordinances may limit impervious cover in developments for environmental protection or runoff control purposes.

### **Infrastructure**

In land use planning, infrastructure refers to basic development needs such as streets, drainage, and water, wastewater, and electrical utilities. In school planning, infrastructure refers to basic service supports such as buildings, technology, and transportation.

### **Interlocal**

Interlocal refers to conditions or agreements between two or more *local governments*.

### **Joint Use**

See *Collocation*.

### **Leapfrog Development**

Leapfrog development is a type of development associated with *urban sprawl* that leaves large tracts of undeveloped or relatively undeveloped land in a scattered pattern.

## **Livability**

See *Sustainability*.

## **Local Government**

A local government is a governmental entity ranking below a national or state government. Local governments usually refer to cities and counties, but may also include school districts and other special districts or authorities.

## **Mixed-Use Development**

Mixed-use development is generally *zoning* that allows more than one category of land use in a given area. A *planned unit development* is a specific type of mixed-use development.

## **Multi-Purposing**

See *Collocation*.

## **Neighborhood School**

A neighborhood school is a public school that is typically identified with a certain neighborhood and is within comfortable walking distance from dwellings in that neighborhood. These schools often serve as centers for various neighborhood activities.

## **Neo-Traditional Planning**

See *New Urbanism*.

## **New Urbanism**

New Urbanism (or Neo-Traditional Planning) is an approach to building neighborhoods with a strong sense of place, aiming to reduce traffic congestion, increase affordable housing supply, and curb *urban sprawl*. Typical characteristics of New Urbanism neighborhoods include:

- ☞ A discernible neighborhood center, with a transit stop located at the center, and most dwellings located within a five-minute walk of the center (i.e., *transit-oriented development* or *pedestrian-scaled development*)
- ☞ A variety of housing types, such that younger and older people, singles and families, and various income levels can find places to live
- ☞ A variety of support services and offices located within each neighborhood
- ☞ *Zoning* to permit garage apartments and home businesses
- ☞ Schools close enough so that most children can walk or bike
- ☞ Small playgrounds accessible to every dwelling
- ☞ Neighborhood streets forming a connected network, dispersing traffic by providing a variety of pedestrian and vehicular routes to any destination
- ☞ Relatively narrow and tree-shaded streets to slow traffic and create a suitable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists
- ☞ Parking usually in the rear or to the side of buildings, utilizing alleyways
- ☞ Prominent sites at the termination of street vistas or in the neighborhood center reserved for civic buildings
- ☞ Active neighborhood associations and other civic groups

## **Pedestrian-Oriented Development**

See *Pedestrian-Scaled Development*.

## **Pedestrian-Scaled Development**

Pedestrian-scaled development is designed such that a person can walk comfortably from one point to another, encouraging strolling, window-shopping, and other pedestrian activities. Pedestrian-scaled development is characterized by a compatible mixture of land uses, visually aesthetic features, and convenient access to public transit. Pedestrian-scaled development and *transit-oriented development* have very similar characteristics.

## **Plat**

A plat is a map showing tracts of land, boundaries, and thoroughfares. A plat is also a map of a *subdivision* or a *site plan*.

## **Planned Unit Development**

A planned unit development (PUD) is a type of *mixed-use development* that it is a distinct departure from traditional *zoning* patterns. A PUD is specifically designed to integrate a grouping of varied yet compatible land uses, such as housing, open space and recreation, offices and commercial centers, and industrial parks, all within one contained development or subdivision.

## **Reconfiguration**

Reconfiguration (or restructuring) of a school results in changes to its programmatic offerings and/or grade level structure.

## **Redevelopment**

Redevelopment (or adaptive reuse) is changing the use of a previously developed parcel of property, or restoring a previously developed parcel of property to its prior use. Redevelopment is usually associated with the improvement or renovation of property that is in disuse or disrepair.

## **Relocation**

School relocation results in moving all or part of a school to a new or different facility.

## **Repurposing**

Repurposing (or reuse) results in some other function at a school facility. The facility may still house a school, but a different kind of school; or the facility may house some non-school function such as an administrative center.

## **Restructuring**

See *Reconfiguration*.

## **Reuse**

See *Repurposing*.

## Revitalization

In community planning terms, revitalization generally refers to bringing businesses, residents, and community activities into or back into a declining area. In school planning terms, revitalization particularly refers to increasing enrollment in schools losing that are enrollment by making them more attractive, through enhancements to facilities and/or programmatic offerings.

## School Choice

School choice refers to any number of programs allowing parents to send their children to a variety of primary and secondary schools. School choice may be based on several factors, including the academic standing or rating of schools, or the curriculum and program offerings of schools. To some, school choice is seen as a possible threat to the success or vitality of *neighborhood schools*.

## Setback

A setback is the minimum distance between construction and a lot line. A setback may also be a minimum distance between any type of development and a protected feature.

## Site Plan

A site plan is a map or drawing of a land parcel depicting property lines and current and proposed land uses, as well as a variety of other property features as may be necessary to demonstrate compliance with applicable ordinances.

## Smart Growth

Smart Growth is very similar to *New Urbanism*, but provides a distinct focus on economic concerns. As such, the term it is often seen written as \$mart Growth. Smart Growth principles include:

- ☞ Creating a range of housing opportunities and choices
- ☞ Creating walkable neighborhoods
- ☞ Encouraging community and stakeholder collaboration
- ☞ Fostering distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- ☞ Making development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
- ☞ Encouraging mixed but compatible land uses
- ☞ Preserving open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- ☞ Providing a variety of transportation choices
- ☞ Directing growth to existing urban areas
- ☞ Promoting compact urban design

Smart Growth provides economic incentives to cities; namely, preventing *urban sprawl* cuts down on *infrastructure* expansions, and helps protect the tax base by not losing taxpayers to suburban areas. Smart Growth also provides economic incentives to developers; namely, rewarding them for achieving Smart Growth goals by expediting development processes, reducing development impact fees, and providing *transfers of development rights*.

## Subdivision

As a verb, subdivision is the act of dividing a piece of land into smaller pieces or lots, usually to make them easier to sell or develop. As a noun, subdivision refers to a number of lots collectively targeted for development, usually depicted on a *plat*. Subdivision ordinances may require minimum lot sizes and a variety of other restrictions or conditions, such as provision of infrastructure or dedicated open space.

## Sustainability

“A sustainable society meets the needs of the present without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” – United Nations

Sustainability (or livability) is concerned with achieving a high quality of life for all citizens. It is a means of shaping human activity so that members of society are able to meet their needs and express their greatest potential both in the present and over the long term, while preserving both cultural and natural diversity. The major goals of sustainability include:

- ☞ Conserving natural resources and ecosystems
- ☞ Providing equitable access to education and economic gain
- ☞ Building social harmony and justice
- ☞ Promoting wise, well-planned capital investments
- ☞ Encouraging public participation in all levels of government and planning

## Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is *mixed-use development* designed to maximize access to public transport, and often incorporates features to encourage transit ridership. TOD neighborhoods typically include areas of high *density* near transportation centers. TOD and *pedestrian-scaled development* have very similar characteristics.

## Transfer of Development Rights

Transfer of development rights (TDR) are *zoning* programs that allow landowners to transfer certain development allowances from one parcel of land to another. The intent of such programs is to shift development to preferred growth areas. When rights are transferred, additional land use restrictions are imposed on the “sending” parcel, but the owner may then develop the “receiving” parcel with fewer land use restrictions than ordinarily allowed, usually resulting in a greater *density*.

## Urban Infill

Urban infill refers to the development or *redevelopment* of parcels of land already in urbanized areas as opposed to contributing to *urban sprawl*. Urban infill often results in mixed but compatible land uses and a variety of housing options. Urban infill projects may also be part of community or neighborhood *revitalization* efforts.

## Urban Sprawl

Urban sprawl is the spreading out of a city and its suburbs over rural or relatively undeveloped land at the fringe of an urban area. Residents of sprawling neighborhoods

tend to live in single-family homes and commute by automobile to work. Urban sprawl is often characterized by scattered or *leapfrog development*.

### **Zoning**

In community planning terms, zoning refers to the specification of permissible land uses. However, in school planning terms, zoning (or alignment) refers to the determination of school attendance boundaries.

### **Zoning Overlay**

A zoning overlay is a set of *zoning* requirements that places additional land use restrictions in a specified area, usually to achieve certain community goals stated in an adopted plan.