

16 Glossary

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). A dwelling unit located on the same lot as a single-family housing unit, or duplex, triplex, fourplex, townhome, or other permitted housing unit. These can be “attached” which is located within or attached to the primary unit, or “detached” which consists partly or entirely of a building that is separate from the primary unit and is on the same lot.

Affordable Housing. Residential housing for households where monthly housing costs, including utilities other than telephone, do not exceed thirty percent of the monthly income of the household. Affordable housing is typically defined with respect to different income levels based on area median income, with 80% of median income (considered “low income”) typically used as the threshold for affordable rental housing.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Act is a 1990 federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities and guarantee equal access to jobs, transportation, public facilities, and services.

Area Median Income (AMI). The household income that is assumed to be the median for a household within an area. For the purposes of housing, this is projected by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and is assumed to represent the median income for a family household of four people. With respect to these calculations, Gig Harbor is assumed to be part of the Tacoma, WA HUD Metro Fair Market Rent Area.

Best Available Science (BAS). The most up-to-date information available for planning and development decision-making, which is defined and required by the Growth Management Act as per RCW [36.70A.172](#).

Buffer. An area contiguous with a critical area that is required for the integrity, maintenance, function, and stability of that critical area.

Capital Facilities. Capital facilities are tangible assets that have a long useful life and include city and non-city operated infrastructure, buildings, and equipment. Under WAC [365-196-415](#), at a minimum, those capital facilities to be included in an inventory and analysis are transportation, water systems, sewer systems, stormwater systems, reclaimed water facilities, schools, parks and recreation facilities, and police and fire protection facilities.

Center of Local Importance (CoLI). A Center of Local Importance is designated to identify a local center or activity node that is consistent with regional and local planning. Such an area is intended to promote compact, pedestrian-oriented development with a mix of uses, proximity to diverse services, and a variety of appropriate housing options, or are otherwise located in an established industrial area.

Climate Adaptation. Actions taken to adapt to unavoidable impacts because of climate change.

Climate Change. The change in global and regional climate patterns apparent from the mid- to late-twentieth century onward and attributed to increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide from the use of fossil fuels.

Climate Resilience. The ongoing process of anticipating, preparing for, and adapting to changes in climate and minimizing negative impacts to our natural systems, infrastructure, and communities.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Comprehensive Plan, or Plan. A generalized coordinated land use policy statement of the governing body of a county or city that is adopted pursuant to Chapter [36.70A](#) RCW.

Concurrency. A state planning requirement to ensure that needed services and facilities are in place by the time development is completed and to be occupied, or that funding has been committed to provide such services within 6 years, as per RCW [36.70A.070](#)(6)(b) and WAC [365-196-840](#).

Consistency. A measure of whether any feature of the Comprehensive Plan or a regulation is incompatible with any other feature or a plan or a regulation. The Growth Management Act addresses consistency in three ways: (1) internal consistency of comprehensive plans, (2) consistency of zoning and regulations with the comprehensive plan, and (3) consistency with other jurisdictions.

Cost Burden. A measure of the percent of household income spent on housing and housing-related expenditures. Households that spend more than 30% of their gross income on housing, including utilities, are considered “cost-burdened”, while households spending more than 50% of their gross income are considered “severely cost-burdened”.

Cottage Housing. Detached residential units on a lot with a common open space that either: (a) is owned in common; or (b) has units owned as condominium units with property owned in common and a minimum of 20% of the lot size as open space.

Cottage. A detached, primary dwelling unit with a footprint of 1,000 square feet or less.

Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). Under the Growth Management Act, counties and cities are required to collaboratively develop countywide planning policies to set the general framework for coordinated land use and population planning under RCW [36.70A.210](#).

Courtyard Housing. Up to eight attached dwelling units arranged on two or three sides of a yard or a court.

Covered Employment. Employment covered under state unemployment insurance which is identified as part of labor statistics in the state. Covered employment does not typically include self-employed workers, proprietors, and other non-insured workers.

Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). An ordinance provided under city code to protect the functions and values of ecologically sensitive areas while allowing for reasonable use of private property, through the application of best available science; implement the GMA and the natural environment goals of the Comprehensive Plan; and protect the public from injury and loss due to slope failures, erosion, seismic events, volcanic eruptions, or flooding.

Critical Areas. Areas and ecosystems that require protection of resources important to the natural environment, wildlife habitats, and sources of fresh drinking water. Under RCW [36.70A.030](#)(6), there are five

types of critical areas: (a) wetlands; (b) areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water; (c) fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas; (d) frequently flooded areas; and (e) geologically hazardous areas.

Density. A measure of the intensity of residential development, usually expressed as the number of people, jobs, or housing units per acre.

Development Regulation. Controls placed on the development or land use activities including, but not limited to, zoning ordinances, critical areas ordinances, shoreline master programs, official controls, subdivision ordinances, and binding site plan ordinances.

Displacement. The relocation of current residents or businesses from their current location due to external factors. Displacement can be physical (e.g., the demolition or removal of a housing unit), economic (e.g., relocation due to rising rents), and/or cultural (e.g., ongoing displacement in a local cultural community hastened due to fewer social connections).

Duplex. Two primary attached dwelling units on a lot in any configuration intended for two separate households. Note that a single-family dwelling unit with an attached or detached accessory dwelling unit is not a duplex.

Dwelling Unit. One or more rooms located within a structure, designed, arranged, occupied, or intended to be occupied by one or more persons as living accommodations.

Easement. A grant by the property owner to the public, a corporation, or persons, of the use of land for a specific purpose and on or over which the owner will not erect any permanent improvements which serve to interfere with the free exercise of that right.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A document that identifies potential environmental impacts of a proposed project or action, as required under the State Environmental Protection Act. This can include potential impacts on earth, water resources, plants and animals, land use patterns and environmental justice, plans and policies, population and employment, housing, aesthetics, cultural and historic resources, transportation, public services, and utilities.

Essential Public Facility. Capital facilities of a countywide or statewide nature which have characteristics that make them extremely difficult to site. Essential public facilities include, but are not limited to, sewage treatment plants, reservoirs, electrical substations and transmission lines, local airport and port facilities, landfills and solid waste transfer stations, senior high schools, community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, correctional institutions, special population diagnostic or treatment facilities, opioid treatment programs (including both mobile and fixed-site medication units), recovery residences, harm reduction programs (excluding safe injection sites), and inpatient facilities (including substance use disorder treatment facilities, mental health facilities, group homes, community facilities, and secure community transition facilities), stormwater retention or detention facilities serving large drainage basins, and major transit facilities.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR). A measure of development intensity calculated as the gross building area of qualifying improvements on a site divided by the net area of a parcel of property. This is typically expressed as a decimal (not as a percentage).

Fourplex. A building consisting of four primary attached dwelling units intended for four separate households on a lot in any configuration.

Frequently Flooded Areas. Lands in the floodplain subject to a 1% or greater chance of flooding in any given year. These areas could include, but are not limited to, streams, lakes, wetlands and their associated floodplains, flood fringes or the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodway. A flood hazard area consists of the floodplain, flood fringe, and FEMA floodway.

Future Land Use. Policy designations in the Comprehensive Plan that describe use types, densities, and intensities allowed in different areas of the city.

Future Land Use Map (FLUM). A required component of the Comprehensive Plan that shows the proposed physical distribution and location of the various land uses during the planning period.

Geologically Hazardous Areas. Areas that may not be suited to development consistent with public health, safety, or environmental standards, because of their susceptibility to erosion, sliding, earthquake, or other geological events. Types of geologically hazardous areas include erosion, landslides, and seismic hazards.

Goal. A broad, general statement of the community's desired long-term future state. Goals indicate what ought to exist in the community or what is desired to be achieved in the future.

Growth Management Act (GMA). The 1990 State Growth Management Act (Chapter [36.70A](#) RCW), as amended. This statute provides the basis for much of the urban planning in the state of Washington and includes requirements for comprehensive planning for communities.

Habitat. The place or type of site where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows.

High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV). A motor vehicle with two or more people traveling in it. This may include carpools, vanpools, and transit.

Household. A group of people, related or unrelated, living within the same housing unit. This can include a person living alone, a family, or roommates.

Housing Cost Burden. A household is considered cost burdened when they spend more than 30% of their household income on housing, and severely cost burdened when that share increases to greater than 50%.

Impervious Surface. A surface that cannot be easily penetrated by water, such as buildings or concrete paving.

Income-Restricted Housing or Rent-Restricted Housing. Housing units subject to a regulatory agreement, covenant, or other legal document on the property title requiring them to be available to households that can document their incomes as being at or below a set income limit and are offered for rent or sale at below-market rates.

Infill Development. Projects that build new structures on vacant or underutilized land in areas that were previously developed, typically without demolishing existing structures.

Infrastructure. Public and private physical assets that provide services necessary to support existing and future development, such as roads, public buildings, schools, parks, transportation, water, sewer, surface water and communication systems.

Level of Service (LOS). A measure of the performance of a public facility in providing necessary functions to meet public needs and expectations.

Location Quotient. The ratio of the proportion of local employment in a sector to the proportion of regional employment in the sector.

Major Transit Stop. A stop on a high-capacity transportation system such as commuter rail stops, stops on rail or fixed guideway systems, and stops on bus rapid transit routes.

Maker Space. A collaborative work space inside a school, library, civic center, or public / private facility for artists and crafts folk to make, learn, explore, and share tools.

Manufactured Home. A structure designed and constructed to be transportable in one or more sections and built on a permanent chassis and designed to be used as a dwelling with or without a permanent foundation when connected to the required utilities that include plumbing, heating, and electrical systems contained therein.

Manufactured Housing Community. A site divided into two or more manufactured home lots for sale or lease and intended for permanent residential use.

Market-Rate Housing. Housing which is bought, sold, and/or rented in the open market with no restrictions on the purchase price or rent charged.

Middle Housing. Buildings that are compatible in scale and, form, and character with single-family detached houses and contain two or more attached, stacked, or clustered homes including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, courtyard apartments, and cottage housing.

Mixed Use Development. A project that combines more than one general category use on a site, such as residential, office, or retail. This can include “vertical” mixed-use where these uses are found in the same structure, or “horizontal” mixed-use where different uses are found in adjacent buildings on the same site.

Mode Split. The proportion of trips that use different modes of transportation.

Mode. A particular category of travel, such as walking, bicycling, driving alone, carpool/vanpool, bus/transit, ferry, or airplane.

Municipal Code or the Gig Harbor Municipal Code (GHMC). The local law of the municipal corporation of Gig Harbor, duly enacted by the proper authorities, prescribing general, uniform, and permanent rules of conduct relating to the corporate affairs of the municipality.

Multicounty Planning Policy (MPP). An official statement adopted in VISION 2050 to provide guidance for regional decision-making, as well as a common framework for countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plans.

Multifamily Housing or Apartment. A structure containing five or more attached dwelling units located on a lot.

Multimodal. Issues or activities which involve or affect more than one mode of transportation, such as transportation connections, choices, cooperation, and coordination of various modes.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). A federal permit program created in 1972 by the Clean Water Act which addresses water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants to waters of the US.

Nonconforming Use. The use of a land or structure which was lawful when established but no longer conforms to current regulations. Typically, nonconforming uses are permitted to continue, subject to certain restrictions.

Nonmotorized Transportation. Any mode of transportation that utilizes a power source other than a motor, such as bicycling or walking.

Nonpoint Source Pollution. Pollution that enters water from dispersed and uncontrolled sources (such as surface runoff) rather than through pipes.

On-Street Parking. Parking provided within the public right-of-way of a street.

Open Space. A parcel or area of land that is unimproved and devoted to the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, and/or passive or low-impact recreation.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). Subsidized, leased housing with no limit on length of stay intended for people who need comprehensive support services to retain tenancy and admissions practices that can lower barriers to entry related to rental history, criminal history, and personal behaviors. Permanent supportive housing is paired with off-site voluntary services for behavioral health and physical health conditions intended to help residents retain their housing and be a successful tenant in a housing arrangement, improve their health status, and connect them with community-based health care, treatment, or employment services.

Planned Action. A planned action is a development project whose impacts have been addressed by an Environmental Impact Statement associated with a plan for a specific geographic area before individual projects are proposed. Such up-front analysis of impacts and mitigation measures then facilitates environmental review of subsequent individual development projects.

Planning Period. The 20-year period following the adoption of a comprehensive plan, or such longer period as may have been selected as the initial planning horizon by the planning jurisdiction.

Plex. A building that consists of two to six primary attached dwelling units intended for separate households on a lot in any configuration.

Point Source Pollution. A source of pollutants from a single, identifiable point of conveyance such as a pipe. For example, the discharge pipe from a sewage treatment plant is a point source.

Policy. A principle, protocol, or proposal for action that supports a related goal. Policies are decision-oriented statements that guide the legislative or administrative body while evaluating a new project or proposed change in ordinance.

Public Facilities and Services. Facilities, infrastructure, and services that provide a specific public benefit, including sanitary and storm sewer systems, water supply, energy, public safety, and emergency services, schools, libraries, and other facilities. These facilities and services are provided by governments, contracted for or by governments, or provided by private entities subject to public service obligation.

Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC). The PSRC is a regional planning and decision-making body for growth and transportation issues in King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Under federal transportation law, the Council is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for regional transportation planning and programming of federal transportation funds in the four counties. It is also the designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization for the four counties. PSRC manages the adopted regional growth strategy, VISION 2050 (see below).

Redevelopable Land. Non-vacant parcels currently in use with structures and improvements on the site, but not considered to be at their “highest and best use”. These sites are potential locations for new projects where existing improvements on the site are demolished and new buildings and improvements can be constructed.

Regional Growth Strategy. The approach for distributing population and employment growth within the four-county central Puget Sound region included as part of VISION 2050.

Regulation. A rule or directive found in city ordinances or the municipal code that meets the public interest and need and supports the community’s framework vision, guiding principles, and goals and policies.

Right-of-Way. The right-of-way is the right to pass over the property of another. It refers to a strip of land legally established for the use of pedestrians, vehicles, or utilities.

Shoreline Master Program (SMP). Local land use policies and regulations that guide the public and private use of Washington shorelines under the State Shoreline Management Act (Chapter [90.58](#) RCW).

Single-Occupancy Vehicle (SOV). A motor vehicle occupied only by a driver.

Single-Family Attached Housing. A primary dwelling unit designed for occupancy by one household located on a lot and sharing at least one wall with another attached dwelling unit.

Single-Family Detached Housing. A primary dwelling unit designed for occupancy by one household located on a lot and not sharing any walls with other primary dwelling units.

Special Needs Housing. Housing that is provided for persons, and their dependents who, by virtue of disability or other personal factors, face serious impediments to independent living and who require special assistance and services in their residence. Special needs housing may be permanent, long term or transitional basis.

Species of Local Importance. Those species of local concern due to their population status or their sensitivity to habitat manipulation, or that are game species.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The State Environmental Policy Act, or Chapter [43.21C](#) RCW, is the state law passed in 1971 requiring State and local agencies to consider environmental impacts in the decision-making process.

Stormwater. Water that falls as rain and flows across the ground, which is typically directed to drains in an urban area to collect the water and eventually direct it to streams, lakes, or other large water bodies.

Streetscape. The physical and aesthetic characteristics of a street, including elements such as structures, access, greenery, open space, view, lighting, etc.

Townhouse. One of multiple attached primary dwelling units that extend from foundation to roof and that have a yard or public way on not less than two sides.

Transit. Motorized public transportation, including public bus, bus rapid transit, and commuter rail.

Tree Canopy. The layer of leaves, branches, and stems that provide tree coverage of the ground when viewed from above. See also urban forest.

Transitional Housing (TH). A facility that provides housing and supportive services for up to two years to individuals or families experiencing homelessness to enable them to move into independent living and permanent housing.

Transition Plan. A plan under the ADA that is required under [28 CFR 35.150](#) to outline the steps necessary to make city facilities more accessible and provide a schedule for compliance under the ADA.

Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ). A unit of geography that is typically used for transportation and utility modeling.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM). A program used to maximize travel choices for people and encourage a more efficient use of transportation systems. These strategies are meant to reduce congestion, ease traffic, and improve the range of transportation options available by encouraging carpooling, biking, public transit, or telecommuting.

Trip Generation. The number of trips made to and from each type of land use by day. Trip generation provides the linkage between land use and travel.

Trip. A one-direction movement which begins at an origin and ends at a destination, which is the typical unit of transportation planning.

Triplex. A building consisting of three primary attached dwelling units on a lot in any configuration intended for three separate households.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The federal agency responsible for housing programs. HUD sets income limits for metropolitan areas and counties across the country that determine eligibility for income-restricted housing units.

Understory. The underlying plant layer in a forest or wooded area, especially the trees and shrubs that grow under a forest canopy.

Undevelopable Land. Land unsuitable for development due to site conditions and not considered as part of the inventory of development capacity in the city.

Urban Growth Area (UGA). An unincorporated area designated under the Growth Management Act to accommodate projected growth over the next 20 years. A UGA may include areas that are provided urban services, such as sanitary sewer and water.

Urban Growth. Growth that makes intensive use of land for the location of buildings, structures, and impermeable surfaces to such a degree as to be incompatible with the primary use of land for the production of food, other agricultural products, or fiber, or the extraction of mineral resources, rural uses, rural development, and natural resource lands designated pursuant to RCW [36.70A.170](#). When allowed to spread over wide areas, urban growth typically requires urban governmental services. "Characterized by urban growth" refers to land having urban growth located on it, or to land located in relationship to an area with urban growth on it as to be appropriate for urban growth.

Urban Forest. The trees and associated understory plants existing in the city, extending across public property, private property, and the right of way including parks and natural areas, as well as the trees along streets and in yards.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). A measurement of the total miles traveled by all vehicles for a specified period. For transit, the number of vehicle miles operated on a given route, line, or network during a specified period.

VISION 2050. The long-range growth management, environmental, economic, and transportation strategy for King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties. It was adopted by the Puget Sound Regional Council in October 2020 and is endorsed by more than 100 member cities, counties, ports, state and local transportation agencies, and Tribal governments within the region.

Watershed. All the land and water that drains toward a particular river, stream, or other body of water. A watershed includes hills, lowlands, and the body of water into which the land drains.

Wetlands. Areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. Wetlands do not include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from non-wetland sites, including, but not limited to, irrigation and drainage ditches, grass-lined swales, canals, detention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, and landscape amenities, or those wetlands created after July 1, 1990, that were unintentionally created as a result of the construction of a road, street, or highway. Wetlands may include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from non-wetland areas to mitigate the conversion of wetlands if permitted by the city.

Zoning Overlay. Areas that are subject both to underlying regulations from a zoning district and additional requirements imposed by an overlay district. The overlay district provisions apply if they conflict with the provisions of the underlying zone.

Zoning. A category of land use regulations that manage the use and development of land for distinct, identified areas.