

Appendix A Glossary

Act: The State of Washington's Growth Management Act.

Affordable housing: Residential housing that is rented or owned by a person or household whose monthly housing costs, including utilities other than telephone, do not exceed 30 percent of the household's monthly income. (WAC 365-1965-210) The definition of "affordable housing" is to be developed by individual jurisdictions as part of their Comprehensive Plan Process.

Agricultural land: Land primarily devoted to the commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, or animal products or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, Christmas trees not subject to the excise tax imposed by RCW 84.33.100 through 84.33.140, [finfish in upland hatcheries](#), or livestock, and that has long-term commercial significance for agricultural production. (RCW 36.70A.030(2))

Alluvial fan: A fan-shaped deposit of sediment and organic debris formed where a stream flows or has flowed out of a mountainous upland onto a level plain or valley floor.

Annexation: The act of incorporating an area into the domain of a city.

Aquifer: A geologic formation, group of formations, or part of a formation capable of yielding a significant amount of groundwater to wells or springs. (WAC 173-160)

Built environment: Elements of the environment developed by humans, including land uses, transportation systems, and public services and utilities.

Capital Facilities Plan: A required element of the Comprehensive Plan designed to form a better match between development and provision of services. It must include an inventory of existing facilities, forecast of future needs and a six-year financing plan.

Cluster Development: Cluster Development provides the flexibility to maintain open space and plan around distinctive site features or constraints by clustering development on smaller lots than conventional development. As a result, an undeveloped tract is created, while maintaining the same overall density.

Compatible: Capable of existing together in harmony (as distinguished from "identical").

Compensation: Something given or received as an equivalent for services, debt, loss injury, etc.

Comprehensive plan: An integrated policy planning document designed to guide land use decisions, including the designation of urban growth areas, based on a consideration of land use alternatives, likely impacts, and possible mitigating measures.

Conditional use: A use permitted only after public review and approved by the Hearing Examiner, and to which special conditions may be attached by the Hearing Examiner. (Whatcom County Zoning Code 20.97.075)

Cottage industry: Small industrial, commercial, or service operations, on a parcel where the operator resides; frequently with an art or craft orientation or related to information processing or to the natural resources of the area. ~~However, it may be of any type, so long as the scale of the operation is in keeping with the surrounding area and off-site impacts are comparable in intensity to those generated by residential uses allowed in the zone. (Whatcom County Zoning Code 20.97.087) , which meets all of the criteria in Whatcom County Code 20.80.980.~~

County-Wide Planning Policies (CWPP): As required by GMA, the County Council and the City Councils of all the cities adopted a set of policies, which embody a vision for the future of Whatcom County. They are a framework intended to guide the development of comprehensive plans for each jurisdiction in the county.

Critical Areas: As defined by each jurisdiction, including at least the following areas and ecosystems: (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.

Critical facilities: ~~As defined in the Whatcom County Critical Areas Ordinance means buildings and other structures that are intended to remain operational in the event of extreme environmental loading from flood, wind, snow, volcanic activities, or earthquakes pursuant to the most current International Building Code (IBC). the definition in Whatcom County's Critical Areas Ordinance 16.16.800(19). (Ord. 97-956). These include:~~

- ~~a. Emergency Facilities
 - ~~i. Fire and police stations;~~
 - ~~ii. Tanks or other structures containing, housing or supporting water or other fire suppression materials or equipment required for the protection of essential or hazardous facilities, or special occupancy structures;~~
 - ~~iii. Emergency vehicle shelters and garages;~~
 - ~~iv. Structures and equipment in emergency preparedness centers;~~
 - ~~v. Stand-by power generating equipment for essential facilities;~~
 - ~~vi. Structures and equipment in government communication centers and other facilities required for emergency response.~~~~
- ~~b. Hazardous Facilities. Structures supporting or containing sufficient quantities of toxic or explosive substances dangerous to the safety of the general public if released.~~

~~c. Special Occupancy Structures~~

- ~~i. Covered structures where primary occupancy is public assembly;~~
- ~~ii. Buildings for schools, colleges, adult education or day care centers;~~
- ~~iii. Hospitals and other medical facilities;~~
- ~~iv. Jails and other detention facilities.~~

Current-use taxation: Taxing farm and forest lands under their current use, instead of at the higher rate appropriate to lands available for development.

Density: A measure of the intensity of development, generally expressed in terms of dwelling units per acre. It can also be expressed in terms of population density (people per acre).

Density transfer: See "transfer of development rights."

Development: Any activity that requires federal, state, or local approval for the use or modification of land or its resource. These activities include, but are not limited to, subdivisions and short subdivisions, binding site plans, planned unit developments, variances, shoreline substantial development, clearing activity, excavation, embankment, fill and grade work, activity conditionally allowed, building or construction, revocable encroachment permits, and septic approval.

Distribution pipeline: Means a pipeline other than a gathering or transmission line or as defined at 49 CFR 192.3, as-if amended.

Downzone: Reclassification from the current zone designation to one where the density of permitted development is lower.

Easement: The right, privilege, or interest that one party has in the land of another. (Dictionary of Real Estate Terms)

Essential State or Regional Transportation Facilities: The interstate highway system, interregional state principal arterials including ferry connections that serve state-wide travel, intercity passenger rail services, intercity high-speed ground transportation, major passenger intermodal terminals excluding all airport facilities and services, the freight railroad system, marine port facilities and services that are related solely to marine activities affecting international and interstate trade, and high-capacity transportation systems serving regions as defined in RCW 81.104.015.

~~**EFSEC:** Is a common abbreviation to refer to Washington's Energy Facility Siting Evaluation Council.~~

~~**FERC:** Is a common abbreviation to refer to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.~~

Forest land: Land primarily devoted to growing trees for long-term commercial timber production on land that can be economically and practically managed for

such production, including Christmas trees subject to the excise tax imposed under RCW 84.33.100 through 84.33.140, and that has long-term commercial significance. In determining whether forest land is primarily devoted to growing trees for long-term commercial timber production on land that can be economically and practically managed for such production, the following factors shall be considered: (a) The proximity of the land to urban, suburban, and rural settlements; (b) surrounding parcel size and the compatibility and intensity of adjacent and nearby land uses; (c) long-term local economic conditions that affect the ability to manage for timber production; and (d) the availability of public facilities and services conducive to conversion of forest land to other uses. (RCW 36.70A.030(8))

Gathering Pipeline: Means a pipeline that transport gas from a current production facility to a transmission or main or as defined at 49 CFR 192.3, as amended.

General aviation airport: A facility where airplanes can take off and land that is publicly owned or privately owned but used by the public. It can include a terminal, hangers and refueling facilities and other accessory uses. Aircraft landing areas used solely for personal use, agricultural use, forest management, or to serve the Eliza Island community are not general aviation airports. Airports used solely for commercial service or military use are not general aviation airports.

Geographic Information System (GIS): An automated or manual system capable of organizing, storing, analyzing and retrieving geographically related (mapped) information. It is intended to support sound decision-making regarding the management of a community's resources. Increasingly, the term is applied to computerized systems which combine digital mapping with automated land use data files.

Greenbelts/Greenways: These are undeveloped open space, natural areas, including agricultural lands, recreational lands, golf courses and other recreational uses, wildlife corridors and other similar uses.

Groundwaters: All waters that exists beneath the land surface or beneath the bed of any stream, lake or reservoir, or other body of surface water within the boundaries of this state, whatever may be the geological formation or structure in which such water stands or flows, percolates or otherwise moves. There is a recognized distinction between natural groundwater and artificially stored groundwater (RCW 90.44)

Group Home: A residence that is licensed by the state as either a boarding home or an adult family home.

Growth management: A method to guide development in order to minimize adverse environmental and fiscal impacts and to maximize the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

Growth Management Act (GMA): State law requiring jurisdictions with certain projected growth rates to prepare a comprehensive land use plan.

Impact/Mitigation fee: A payment of money imposed upon new development as a condition of approval, as defined and provided by RCW 82.02 and/or 43.21c. This fee must be used exclusively to finance improvements in capital facilities that are necessitated by the development. (CWPP)

Inclusionary Zoning: Zoning that requires developers to provide a portion of housing units in a specific project or area to meet the needs of low and moderate income people.

Incompatible: Not capable of existing together in harmony.

Incorporated area: Area inside city limits.

In-fill: The practice of using developable land that lies within a city, UGA, or developed area outside resource lands, where services are available rather than passing over such parcels in favor of land farther out or farther from available services. (CWPP)

Infrastructure: Streets, water and sewer lines, and other public facilities basic and necessary to the functioning of an urban area.

In-patient facilities: Buildings and accessory uses primarily utilized to provide health care service or medical attention, care or treatment that requires at least one overnight stay.

Interlocal agreement: An agreement intended to apply within designated Urban Growth Areas to set clear and reasonable criteria for orderly annexations, including guidelines on size and timing of annexations and urban levels of development, appropriate development standards and tax revenue sharing provisions. Participants in the agreement could include the county, any adjacent city, affected fire districts, (if applicable) and any other utility provider. (CWPP)

Level of service (LOS): An established minimum capacity of public facilities or services that must be provided per unit of demand or other appropriate measure of need. Level of service standards are synonymous with locally established minimum standards. (WAC 365-1956-210) Level of service for transportation is usually expressed as a proportion derived by comparing a roadway's current volume to its capacity. For example, the level of service of a road segment is expressed by a declining letter scale ("A" is free-flowing traffic; "F" is a traffic jam). For most other facilities, the standard is units of the facility (i.e. acres of park land, number of jail beds, square feet of office space) per 1,000 people.

Local Improvement District (LID): A defined geographical area or special district set up by ordinance to finance streets, sewers, and other public improvements that directly benefit properties in the district. The improvements are paid for by the benefited property owners over a period of time, usually 10 to 20 years.

Long-term commercial significance: Includes the growing capacity, productivity, and soil composition of the land for long-term commercial production, in consideration with the land's proximity to population areas, and the possibility of more intense uses of the land.
(RCW 36.70A.030(10))

Low Impact Development: A stormwater and land use management strategy that strives to mimic pre-disturbance hydrologic processes of infiltration, filtration, storage, evaporation and transpiration by emphasizing conservation and use of on-site natural features, site planning, and distributed stormwater management practices that are integrated into a project design. LID strategies can be applied to new development, urban retrofits, infrastructure improvements and revitalization projects to protect aquatic resources.

Low Income Housing: The federal government defines low-income housing as housing provided for individuals earning 50% or less of the average family wage of the local jurisdiction.

Master planned resort: A self contained and fully integrated planned unit development, in a setting of significant natural amenities, with primary focus on destination resort facilities consisting of short-term visitor accommodations associated with a range of developed on-site indoor or outdoor recreational facilities. A master planned resort may include other residential uses within its boundaries, if the residential uses are integrated into and support the on-site recreational nature of the resort.

Mineral resource land: Land primarily devoted to, or with the documented presence of and/or potential for, the long-term and commercially significant extraction of minerals such as precious metals, coal, sand and gravel, etc.

Mitigation: Measures taken to avoid, minimize, or compensate for adverse environmental impacts associated with a (project or non-project) land use action.

Natural Resource Lands: Natural Resource Lands include agricultural, forestry, and mineral resource lands that are not already characterized by urban growth and that have long-term significance for the commercial production of food or other agricultural products, for the commercial production of timber, and that have long-term significance for the extraction of minerals.

New fully-contained community: A development proposed for location outside of the existing designated urban growth areas, which is characterized by urban densities, uses and services and meets the criteria of RCW 36.70A.350. (WAC 365-

1956-210) The criteria include new infrastructure, traffic demand management programs, buffers, a mix of uses, affordable housing, environmental protection, development regulations, mitigation of impacts on resource lands, and protection of critical areas.

Non-compatible: See "Incompatible."

Nonconforming use: A building or ~~premises—land~~ occupied by a legally established use that does not conform ~~with~~ the regulations of the zoning use district in which it is ~~situated~~located. (Whatcom County Zoning Code 20.97.270)

Non-federal land: The areas of Whatcom County not under federal management (i.e., the areas not included in the Mt. Baker National Forest or North Cascades National Park).

One-number locator service (one-call): Means a service through which a person can notify utilities and request field marking of underground facilities.

Open space: Any parcel or area of land or water not covered by structures, hard-surfacing, parking areas and other impervious surfaces except for pedestrian or bicycle pathways.

Parcel: With regard to the agricultural protection zone, a parcel is defined as contiguous land held in the same ownership but without regard for segregation made for tax purposes. To be contiguous the land must share a common boundary on at least one side. Land is not a contiguous parcel if bisected by a public right-of-way, a Category I stream or a Category 1 or 2 wetland, or divided as part of a subdivision or exempt land division approved pursuant to Chapter 58.17 RCW or Title 21 Whatcom County Code or created after 1959 or created as a legal lot of record.

Plat: A detailed drawing of a land subdivision, recorded with the county. Along with the property lines, it may include notations of easements, rights, and restrictions.

Potable: Potable describes water that is suitable for drinking by the public. (WAC 246-290)

Productive: Capable of economically producing wood fiber or food products.

Private Utilities: Water and/or sewer service owned and operated by an entity other than a political subdivision of the federal, state or tribal governments.

Public Utilities: Water and/or sewer services owned and operated by a political subdivision of federal, state or tribal governments (includes water and sewer districts and public utility districts).

Recreation Resource Management Areas: Large undeveloped parcels with unique or attractive features where public access is maintained and unique scenic areas preserved through public ownership or private easements.

Regional Transportation Planning Organization: An organization created by the Growth Management Act to coordinate regional transportation efforts and to foster cooperation among state and local jurisdictions. The Whatcom Council of Governments has been designated as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization for Whatcom County.

Resource Based Industry: A business or industry that has a direct relationship to natural resources such as agriculture, minerals, forestry, fishing and aquaculture. This type of industry is generally located in close proximity to the resource or resource land.

Restoration: Bringing back into existence the natural functions and aesthetic character of a site, including the integrity of its surficial geology, topography, soils, hydrology, and/or vegetative regime. Within the context of threatened and endangered species goals and policies, restore or restoration means an action that improves habitat of threatened and endangered species that is:

- a. Undertaken voluntarily by the landowner; or
- b. Undertaken voluntarily by the County on county property or right-of-way, in accordance with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan; or
- c. Undertaken as a condition of a permit when the condition has been imposed pursuant to adopted regulations and there is a nexus between new development or new clearing activity and the required restoration.

Rezone: Reclassification of an area from its current zoning to a different use.

Right-of-way: A recorded right to use or travel over a specified area or strip of land. Most commonly it refers to land on which a street, sidewalk, or railroad is located. It can also be occupied by utilities, transmission lines, oil or gas pipelines, drainageways, or similar facilities, although pathways for these facilities are more commonly referred to as easements.

Rural lands: All lands which are not within an urban growth area and are not designated as natural resource lands having long-term commercial significance for production of agricultural products, timber, or the extraction of minerals. (WAC 365-1965-210)

~~**Short Term Planning Area:** Short Term Planning Areas are used as a tool for facilitating provision of urban levels of services and preventing sprawl.~~

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA): 1971 state law paralleling the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires state and local agencies to consider environmental impacts in the decision-making process. A determination of environmental significance must be made for all non-exempt projects or actions which require a permit, license or decision from a government agency. If the action

does not have significant adverse environmental impacts, a Declaration of Non-Significance is issued. If the action or project could have major impacts, an Environmental Impact Statement is required. SEPA requires consideration of alternatives and mitigation of environmental impacts for major public and private projects and programs.

Sprawl: Low-density development unfolding from the edges of cities and towns. It is unplanned, land-consumptive, automobile-oriented, and designed without attention to its surroundings.

Subarea: A geographic division of the county, created for planning purposes. There are ten subareas in Whatcom County.

Subdivision: Division of a lot, tract, or parcel of land into two or more lots, tracts, or parcels or other divisions of land for sale or development. (Black's Law Dictionary)

Sustainable: Sustainability is an economic state where the demands placed upon the environment by people and commerce can be met without reducing the capacity of the environment to provide for future generations. (Paul Hawken, *The Ecology of Commerce*)

Third-party damage: Means damage caused by a party other than the owner/operator of a utility facility or a contractor working for such owner/operator.

Title 20: Whatcom County Zoning Code.

Transfer of development rights (TDR): A program in which the unused portion of a "sending" property's zoned capacity--one of the separable rights of property--is sold to the developer of a "receiving" site, who is allowed to add the capacity to the zoned limit of that site. TDRs can be used to prevent the demolition of affordable housing units, especially in downtowns, or to protect historically significant property or open space.

Transmission pipeline: Means a natural gas or hazardous liquid pipeline that transports within a storage field, or transports from an interstate pipeline or storage facility to a distribution main or a large volume user, or operates at a hoop stress of twenty percent or more of the specified minimum yield strength or as defined at 40 CRF 192.3, as amended.

Transportation analysis zone (TAZ): Geographic area defined for transportation modeling purposes. (COG, 1996)

Unincorporated area: Area of the county outside city limits.

Urban Fringe Subarea Plan: A plan pertaining to the Bellingham Urban Growth Area and a portion of Whatcom County surrounding Bellingham. It is a plan designating the interface between urban and rural land uses. Part of the Urban

Fringe Area is included in an Urban Growth Area. Some of the area already lies within Bellingham's Urban Service Area.

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.

Urban growth area (UGA): An area designated, within which urban growth will be encouraged and outside of which growth can only occur if it is not urban in nature. Urban growth areas around cities are designated by the county in consultation with the cities; urban growth areas not associated with cities are designated by the county.

Urban Growth Area Reserves: These are areas that are adjacent and contiguous to Urban Growth Areas which appear to be suitable for future inclusion of the respective Urban Growth Area. These lands are held in reserve until it is demonstrated that they are needed for urban growth, and that consideration is given to ensuring adequate public facilities and services, reduction of sprawl, economic development, open space corridors and natural resource conservation.

Urban Level of Service: The minimum level of urban facilities and services, including sanitary sewer, water service, police protection, fire protection and emergency medical services, parks and recreation programs, solid waste management, electric service, land use controls, communication facilities and public schools, to support urban levels of development. A full range of services would add urban public transit, natural gas, storm drainage facilities, street lighting, libraries, local parks, local recreation facilities and services, and health services.

Utility corridor: Means an area where an existing utility transmission line is situated, which includes the right-of-way occupied by the existing line and areas immediately adjacent to such rights-of-way in which siting additional utility transmission lines could potentially be considered appropriate.

Visioning: A process of citizen involvement to determine values and ideals for the future of a community and to transform those values and ideals into manageable and feasible community goals. (WAC 365-1965-210)

Water association: A private corporation which distributes potable water to residential customers.

Watershed: A geographic region within which water drains into a particular river, stream or body of water.

WUTC: Is a common abbreviation to refer to the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission.

Zoning: A measure by which the community is divided up into districts or zones. In each zone there are permitted uses and special uses, as well as regulations governing lot size, building bulk, placement, and other development standards.