
GLOSSARY

Adaptive Re-use: Use of an old structure for a different purpose than originally intended, e.g. a house used as a restaurant. The purpose is to preserve the structure by finding an alternate use.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance: An ordinance that has an effect on the development process by conditioning development approval on a showing or finding that sufficient infrastructure and services are present or will be provided at the time they are required.

Affordable Housing: Non-subsidized housing (sale or rental) for people whose income is below a locally established income limit. Subsidized housing units (owned or rented) for individuals with incomes that are below a federally established income limit. Qualifying individuals pay no more than 30% of their income for rent; or if owners, pay no more than 30% of their income for principal, interest, taxes and insurance. Numbers vary based on family size. Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Ancillary: Subordinate, subsidiary, auxiliary, supplementary. An ancillary use complements a primary use such as a deli in an industrial park.

Anaerobic: Living or active in the absence of free oxygen.

Aquifer: A geological formation or structure that transmits underground water in sufficient quantity to supply pumping wells or springs.

Aquifer Recharge Area: Undeveloped or sparsely developed area where groundwater can be replenished by rainfall.

Arterial Road: A publicly owned and maintained road generally designed with restricted access and primarily intended to carry “through” traffic at 45 to 55 miles per hour.

Buffer: An undeveloped or relatively undeveloped land area, which lies between two areas which contain or may contain conflicting land uses. Intended for the purpose of reducing or eliminating harmful conflicts and screening one use from another. The buffer may include trees, plants or other devices to further shield one use from the other.

Building Excise Tax: A tax levied on different types of building construction throughout the County and Municipalities and used for the capital costs of additional or expanded public works, improvements, and facilities required to accommodate new construction or development including bridges, streets and roads, parks and recreation facilities, schools and storm drainage facilities (Source: HB 701)

Canopy: The upper branches of a stand of trees; the tallest trees in a forested area.

Capital Improvements Program: The County’s plan for future capital improvement expenditures. This plan spells out the capital facilities which the County plans to finance, including schools, libraries, parks, roads, etc.

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Cluster Development: A residential development in which dwelling units are grouped on small lots in a selected area or areas of the parent tract leaving the remaining land in natural habitat or other open space uses, including agriculture and forestry.

Commercial Use: A type of activity where goods or services are sold or traded with the expectation of profit or gain.

Critical Area: All lands and waters defined in Section 8-1807 of the Natural Resource Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. They include:

1. All water of and lands under the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries to the head of tide as indicated on the State Wetland Maps, and all State and private wetlands designated under Title 9 of the Natural Resources Article, Annotated Code of Maryland;
2. All land and water areas within 1,000 feet beyond the landward boundaries of State or private wetlands and the heads of tide designated under Title 9 of the Natural Resources Article, Annotated Code of Maryland; and
3. Modification to the areas through inclusions or exclusions proposed by local jurisdictions and approved by the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission as specified in section 8-1807 of the Natural Resource Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.

Diabase: A fine to medium-grained dark colored igneous rock that is a good source for crushed stone for road and building construction.

Easement: An interest in land owned by another that entitles its holder to a specific and limited use or enjoyment.

Agricultural Easement: An easement designed specifically to protect farmland. Landowners who sell easements retain the right to use their land for farming, ranching and other purposes that do not interfere with or reduce agricultural viability. They continue to hold title to their properties and may restrict public access, sell, give or transfer their property, as they desire.

Conservation Easement. An easement designed to limit land to specific uses and thus protect it from development.

Environmental Impact Assessment: A systematic comprehensive review process designed to identify and evaluate potential environmental impacts of a project.

Erosion: The wearing away and removal of materials of the earth's crust by natural means such as wind or water.

Fiscal: Of or relating to public revenues, public expenditures and public debt; public financial matters.

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Floodplain, 100 year: Land adjoining a water course or other water body that will be inundated to a defined height by water from a flood which has a 1% chance of occurring in any year.

Groundwater: Water beneath the ground surface in a saturated zone.

Growth Allocation: An act of the County Council, approved by the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Commission, that provides for conversion of a property or properties located in Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs) and/or Limited Development Areas (LDAs) in the Critical Area to another land management classification that may allow an increase in the permitted intensity of use.

Habitat: Place or site where animals or plants naturally live and thrive.

Impact Fee (also known as development impact fees): Assessments levied on new development to help pay for the construction of off-site capital improvements that benefit the contributing development. The standards set by court cases generally require that an impact fee meet a three part test:

1. The need for new facilities must be created by new development.
2. The amount of fee charged must not exceed a proportionate share of the cost to serve new development.
3. All fee revenues must be spent within a reasonable period of time and in proximity to the fee-paying development.

Infill: Development of unused land surrounded by already developed land.

Land Trust: A public and/or private organization with the authority to buy, accept donations, hold and/or sell interests in real property for the purpose of land and/or building preservation.

Local Historic District: A district, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in local and American history, architecture, archaeology and/or culture. A local historic district is created by a local historic overlay zoning district. Controls are created and administered by local citizens and local government.

Mitigation: Planting of new vegetation to replace those that have been removed; creation of new wetlands to replace those destroyed by development. Mitigation is often done in a different area than that previously occupied by the replacing forest, wetland, etc.

Mixed Use Development: Development characterized by a mix of residential uses, commercial uses or public facility uses in appropriate locations where the combination of uses are complementary and contribute to establishing neighborhood centers of community activity and commerce.

National Historic Landmark: District, site or structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places and considered to be of unusual importance to American history, architecture, archaeology and/or culture. Under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior. Designation does not imply local control over the listed properties.

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National Register of Historic Places: A register of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and/or culture. The Register is maintained by the Secretary of the Interior and administered by the Keeper of the National Register. Local nominations to the Register are made by the Maryland Historical Trust, a unit of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. Designation does not imply local control over the properties.

Open Space: Land that is in largely natural state with few if any buildings or other structures. Examples include passive parks, farmland and vacant land.

Performance Standards: Regulations of land use based on certain standards for such things as noise, vibrations, environmental conditions, etc.

Perk Site (percolation site): An area where the soil may be used as a medium to effectively dispose of sewage by means of the sewage effluent percolating or filtering downward through the soil. Located by a “perk test” which measures time required for water to sink through the soil.

Perpetuity: A limitation on property that is not destructible by the persons who hold an interest in the property.

Perpetual Easement: An interest in land owned by another that entitles its holder to a specific and limited use or enjoyment, which is unlimited with respect to time so long as the right is not extinguished.

Public Facilities: Public works supplied generally by a government organization. Examples include: public roads, schools, water and sewer facilities, fire stations and libraries.

Purchase of Development Rights: PDR programs utilize public funds to purchase the development potential from privately held land. Typically, the landowner voluntarily sells the development rights and receives compensation for the development restrictions placed on the land in the form of a conservation easement. Title remains with the land and can be transferred although use of the land may be limited to farming or open space.

Recreation: Passive recreation facilities include mostly undeveloped land, natural areas for hiking, camping, hunting and fishing. Active recreation facilities include developed areas such as ball-fields, boat-ramps, equestrian facilities, golf courses, tennis courses and swimming pools.

Reservation of Development Rights: A legal agreement describing the minimum open space requirement. The agreement restricts future development of any residential commercial or industrial buildings, structures, or uses, excluding agricultural buildings or structures.

Right-to-farm Act: A State or local act that offers protection to farmers against nuisance suits. Localities are prevented from enforcing nuisance ordinances that would disrupt normal farm practices.

Roads: An open, generally public way for the passage of persons, vehicles and animals.

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Septic System: Subsurface sewage disposal system that uses the natural absorption of soil to treat wastewater. The common use is to serve one dwelling, but could be designed to serve several dwellings. Drainfield refers to the soil absorption fed by pipes from the dwelling.

Setback: The distance from a property line to a structure or use such as parking. Governed by the Zoning Ordinance or by covenants and/or easements or conditions at the time of rezoning.

Site Plan: A plan, to scale, showing proposed uses and structures for a parcel of land. It includes such information as location of lot lines, streets, buildings, parking areas, landscaping, utility lines, reserved open space, topographic information and environmental features.

State Priority Funding Area (PFA): Existing communities and other locally designated areas, consistent with the 1992 State Visions, where the State and local governments want to encourage and support economic development and new growth.

Street: A public thoroughfare in a city or town, usually including the sidewalk lining one or both sides.

Strip Development: A development pattern characterized by a string of houses and/or businesses, each with access to the highway. Strip commercial refers to the practice of lining major streets with commercial development rather than grouping commercial development in clusters.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): Transfer of Development Rights programs are used to transfer the development potential from certain types of land, such as resource lands, targeted greenways, or agriculture lands to areas designated for growth.

Transportation Level of Service (LOS): A measure describing the operational conditions within a traffic stream. A level-of-service definition generally describes these conditions in terms of such factors as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort and convenience, and safety.

Wetlands: Areas inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater sufficient to support vegetation adapted for life in saturated conditions. Includes but is not limited to swamps and marshes. Many wetlands do not appear wet at all times.

Working Lands: Working land is privately owned cropland, rangeland, pasture, and forest.

Zoning District: A classification of land that designates and limits allowed uses, lot sizes, building setbacks and other land development regulations.

Zoning Ordinance: A local ordinance that defines and implements land use and design standards such as permitted uses, lot sizes, setbacks, etc.