

Glossary

A

Adverse Impact	A negative consequence to the physical, social, or economic environment resulting from an action or project.
Air Quality	A description of healthiness and safety of the atmosphere.

B

Bicycle Lane	A corridor expressly reserved for bicycles, existing on a street or roadway in addition to any lanes for use by motorized vehicles.
Buffer	A portion of property designated to mitigate impacts between land uses or transportation routes, or to protect water features from pollutants.

C

Census	The official decennial enumeration of the population conducted by the Federal government.
Commercial	A land use classification that permits facilities for the buying and selling of commodities and services.
Comprehensive Plan	The overall development plan for the community which has been officially adopted to provide long-range development policies including all specified individual elements thereof among which are the plans for land intensities,; land subdivision; circulation; and community facilities, utilities and services.
Conservation	The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect.
Conservation Subdivision	A housing development in rural areas that is characterized by compact lots and common open space, where the natural features of the land are preserved to the greatest extent possible. Typically, environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands, floodplains and steep slopes, are set aside in conservation areas, while lots are reduced in size and arranged to fit in less sensitive areas.

D

dB	The decibel (dB) is the unit used to measure the magnitude or intensity of sound. It uses a mathematical scale to cover the large range of sound pressures that can be heard by the human ear. A 10-dB increase will be perceived by most people to be a doubling of loudness.
Density	The number of dwelling units per gross acre, except in the case of a conservation subdivision, where the net area shall be used.
Density, Residential	The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. Densities may be expressed in units per gross acre or per net developable acre.
Developer	(a) The person, firm, corporation, or legal entity that has financial, or operational control over land-disturbing activity; or (b) The person, firm, corporation, or legal entity in possession or control of the land when he directly or indirectly allowed the land-disturbing activity, has benefited from it, or has failed to comply with any provisions of the Unified Development Ordinance.

Development	Any human caused change to improved or unimproved real estate that requires a permit or approval from any agency of the City or County of Durham, including but not limited to, buildings or other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations and storage of materials.
Development Rights	The right to develop land by a land owner who maintains fee-simple ownership over the land or by a party other than the owner who has obtained the rights to develop. Such rights usually are expressed in terms of density allowed under existing zoning.
Division of Water Quality	A functional component of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources.
DNL	The average annual sound level, in decibels, computed on the basis of a 24-hour period with a 10-dB penalty for sound occurring between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. to account for the greater intrusiveness of noise during late night or early morning hours.
Dwelling Unit	Rooms used for human habitation containing independent cooking, sleeping and toilet facilities; excluded are boarding houses, hotels, and dormitories.

E

Easement	A grant by a property owner for use by the public, a corporation or persons of an area of land for specific purposes.
Easement, Conservation	A tool for acquiring open space with less than full-fee purchase, whereby a public agency buys only certain specific rights from the land owner. These may be positive rights (providing the public with the opportunity to hunt, fish, hike, or ride over the land), or they may be restrictive rights (limiting the uses to which the land owner may devote the land in the future.)
Environment	The physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance.”
Erosion	The wearing away of land surface by the action of wind, water, gravity or any combination thereof.

F

Family	One or more individuals residing in a dwelling unit, living as a single housekeeping unit, and complying with the following rules: (a) Any number of individuals related by blood, marriage, or adoption may occupy a dwelling unit. (b) Where some or all of the occupants are unrelated by blood, marriage, or adoption, the total number of occupants that are unrelated shall not exceed three. In applying this provision, children who are under the age of 23 and who are children of the owner or a person renting an entire dwelling unit from the owner, shall be counted as a single occupant. In addition, in all cases, the limitation set out in subsection (c) below shall apply. (c) The presence of household employees or children in foster care shall not disqualify any premises otherwise satisfying the above rules.
Flood, 100-Year	The magnitude of a flood expected to occur on the average every 100 years, based on historical data. The 100-year flood has a 1/100, or one percent, chance of occurring in any given year.

Floodplain

The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream regularly subject to flooding. That part of the floodplain subject to a one percent chance of flooding in any given year is designated as an "area of special flood hazard" by the Federal Insurance Administration.

Future Land Use Map

A map of the community, adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan, showing desirable patterns of future land use in color and used to guide the location and character of new development.

G

Goal

A general, overall, and ultimate purpose, aim, or end toward which the City and County will direct effort.

Growth Management

The use by a community of a wide range of techniques in combination to determine the amount, type, and rate of development desired by the community and to channel that growth into designated areas.

H

Highway

A high-speed, high-capacity, limited-access transportation facility serving regional and county-wide travel. Highways may cross at a different grade level.

Historic Building or Site

A historic building or site is one which is noteworthy for its significance in local, state, or national history or culture, its architecture or design, or its works of art, memorabilia, or artifacts.

I

Impact

The effect of any direct man-made actions or indirect repercussions of man-made actions on existing physical, social, or economic conditions.

**Implementation
Infrastructure**

Actions, procedures, programs, or techniques that carry out policies. Public services and facilities, such as sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems, public safety facilities, libraries, schools, and roads.

Issues

Important unsettled community matters or problems that are identified in a community's general plan and dealt with by the plan's goals, objectives, and policies.

J

K

L

Land Use

The occupation or utilization of land or water area for any human activity or any purpose defined in a land use plan.

M

N

O

Objective	A specific statement of desired future condition toward which the local government will expend effort in the context of striving to achieve a broader goal. An objective should be achievable and, where possible, should be measurable and time-specific
Office Use	The use of land by general business offices, medical and professional offices, administrative or headquarters offices for large wholesaling or manufacturing operations, and research and development.
Open Space	Areas of a development that allow for light, air, wildlife habitat, and for scenic and recreational use. Also included are areas designed to enhance the privacy or general appearance of a development. Private open space is open space that is owned by a corporation, individual, or house owners association. Public open space is open spaced owned by a governmental jurisdiction.
Overlay	A zoning designation on a zoning map that modifies the basic underlying designation in some specific manner.

P

Parks	Open space lands whose primary purpose is recreation.
Policy	A specific statement of principle or of guiding actions which implies clear commitment but is not mandatory. A general direction that a governmental agency sets to follow, in order to meet its goals and objectives before undertaking an action program. (See “Program.”)
Program	An action, activity, or strategy carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve a specific goal or objective. Policies and programs establish the “who,” “how” and “when” for carrying out the “what” and “where” of goals and objectives with new development to the users of the infrastructure on the basis of projected use.

Q

R

Recreation, Active	Leisure activities usually of an organized nature, often performed with others and often requiring equipment, taking place at prescribed places, sites, or fields.
Recreation, Passive	Recreational activities that do not require a developed site. This includes such activities as hiking, horseback riding, and picnicking.
Regional	Pertaining to activities or economies at a scale greater than that of a single jurisdiction, and affecting a broad homogeneous area.
Residential	Land designated for buildings consisting only of dwelling units.
Residential Development	Any development that is comprised in whole or in part of dwelling units designed for long-term human habitation.
Residential, Multiple Family	Usually three or more dwelling units on a single site, which may be in the same or separate buildings.
Residential, Single-family	A single dwelling unit on a building site.
Rezoning	An amendment to the map and/or text of a zoning ordinance to effect a change in the nature, density, or intensity of uses allowed in a zoning district and/or on a designated parcel or land area.

S

Sewer	A system of subterranean conduits which carries refuse liquids or waste matter to a plant where the sewage is treated.
Single-Family	A house designed for, or occupied exclusively by, one family. Not to include manufactured housing.
Site	A parcel of land used or intended for one use or a group of uses and having frontage on a public or an approved private street. A lot. (See "Lot.")
Standards	A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. Requirements in a zoning ordinance that govern building and development as distinguished from use restrictions. For example, site-design regulations such as lot area, height limit, frontage, landscaping, and floor area ratio.
Storm Water	Surplus surface water generated by rainfall that does not seep into the earth but flows overland to flowing or stagnant bodies of water.
Subdivisions	All divisions of a tract or parcel of land into two or more lots, building sites, or other divisions for the purpose of sale or building development (whether immediate or future) or any division of land involving the dedication of a new street or a change in existing streets.

T

U

Urban Growth Area	Those portions of Durham, Orange, and Wake Counties indicated in the Comprehensive Plan which are expected to receive urban services and to develop an urban character over the next 20 to 30 years and are not within the Rural Tier.
Use	The purpose for which a building, structure, or area of land may be arranged or occupied or the activity conducted or proposed in a building, structure, or on an area of land.

V

Water Quality	A term used to describe the biological, chemical and physical characteristics of water and its general composition. These attributes affect water's ability to sustain life and its suitability for human consumption.
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W

Watershed	All of the land area draining to a particular point on a water course or to a water body.
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X

Y

Z

Zone, Overlay

A special purpose zone, which is superimposed over the regular zoning map. Overlay zones are used for a variety of purposes, such as airport compatibility, floodplain or wetlands protection, historic designation, or special parking regulations.

Zoning

The division of a city or county by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that implements policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Zoning District

A designated section of the city or county for which prescribed land use requirements and building and development standards are uniform.