

GLOSSARY OF COMMON LAND USE TERMS

Annexation - The process of expanding the city boundaries to bring adjacent territory under the jurisdiction of the city. Under Washington law, a city shall not annex land located outside the Urban Growth Area boundary.

Annual Review - The City of Vancouver's program for annual consideration of site-specific Comprehensive Plan map changes from property owners, or other map or text changes to the Comprehensive Plan. The program follows the state Growth Management Act requirements that such proposals be evaluated cumulatively, once per year. See **Comprehensive Plan Amendment**.

Capital Facilities Plan - An element of a Comprehensive Plan specifying the cost and funding sources for those facilities (such as streets, water, sewer, parks) required to serve development that is projected to occur within a specified period of time (typically six years), and over the 20-year period of the Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan - A multi-volume document consisting of maps, charts, and text which contains the City of Vancouver's policies regarding long-term development. The Comprehensive Plan has chapters addressing community development, economic development, housing, environment, public facilities and services, annexation and implementation. It also adopts another of other policy documents by reference, including subarea and district plans, the City's annual Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), the Transportation System Plan, and other facilities and service plans. The **Comprehensive Plan Map** shows the geographic pattern of land use as defined in the Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan Amendment - The reclassification of land from one Comprehensive Plan designation to another, or changes to the text of a Comprehensive Plan. Under current State law, Comprehensive Plan amendments may only be considered once each year.

Comprehensive Plan Map - See "Comprehensive Plan"

Community Framework Plan - A planning document adopted in 1993 by Clark County and its respective municipalities establishing the basic policy direction for guiding growth within the region.

Conditional Use - A use that because of its potential adverse land use impacts may be permitted in a particular zoning district only when subject to conditions intended to mitigate those impacts and after review at a public hearing.

Concurrency - The concept of requiring that public facilities and services (roads, sewers, parks, etc.) necessary to serve new development be in place at the time development occurs or be planned to be in place within six years. A key feature of the Growth Management Act (GMA).

Critical Areas - Defined by the Growth Management Act (GMA) as wetlands, frequently flooded areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, geologic hazard areas, and areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers providing potable water (commonly

referred to as *critical aquifer recharge areas*). GMA requires that critical areas be designated and protected via development regulations. The first four are designated and protected under VMC 20.740, Critical Areas Protection. Critical aquifer recharge areas are designated and protected under VMC 14.26, Water Resources Protection.

Down zoning - Changing a zoning designation from one allowing more intensive uses to one allowing less intensive uses (e.g. changing a multi-family residential designation to single family residential designation). See “Upzoning”

Easement - A right to use, for a specified purpose, a particular piece of land owned by another.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - A document analyzing the potential environmental impacts associated with a proposed plan, development action or regulation. Required by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

ESHB 1724 - State of Washington legislation passed in 1995 requiring jurisdictions to streamline development review procedures and process development applications in accordance with a State-mandated timeline. Also known as the Regulatory Reform Act.

Ex-Parte Contact - In a quasi-judicial land use case, any contact outside of the public hearing between a member of the decision-making body and someone wishing to directly or indirectly influence the outcome of the case.

Growth Management Act - GMA was enacted in 1990 by the Washington State legislature. The Growth Management Act requires that fast-growing cities and counties coordinate with one another in comprehensive land use planning. The main goals of this Act include encouraging development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner, protecting sensitive and natural resource lands, and reducing sprawl.

Public Hearing - A formal proceeding before a Hearings Examiner or the Planning Commission during which a land use proposal is considered.

Hearings Examiner - An appointed public official who conducts public hearings and renders decisions on specific types of land use cases.

Neighborhood Action Plans - Area-specific plans for City-recognized neighborhood associations_Used as a guide for land use decisions within each neighborhood.

Planned Action - is a SEPA process that front-loads the environmental review for certain large projects, allowing individual developments within the project to be permitted without further environmental review. Planned actions may be undertaken for master-planned or phased projects and subarea plans, among others. An EIS is required and the planned action must be adopted by ordinance.

Planned Unit Development - A type of residential subdivision in which some flexibility in development standards is permitted in order to provide common open space and other amenities.

Planning Commission - A body of seven citizens appointed by the City Council and charged with studying and advising the City Council on land use issues.

Setback - The placement of a building a specified distance away from a property line, other structure or other feature.

Shoreline Management Act - The Shoreline Management Act was enacted in 1971 by the Washington State legislature. It requires jurisdictions to adopt plans and development regulations protecting sensitive shoreline areas while providing for economic development and public access. The City of Vancouver's Shoreline Master Program was first adopted in 1975.

Short Plat or Short Subdivision - The division of one parcel of land into two, three, or four parcels. This division of land is governed by a body of state and local law known as "subdivision law" and generally requires certain improvements to be made on the land in preparation for development.

Standing - Individuals with "standing" are legally entitled to initiate a legal action. For example in land use, people who are entitled to appeal a decision made by a Hearings Examiner would be said to "have standing."

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) - Washington State environmental law requiring jurisdictions to determine whether there are any "probable significant adverse environmental impacts" associated with proposed development activities. This determination may or may not lead to the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).

Subarea Plan - A plan for an area smaller than the entire city that implements the comprehensive plan and addresses issues unique to the area. It may revise zoning regulations for the area as well.

Subdivision - The division of a single parcel of land into at least five parcels. This division of land is governed by a body of state and local law known as "subdivision law" and generally requires certain improvements to be made on the land in preparation for development.

Up-zoning - Changing a zoning designation from one allowing less intensive uses to one allowing more intensive uses (e.g., changing from single family residential to multi-family).

Urban Growth Boundary - See "Urban Growth Area"

Urban Growth Area - An urban growth area includes a city and land around it that is characterized by or planned for urban development over the comprehensive planning horizon (20 years). Land outside urban growth areas is to remain rural in character. The extent of an urban growth area is identified by the **urban growth boundary**. GMA requires counties to establish UGA boundaries, and update them based on new growth forecasts at least every 10 years. Land outside the urban growth boundary that has been identified and planned for urban development beyond the initial 20-year comprehensive planning horizon is known as the **Urban Reserve**.

Urban Reserve - See "Urban Growth Area"

Variance - A deviation from the strict application of development standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance. A public hearing is necessary for approval of a variance.

Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board - A review authority established by the State to determine the adequacy of Comprehensive Plans and regulations prepared by each jurisdiction planning under the Growth Management Act.

Zone Change or Rezone - The reclassification of land from one zoning designation to another. A corresponding Comprehensive Plan amendment may or may not be required. A zone change not requiring a corresponding Comprehensive Plan amendment may be processed at any time of year. Zone changes with Comprehensive Plan amendments may be considered only once each year, via the Annual Review Process

Zoning Map - A map that shows the locations of zoning districts.