

## Glossary of Key Land Use Planning Terms

### A

#### **Access to the Region's Core (ARC) Tunnel – or Mass Transit Tunnel (MTT)**

A project now underway to build a new rail tunnel under the Hudson River between New Jersey and Manhattan. It is the region's top transit priority. (Source: North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority) The Tunnel will double transit capacity on most of New Jersey's rail lines, accessible to almost 70% of the state's population.

#### **Affordable Housing**

Housing for which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities. (Source: HUD) *Also defined as housing for those making up to 80% of the median income of a specific county.*

### B

#### **BRT (Bus Rapid Transit)**

A system that allows bus vehicles to operate on a right-of-way that is largely separated from other types of traffic. (Source: North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority)

#### **Brownfields**

Abandoned, idle, or under-used properties where use, expansion or redevelopment is complicated by environmental contamination that can make redevelopment financially or logistically prohibitive. (Source: North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority)

### C

#### **Comprehensive Plan (also called Master Plan)**

The official public document adopted by a community as the policy guide for decisions about its future development and redevelopment. It consists of a vision for the community, background data, goals, policy statements, standards and programs for guiding the physical, social and economic development of a community. (Source: Sierra Club North Star Chapter)

### D

#### **Density Bonus**

*An increase in density (as measured in dwelling units per acre or floor area ratio) that the developer is granted above what is otherwise permitted under the zoning on that piece of property. Bonuses are often given as an incentive to cluster to save open space, build affordable housing or provide some other public benefit.*

### E

#### **Economic Growth**

The growth in jobs that signals the economic base of a region is strong or strengthening.

#### **Eminent Domain**

The authority to take private property for a public purpose upon payment of just compensation. (Source: Sierra Club North Star Chapter) *This is an example of a **police power** given to governments to **take** private property.*

## F

### **Fair Share**

This term comes from the New Jersey Supreme Court's 1975 *Mt. Laurel* decision, which interpreted the New Jersey Constitution to mean that a police power such as zoning could only be used by government to promote the general welfare. The Court decided that evidence that local government was doing that would be provided by zoning that could be demonstrated would allow a reasonable "fair share" of the region's need for affordable housing

## G

### **Growth Management (Smart Growth)**

The use by a community of a range of techniques to determine the amount, direction, rate and type of growth desired and to channel that growth into designated areas. (Source: Sierra Club North Star Chapter)

## H

### **Home Rule**

Doctrine found in some state constitutions, which grants cities, towns, counties or other forms of local government the right to enact legislation on any matter that does not directly interfere with state law. (Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission). *Home Rule is often held responsible for the fragmentation of government actions and the inability to create a competitive, equitable and sustainable state.*

## I

### **Inclusion**

Inclusion means having a "seat at the table" when decisions are made about your future. This empowerment is expected to provide disenfranchised people with equal access to good jobs, safe neighborhoods and performing schools within a region. Inclusion leads to **regional equity**.

### **Inclusionary Zoning (IZ), Inclusionary Development**

*Zoning that requires a percentage or 'set-aside' of the housing units in an otherwise market-rate development to be deed-restricted as affordable to specified household income categories. In practice, this is less about the zoning than it is about the private sector being required to build some affordable housing. A density bonus is often, but not always, added to IZ as compensation for the cost of subsidizing the housing.*

## L

### **Land Use**

*The way in which land is developed, preserved, or constrained. Land uses are the industrial, commercial, retail, residential, utilities, infrastructure and public facilities, and other development that is represented by buildings and infrastructure. Preserved land is that which has been purchased as parks, protected farmland or open space or places*

*set-aside for active or passive recreation. Constrained land is land that has sensitive environmental features that have been protected from development by statute – wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, etc.*

## M

### **MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization)**

Under federal legislation, MPOs plan all federally funded transportation investments and serve as a forum where local officials, public transportation providers and state agency representatives can come together and cooperatively plan to meet a region's current and future transportation needs. (Source: North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority)

### **Mixed-Use Development (MXD)**

Development that is created in response to patterns of separate, *low-density* uses that are typical in suburban areas. Mixed-use developments include residential, commercial, and business uses in one – *usually walkable* – area. (Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission).

## N

### **NIMBY**

NIMBY is an acronym for “Not in My Back Yard”, which refers to opposition by nearby residents to development that they perceive to be undesirable. NIMBY sentiment sometimes leads to the derailment of plans to build affordable homes. (Source: Center for Housing Policy). *Also a cause of the failure to add or redevelop at higher density, mixed-use and/or mixed-income developments.*

## P

### **Police Power**

The legal authority to enact legislation and implement programs to protect the public health, safety and welfare. (Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission). *Usually applied to powers over private land, such as **eminent domain** or **zoning**.*

## R

### **Regional equity**

*Using public plans, regulations and investments to ensure that access to opportunities (jobs, housing, transportation, good schools, etc.) is equally available throughout a region, and that within a region, there are no places of concentrated poverty, no disparities among communities, and no racial or economic segregation.*

## S

### **Set-Aside Requirements**

*The percentage of units in a development that must be provided as affordable housing under a **fair share** or **inclusionary** program. For example, a “20% set-aside” means a developer is required to construct one affordable unit for every four market-rate units within a proposed development.*

### **Sprawl**

The outward expansion of suburbs characterized by low-density and *separated*

residential and commercial development, unchecked land development, and dominance of transportation by autos. (Source: North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority)

### **Sustainability**

*Environmental protection, economic opportunity and community well-being are pursued as equally important goals. Today, it is often used to refer primarily to reducing energy and natural resource consumption and avoid the impact of climate change.*

## **T**

### **Transit Oriented Development (TOD)**

Compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development near bus and rail stations that serves housing, transportation, and neighborhood goals. (Source: North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority). *If the transit service is not yet there, the development can be considered “transit ready”.*

## **W**

### **Workforce Housing**

*Generally defined as housing affordable to people making hourly wage or salaries, not those with financial assets. Specifically defined sometimes as 110%, 115% or 120% percent **or less** of the median income of a county.*

## **Z**

### **Zoning**

The division of a community (city, township or county) by local legislative regulation into areas or zones that implement the comprehensive plan. (Source: Sierra Club North Star Chapter) *Considered a **police power**, like **eminent domain**, and must be applied only to advance the general welfare.*

*NOTE: Definitions have been edited by PlanSmart NJ. The sources are noted. The source of definitions in italics are from PlanSmart NJ. .*