Glossary

aesthetic - pleasing to the senses; a pleasing appearance.

Anywhere, U.S.A. – where the built environment contains primarily franchise businesses and franchise architecture.

architecture or architectural style – the exterior design and shape of a building, including roof line, windows, etc. An ‘architecturally compatible building’ blends well with nearby buildings and the natural landscape.

best management practices (BMPs) - specific land and water management activities that are practical, affordable, and protect ecological health; also called “conservation practices.”

big-box design – large box-shaped buildings with little or no architectural detail or color. Typically part of a chain of stores, called a franchise, built across the region or country.

biodiversity – diversity of plants, animals, and other life-forms.

BMP – see Best Management Practices.

brownfields - polluted industrial sites no longer used.

buffer - vegetation maintained along a stream or lakeshore to protect water quality by filtering sediment and contaminants from runoff before it reaches the water. Buffer zones are an example of a best management practice. Vegetation may also be used as a visual screen to block less-pleasing views and reduce noise.

built environment - structures such as buildings, roads, bridges, and other forms of construction which are not part of the natural environment.

cluster development – where houses are built close together, rather than on large single lots, so that a large space can be set aside for recreational use, scenic views, farming or forestry.

cultural character – features, both natural and man-made, which reflect the community's history and unique “personality.”

developer – a person who earns money by constructing new housing, shopping centers, and other buildings or renovates existing structures.

development - a tract of land with homes, businesses, or other structures built on it.

ethics - a guiding philosophy or set of values.

exotic plants or exotic landscaping – using plants that are not native to the local area.

façade – materials that cover the exterior of a building.

franchise – the same store, often built to look exactly the same, located in multiple locations across the region or country; may be called a ‘chain of stores.’

commercial – used for business and profit-making.

common good - what is best for most of the people affected.

congestion - crowding with automobile traffic or lots of people.

contaminants – unnatural or unwanted substances, often caused by human activities, that may damage or kill plants, wildlife, or humans, or upset the natural balance in an ecosystem. Occasionally contaminants may be naturally caused by the geology, such as high uranium or selenium in the water.

consensus - a general agreement of those concerned.

conservation easement – a way for private property owners to voluntarily protect their land from certain specified future uses. An easement needs to be held by a unit of government, a local land conservancy, or other organization that will enforce the easement in perpetuity.
**franchise architecture** – where the same design is used for all of the restaurants, hotels, etc. owned by the same company.

**habitat fragmentation** – where there are no longer continuous connections between forests and fields for wildlife to travel through and use for food and shelter.

**historic resource** - old structures or other physical features which reflect the history of a community and can act as a resource both culturally and economically through tourism.

**impervious surface** – impermeable, water does not pass through.

**interjurisdictional** - more than one governmental unit has control over different aspects of the same decision.

**incentives** - encouragement through recognition, peer pressure, or economics to act in a certain way.

**industrial** - relating to industry or the production of goods.

**infrastructure** – all of the support systems needed to provide public services including police, fire protection, drinking water, wastewater treatment, roadways, etc.

**landscaping** – combination of living plants (trees, shrubs, flowers, grass) and nonliving materials (rocks, fences, etc.) placed around a home or building to make it more attractive.

**land use** – ways that humans use the land, such as for homes (residential), businesses (commercial), industry, agriculture, and recreation.

**land use plan** – a guide, adopted by a local government or other group, for how land within a specific area should be used.

**macroinvertebrate** – an animal without a backbone that is generally visible to the unaided eye. Some species are used to indicate water quality of streams and lakes.

**master or comprehensive plan** – a plan for a community which states the community’s intentions for land use, natural resource preservation, economic development, housing, and infrastructure.

**median** – strip of pavement or vegetation that divides a street or highway.

**native plant species** – species of plants or animals that lived in the area before humans settled there.

**natural character**- the landscape that is typical to an area.

**nonpoint source pollution** – pollution from a variety of sources that runs off over a large area, rather than from a specific pipe.

**off-premise advertising** – when a business puts up a sign away from the actual business, such as billboards, to attract customers.

**open space** – an area that is not built upon, that may be vegetated or man-made (i.e. playground).

**ordinance** – a local law adopted by a town, city or township that guides the type of activity or behavior allowed.

**perennial** – plants that come up each year without being planted. All trees and shrubs are perennial. Annual plants must be planted from seed each year.

**pervious** – permeable, water can infiltrate through.

**plan view** – birds-eye view of a site looking down from above.

**point source** – polluted water that is discharged through a pipe to a lake, stream, or groundwater.

**pollution** – substances in the water that can cause harm to plants, animals, or people.

**regulation** – a rule enforced by a government agency or other authority that guides the type of activity or behavior allowed.
renovation – to improve a building so that it is functional, although it may have lost its original historic appearance.

residential – area where land is used for housing.

restoration – improving a building, through repair and alteration, so that it can be used while still preserving those features of the property which are significant to its history, architecture and cultural value.

runoff – rain or snowmelt that runs off across the land to a body of water.

rural – in the country, away from the densely populated city. Homes are spread out, low population density, often with farms and forested land.

screening – structure or planting to conceal from public view

sense of place – the special qualities of a place that make it feel like home.

site plan – a drawing to scale of a site including buildings, structures, property boundaries, and roads.

sprawl - linear “strip” of development along roadways leading to a community. Common characteristics of sprawl development include: excessive signage, limited landscaping, uncoordinated architecture, and designed for only vehicular access. Sprawl can be a collection of shopping centers, strip malls, fast food places, and homes.

streetscape – the view one sees looking down a street.

subdivision – a planned housing development located away from a community’s downtown, on same-sized lots, and separated from a main road. Often, the homes look very similar.

suburb or suburban – area outside of a city with less dense population and less development, separating urban and rural areas.

stewardship – caring for natural resources

swale – a low area in the landscape where water flows.

turbidity – cloudiness in the water caused by tiny suspended particles of soil or other debris.

urban - where development is more dense, as in a city.

viewshed - all that can be seen from a specific point, including the natural landscape and built environment.

vista – view

visual corridor – the view along a road or other transportation route.

visual character – those aspects of the natural and built environment that are unique to an area.

visual clutter or visual pollution – a collection of objects that fills one’s view, including large, unattractive signs, billboards, excessive power lines, and mismatched development.

watershed – land area that drains water to a lake, river or stream.

zoning – ordinances or regulations that guide the type of development that can occur in a designated area.