



## CITY OF ATLANTIC BEACH COMMON PLANNING TERMS

**Buffer** - A strip of land with natural or planted vegetation located between a structure and a side or rear property line intended to separate and partially obstruct the view of two adjacent land uses or properties from one another. A buffer area may include any required screening for the site.

**City Charter** – The governing document of a municipality

**Compatibility** - The characteristics of different designs which, despite their differences allow them to be located near each other in harmony, such as scale, height, materials, fencing, landscaping and location of service areas.

**Comprehensive Plan** - A comprehensive long-range plan document intended to guide growth and development of a geographic area. It includes analysis, recommendations, and proposals for the community's future, land use, housing, transportation and community facilities. Master Plans are often based on public input, surveys, planning initiatives, existing development, physical characteristics, and social and economic conditions.

**Easement** - A grant by a property owner to the use of land by the public, a corporation, or persons for specific purposes as the construction of utilities, sidewalks, drainage ways, or roadways.

**Floor Area Ratio (FAR)** - The ratio of gross floor area to gross site area. In other words, it is the proportional relationship between the total floor area of the buildings and the land on which they are built.

**Land Development Code or Regulations** - The legal guidelines by which the city controls the uses of buildings or areas of land and the rules about building size and height, setbacks from lot lines, and required open space.

**Land Use** - Land use is based on the functional differentiation of land for different human purposes or economic activities. Typical categories for land use are dwellings, industrial use, transportation, recreational use or nature protection areas. Use categories are assigned to individual land parcels, as established for zoning, real estate permitting, planning, and those aspects of environmental law as apply to such real estate matters. Urban land use categories usually place restrictions on building lot coverage, height, area and setbacks, etc., as well as economic activity.

**Mixed-Use Development** - Mixed-use development, sometimes referred to as live/work/play communities, refers to development that includes a mixture of complementary land uses. The most common mix of land uses include housing, retail, office, commercial services, and civic uses.

**Neighborhood Character** - The atmosphere or physical environment which is created by the combination of land use and buildings within an area. Neighborhood character is established and influenced by land-use types and intensity, traffic generation, and by the location, size, and design of structures as well as the interrelationship of all these features.

**Open Space** - An area of land that is valued for natural resources and wildlife habitat, for agricultural and forest production, for active and passive recreation, and/or for providing other public benefits. Open space in urban areas, is also defined as any public space not dedicated to streets or parking.

**Overlay District** - Overlay districts or zones are special zoning districts where new developments and redevelopments must follow design guidelines, requirements and/or restrictions established by the City. Typically, this is an area where certain additional requirements are superimposed upon a base zoning district or underlying district and where the requirements of the base or underlying district may or may not be altered.

**Planned Unit Development (PUD)** - Land use zoning which allows the adoption of a set of development standards that are specific to a project. PUD zones usually do not contain detailed development standards. Those are established during the process of considering proposals and adopted by ordinance upon project approval.

**Right-of-Way** - A public or private area that allows for the passage of people or goods. Right-of-way includes passageways such as freeways, streets, bike paths, alleys, and walkways. A public right of-way is dedicated or deeded to the public for public use and is under the control of a public agency

**Setback** - The minimum distance by which any building or structure must be separated from a street right-of-way or lot line.

**Stormwater Management** - The process of controlling and processing runoff from rain and storms so it does not harm the environment or human health.

**Variance** – The legal remedies by which property owners may obtain permission to build structures that do not fully correspond to the existing zoning codes.

**Zoning** - Legislative regulations by which a municipal government can control the use and characteristics of buildings and land within its boundaries. Zoning laws consist of two parts: text which spells out specific regulations for each zoning district and maps that show where each district applies. It has become, in the United States, a widespread method of controlling urban and suburban development (e.g., density, nuisance, etc.) and is also used to correct or compensate for defects of existing plans.