

Title 30-A: MUNICIPALITIES AND COUNTIES
Part 2: MUNICIPALITIES
Subpart 6-A: PLANNING AND LAND USE REGULATION
Chapter 187: PLANNING AND LAND USE REGULATION
Subchapter 1: GENERAL PROVISIONS

§4301. Definitions

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings. [PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §10 (NEW).]

1. Affordable housing. "Affordable housing" means a decent, safe and sanitary dwelling as follows:

A. Rental housing that a household whose income does not exceed 80% of the median income for the area as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended, can afford without spending more than 30% of the household's monthly income on housing costs; and [PL 1989, c. 878, Pt. A, §83 (RP); PL 2025, c. 393, §1 (NEW).]

B. With respect to housing that is owned, housing that a household whose income does not exceed 120% of the median income for the area as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended, can afford without spending more than 30% of the household's monthly income on housing costs. [PL 1989, c. 878, Pt. A, §83 (RP); PL 2025, c. 393, §1 (NEW).]

C. [PL 1989, c. 878, Pt. A, §83 (RP).]

D. [PL 1989, c. 878, Pt. A, §83 (RP).]

E. [PL 1989, c. 878, Pt. A, §83 (RP).]

[PL 2025, c. 393, §1 (RPR).]

1-A. Cluster development. "Cluster development" means a form of development that allows a design in which individual lot sizes and setbacks are reduced in exchange for the creation of common open space and recreation areas, the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, agriculture and silviculture and the reduction in the size of road and utility systems.

[PL 2025, c. 393, §2 (AMD).]

1-B. Age-friendly community. "Age-friendly community" means a community where policies, services, settings and structures support and enable older people to actively age in place and that recognizes the capabilities, resources and needs of older adults, plans to meet the needs of older adults in flexible ways that support healthy and active aging, promotes the inclusion and contributions of older adults in all areas of community life, respects the self-determination and independence of older adults and protects those older adults who are most vulnerable.

[PL 2019, c. 38, §1 (NEW).]

REVISOR'S NOTE: Subsection 1-B as enacted by PL 2019, c. 145, §1 is REALLOCATED TO TITLE 30-A, SECTION 4301, SUBSECTION 1-C

1-C. (REALLOCATED FROM T. 30-A, §4301, sub-§1-B) Accessory dwelling unit. "Accessory dwelling unit" means a self-contained dwelling unit located within, attached to or detached from a single-family dwelling unit or multi-unit structure located on the same parcel of land.

[PL 2025, c. 385, §2 (AMD).]

2. Coastal area. "Coastal area" means a coastal island and any municipality or unorganized township contiguous to tidal waters. The inland boundary of the coastal area is the inland line of any coastal town line.

[PL 2001, c. 578, §1 (AMD).]

3. Comprehensive plan. "Comprehensive plan" means a document or interrelated documents containing the elements established under section 4326 ([./30-A/title30-Asec4326.html](#)), including the strategies for an implementation program that are consistent with the procedures, goals and guidelines established under subchapter 2 ([./30-A/title30-Ach187sec0.html](#)).

[PL 2025, c. 393, §3 (AMD).]

4. Conditional zoning. "Conditional zoning" means the process by which the municipal legislative body may rezone property to permit the use of that property subject to conditions not generally applicable to other properties similarly zoned.

[PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §10 (NEW).]

4-A. Critical rural area. "Critical rural area" means a rural area that is specifically identified and designated by a municipality's or multimunicipal region's comprehensive plan as deserving maximum protection from development to preserve natural resources and related economic activities that may include, but are not limited to, significant farmland, forest land or mineral resources; high-value wildlife or fisheries habitat; scenic areas; public water supplies; scarce or especially vulnerable natural resources; flood buffer areas and flood-prone areas; and open lands functionally necessary to support a vibrant rural economy.

[PL 2021, c. 590, Pt. A, §3 (AMD).]

4-B. Critical waterfront area.

[PL 2025, c. 393, §4 (RP).]

5. Contract zoning. "Contract zoning" means the process by which the property owner, in consideration of the rezoning of that person's property, agrees to the imposition of certain conditions or restrictions not imposed on other similarly zoned properties.

[PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §10 (NEW).]

5-A. Downtown. "Downtown" means:

A. The central business district of a community that serves as the center for socioeconomic interaction in the community and is characterized by a cohesive core of commercial and mixed-use buildings, often interspersed with civic, religious and residential buildings and public spaces, typically arranged along a main street and intersecting side streets, walkable and served by public infrastructure; or [PL 1999, c. 776, §7 (NEW).]

B. An area identified as a downtown in a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to chapter 187, subchapter II (./30-A/title30-Ach187sec0.html). [PL 1999, c. 776, §7 (NEW).]

[PL 1999, c. 776, §7 (NEW).]

5-B. Growth-related capital investment. "Growth-related capital investment" means investment by the State in only the following projects, even if privately owned, whether using state, federal or other public funds and whether in the form of a purchase, lease, grant, loan, loan guarantee, credit, tax credit or other financial assistance:

A. Construction or acquisition of newly constructed multifamily rental housing; [PL 1999, c. 776, §7 (NEW).]

B. Development of industrial or business parks; [PL 1999, c. 776, §7 (NEW).]

C. Construction, extension or upgrade of sewer, water and other utility infrastructure; [PL 2025, c. 393, §5 (AMD).]

D. Grants and loans for public or quasi-public service infrastructure, public or quasi-public facilities and community buildings; [PL 2025, c. 393, §6 (AMD).]

E. Construction or expansion of state office buildings, state courts, hospitals and other quasi-public facilities and other civic buildings that serve public clients and customers; [PL 2025, c. 393, §7 (AMD).]

F. Development of mixed-use housing projects; and [PL 2025, c. 393, §8 (NEW).]

G. Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. [PL 2025, c. 393, §9 (NEW).]

"Growth-related capital investment" does not include investment in the following: the operation or maintenance of a governmental or quasi-governmental facility or program; the renovation of a governmental facility that does not significantly expand the facility's capacity; general purpose aid for education; school construction or renovation projects; highway or bridge projects; programs that provide direct financial assistance to individual businesses; community revenue sharing; or public health programs.

[PL 2025, c. 393, §§5-9 (AMD).]

5-C. Department. "Department" means the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

[PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. JJ, §12 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. JJ, §41 (AFF); PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §5 (REV).]

6. Development. "Development" means a change in land use involving alteration of the land, water or vegetation, or the addition or alteration of structures or other construction not naturally occurring.

[PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §10 (NEW).]

6-A. Impact fee. "Impact fee" means a charge or assessment imposed by a municipality against a new development to fund or recoup a portion of the cost of new, expanded or replacement infrastructure facilities necessitated by and attributable at least in part to the new development.

[PL 2005, c. 597, §1 (AMD); PL 2005, c. 597, §4 (AFF).]

6-B. Impact fee ordinance. "Impact fee ordinance" means an ordinance that establishes the applicability, formula and means by which impact fees are assessed.

[PL 2001, c. 406, §1 (NEW).]

6-C. Growth area. "Growth area" means an area that is designated in a municipality's or multimunicipal region's comprehensive plan as suitable for orderly residential, commercial or industrial development, or any combinations of those types of development, and into which most development projected over 10 years is directed.

[PL 2001, c. 578, §3 (NEW).]

7. Implementation program. "Implementation program" means that component of a local growth management program that begins after the adoption of a comprehensive plan and that includes the full range of municipal policy-making powers, including spending and borrowing powers, as well as the powers to adopt or implement ordinances, codes, rules or other land use regulations, tools or mechanisms that carry out the purposes and general policy statements and strategies of the comprehensive plan in a manner consistent with the goals and guidelines of subchapter 2 ([../30-A/title30-Ach187sec0.html](#)).

[PL 2005, c. 597, §2 (AMD); PL 2005, c. 597, §4 (AFF).]

8. Land use ordinance. "Land use ordinance" means an ordinance or regulation of general application adopted by the municipal legislative body which controls, directs or delineates allowable uses of land and the standards for those uses.

[PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §10 (NEW).]

8-A. Local climate action plan. "Local climate action plan" means a planning and decision-making document adopted by a municipality or multimunicipal region that:

A. Includes compiled information regarding climate and health risks; [PL 2021, c. 590, Pt. A, §4 (NEW).]

B. Includes an evaluation of options for addressing climate and health risks by individuals, committees or offices in local or regional government that are responsible for planning, implementing and monitoring activities that reduce climate risk, build resilience to natural hazards and improve health and community capacity to manage crises; and [PL 2021, c. 590, Pt. A, §4 (NEW).]

C. Is produced using community dialogue and participation in a manner that ensures the input and needs of the community's most vulnerable citizens are elevated and prioritized. [PL 2021, c. 590, Pt. A, §4 (NEW).]

[PL 2021, c. 590, Pt. A, §4 (NEW).]

9. Growth management program. "Growth management program" means a document containing the components described in section 4326 ([../30-A/title30-Asec4326.html](#)), including the implementation program, that is consistent with the procedures, goals and guidelines established by subchapter 2 ([../30-A/title30-Ach187sec0.html](#)) and that regulates land use beyond that required by Title 38, chapter 3, subchapter 1, article 2-B ([../38/title38ch3sec0.html](#)).

[PL 2025, c. 393, §10 (AMD).]

10. Planning committee. "Planning committee" means the committee established by the municipal officers of a municipality or multimunicipal region that has the general responsibility established under sections 4324 ([../30-A/title30-Asec4324.html](#)) and 4326 ([../30-A/title30-Asec4326.html](#)).

[PL 2025, c. 393, §11 (AMD).]

11. Moratorium. "Moratorium" means a land use ordinance or other regulation approved by a municipal legislative body that, if necessary, may be adopted on an emergency basis and given immediate effect and that temporarily defers all development, or a type of development, by withholding any permit, authorization or approval necessary for the specified type or types of development.

[PL 2005, c. 597, §2 (AMD); PL 2005, c. 597, §4 (AFF).]

11-A. Multimunicipal region. "Multimunicipal region" means a region made up of 2 or more municipalities that work together to cooperatively establish a growth management program or independent growth management programs that are unified with respect to the implementation of the state goal identified in section 4312, subsection 3, paragraph A ([./30-A/title30-Asec4312.html](#)). The several municipalities in a multimunicipal region may establish the region pursuant to section 4325 ([./30-A/title30-Asec4325.html](#)) or chapter 115 ([./30-A/title30-Ach115sec0.html](#)).

[PL 2001, c. 578, §6 (NEW).]

12. Municipal reviewing authority. "Municipal reviewing authority" means the municipal planning board, agency or office, or if none, the municipal officers.

[PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §10 (NEW).]

12-A. Place type. "Place type" means a definable geographic settlement pattern identifiable by the type of activities that occur there and by a set of characteristics related to its location, including the proximity and relationship to natural resources and rural areas, the size of the developed area, the arrangement of buildings and their uses, the pattern and arrangement of streets, the type of infrastructure available and the presence of civic spaces and civic buildings.

[PL 2025, c. 393, §12 (NEW).]

13. Office.

[PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. JJ, §13 (RP); PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. JJ, §41 (AFF).]

13-A. Rate of growth ordinance. "Rate of growth ordinance" means a land use ordinance or other rule that limits the number of building or development permits issued by a municipality or other jurisdiction over a designated time frame.

[PL 2001, c. 406, §1 (NEW).]

14. Regional council. "Regional council" means a regional planning commission or a council of governments established under chapter 119, subchapter I ([./30-A/title30-Ach119sec0.html](#)).

[PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. A, §45 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §10 (NEW).]

14-A. Service center community. "Service center community" means a municipality or group of municipalities identified by the department according to a methodology established by rule that includes 4 basic criteria, including level of retail sales, jobs-to-workers ratio, the amount of federally assisted housing and the volume of service sector jobs. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A ([./5/title5ch375sec0.html](#)).

[PL 2021, c. 754, §1 (AMD).]

14-B. Rural area. "Rural area" means a geographic area that is identified and designated in a municipality's or multimunicipal region's comprehensive plan as an area that is deserving of some level of regulatory protection from

unrestricted development for purposes that may include, but are not limited to, supporting farmland and agriculture, forest land and forestry, mineral resources and mining, open space, erosion mitigation, water retention, wildlife habitat, fisheries habitat, natural resources, open land and scenic lands, and away from which most development projected over 10 years is diverted.

[PL 2025, c. 393, §13 (AMD).]

14-C. Transitional area. "Transitional area" means an area that is designated in a municipality's or multimunicipal region's comprehensive plan as suitable for a share of projected residential, commercial or industrial development but that is neither intended to accept the amount or density of development appropriate for a growth area nor intended to provide the level of protection for rural resources afforded in a rural area or critical rural area.

[PL 2001, c. 578, §6 (NEW).]

15. Zoning.

[PL 1993, c. 166, §2 (RP).]

15-A. Zoning ordinance. "Zoning ordinance" means a type of land use ordinance that divides a municipality into districts and that prescribes and reasonably applies different regulations in each district.

[PL 1993, c. 166, §3 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 104, §§A45,C10 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 562, §1 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 581, §6 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 878, §A83 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 18, §1 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 722, §5 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 722, §11 (AFF). PL 1991, c. 780, §E1 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 166, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 395, §D12 (AMD). PL 1999, c. 776, §7 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 90, §1 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 406, §1 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 578, §§1-6 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 613, §1 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 673, §1 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 244, §1 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 597, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 597, §4 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. JJ, §§12-14 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. JJ, §41 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §5 (REV). RR 2017, c. 1, §22 (COR). PL 2019, c. 38, §1 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 145, §1 (AMD). RR 2019, c. 1, Pt. A, §36 (COR). PL 2021, c. 590, Pt. A, §§3-5 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 754, §1 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 385, §2 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 393, §§1-13 (AMD).

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