

# Glossary



**AESTHETIC** The visual appearance or look of an object, view, etc.

**AMENITIES** Aesthetic characteristics or other features of land development that increase its desirability or its marketability. Amenities may include such things as a unified building design, recreational facilities, security systems, views, landscaping, attractive site design, adjacent open space, or water bodies.

**BALANCE** Balance in design refers to the equilibrium or equality of visual attraction. Symmetrical balance is achieved when one side of the design is a mirror image of the other side. Asymmetrical balance uses different forms, colors and textures to obtain balance of visual attraction (Ingram, 2006).

**BERM** A raised and elongated area of earth intended to direct the flow of water, visually screen, redirect out-of-control vehicles, or reduce noise levels by shielding a receiver from the highway (AASHTO, 1991).

**BUFFER** A strip of land, compatible land uses, fence, or a border of trees, etc., between one use and another that somewhat mitigates negative impacts between uses. An area which provides a degree of insulation from certain highway or transportation effects on adjacent private property or protected natural resources and vice-versa (AASHTO, 1991).

**CARRYING CAPACITY** The number of individuals in a population that the resources of a habitat can support (Carrying Capacity, 2006).

**COMMUNITY IDENTITY** Community identity can be broadly defined as a community of interest or an emotional attachment or sense of belonging to a geographic area (Province of Nova Scotia, 2006).

**COMMUNITY INTERFACE** Community interface zones are characterized by lower travel speeds, frequent curb cuts, cross streets, traffic control devices, and increased pedestrian and other non-vehicular traffic. Adjacent land uses are typically commercial, but may include residential areas, schools, parks, and other civic uses.

**COMMUNITY TRANSITION** Community transition zones include stretches of highway between the center of a community and its undeveloped edges.

**CONNECTIVITY** In landscape ecology, the measure of the degree to which a matrix, a corridor, or a network is connected. The fewer the gaps or aberrations, the greater the connectivity.

**CONTEXT SENSITIVE** Consideration for how a proposed project will fit within its physical location and how it preserves the aesthetic, environment, and historic character of its surroundings.

**CONSTRAINT** A feature or condition of the built or natural environment that poses an obstacle to design, planning, or construction.

**CONTOUR GRADING** Transitioned and rounded grading. Moving the earth to form a shape or obtain a smoothness.

**CORRIDOR** A stretch of road or highway along with its associated facilities, adjacent land uses and visual character.

**CORRIDOR PLAN** A detailed specific plan that considers land use and transportation issues within a carefully organized, collaborative planning process between local governments, regional entities, and NDOT.

**CULTURAL RESOURCES** Cultural resources include buildings, landscapes, archeological sites, ethnographic resources, objects and documents, structures and districts. They provide information about people from the past and establish important connections to the present (NPS, 2006).

**CURB EXTENSIONS** A section of sidewalk extending into the roadway at an intersection or midblock crossing that reduces the crossing width for pedestrians and may help reduce traffic speeds (AASHTO, 2004).

**DESIGN** The process of taking ideas and producing a work of art. The drawings, models, or action of laying out structures, land activities, recreational facilities, vegetation, land cover, erosion protection, watering methods, etc.

**DESIGN GUIDELINES** A collection of helpful, interpretive, explanatory recommendations that are intended to provide a framework for design.

**DESIGN OBJECTIVES** Highway types are categorized according to the type of road, the speed and volume of travel, and the type of access. Design Objectives establish program elements and goals that should always be considered when addressing projects located along roads with similar characteristics.

**DESIGN SPIRIT** The intent or vision of the design. What the designer hopes to accomplish.

**DESIGN THEME** A unifying concept throughout the design. A design theme provides a sense of consistency and harmony because it is created by the repetition of forms and materials throughout the design (Booth, 1999).

**DISTANCE ZONES** Landscapes are subdivided into three distance zones based on relative visibility from travel routes or observation points. The three zones are: foreground, middleground, and background. The foreground zone includes areas where the viewer can perceive details of the landscape and typically extends up to a ¼ mile from the viewer. The middleground zone is located between ¼ mile and three miles from the viewer. The background is the area beyond the middleground extending to the horizon or limit of the area that is seen.

**DROUGHT TOLERANCE** A term often used to describe plants with low water requirements, the ability to withstand extended periods without water, or plants of a desert region.

**FOCAL POINT** A noticeable area or spot of attention, activity, or attraction. It may be such a spot because many paths, views, rays, walks, etc. converge or it is of a different color, texture, height, width, brightness, etc.

**GABION** A wire basket usually filled with stone which is used for erosion control/slope protection (AASHTO, 1991).

**GATEWAY** An entrance to a city, community, valley, or other large-scale space.

**GROUND TREATMENT** Treatment to disturbed ground such as seeded revegetation, pavement, stone mulch, etc.

**HARDSCAPE** The hard surface elements of a planned (designed) landscape that give it definition and style, including walks, driveways, walls, buildings, fences, and large ornamental or sculptural pieces.

**INVASIVE** A term used to describe plants that vigorously spread, propagate, have rapid unchecked growth, or invade a surrounding landscape area.

**LANDMARK** A conspicuous object on land that identifies a locality, or a designated preservation site, such as a building, monument, or landscape (AASHTO, 1991).

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN SEGMENT** Areas of similar character in which the same major design theme is applied.

**LANDSCAPE TREATMENT TYPE** Is the combination of varying intensities of softscape, structures, and hardscape.

**LIGHT POLLUTION** Light pollution is excess or obtrusive light. It obscures the night sky, interferes with astronomical observatories, wastes energy, and disrupts ecosystems.

**MAINTENANCE COST** The cost of maintaining a landscape. May be calculated annually or over the life of the project.

**MANAGED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER** Highway zone that comprises areas of current growth or planned growth at community edges along interstates or elevated highways. Can be adjacent to a variety of land uses varying from residential to industrial.

**MANAGEMENT PLAN** A written report of what the management of a project or property hopes to accomplish and how it intends to do so.

**MASSING** The grouping of plant materials.

**SHARED-USE TRAIL** A trail used by a combination of users, including pedestrians, roller bladers, horseback riders, bicyclists, etc.

**NATIVE PLANTS** An original species in a region, as distinguished from an invader, imported or cultured species (AASHTO, 1991).

**NATURAL DRAINAGE** The flow of water over undisturbed existing surface topography.

**NATURAL FEATURES** Conditions produced by nature such as surface land forms, geology, slopes, vegetation, water, drainage patterns, aquifers, recharge areas, climate, microclimate, floodplains, aquatic life, wildlife, views, and landscape ecological patterns of path, corridor, or matrix.

**NATURAL SYSTEM** Natural systems are any type of system found in nature that is not manmade. A key characteristic of a natural system is that we expect its operating rules (laws) to stay the same forever. Examples include ecosystems, physical, or biological systems.

**NONSTRUCTURAL DRAINAGE DESIGN** Drainage features using organic form and natural materials such as earth and rock vs. pipes and concrete.

**NOXIOUS WEED** Noxious weed means any species of plant which is, or is likely to be, detrimental or destructive and difficult to control or eradicate (NRS 555.005).

**OPPORTUNITIES** A feature or condition of the built or natural environment that provides an opportunity to design, planning, or construction.

**ORIENTATION** The direction a person, structure, or any upright feature with a face is directed, or facing.

**ORNAMENTAL SOFTSCAPE** Plantings used for decorative qualities.

**PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS** A public walkway not adjacent to a street. It may connect between two public streets, or between a public street and a public facility, such as a school or park. The standard pedestrian connection includes a sidewalk and landscaped buffers on each side (<http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?a=jjbci&c=dgbgh>).

**PERENNIAL** A plant that persists or resprouts year to year for several or many years.

**PLACE-BASED KNOWLEDGE** Local knowledge. Knowledge gained from direct experience with a geographic location.

**PLACE-MAKING** Design solutions that use elements unique to the place or new elements to establish a specific style.

**PLACE NAME SIGN** A sign program that will provide clear and consistent direction from the corridors to scenic areas, points-of-interest, historical sites, and local attractions.

**PLAN VIEW** A drawing of an item, site, community, city, etc. as viewed from above.

**PLANT COMMUNITY** All of the plant species within a microclimate, habitat, or environment.

**PLANT DIVERSITY** The variety of plants found in a given area.

**PRESERVE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER** Highway zone that consists of agricultural uses or low-density residential and where the potential for significant future growth appears to be low.

**PROGRAM** A list or outline of the elements and requirements the design solution should incorporate (Booth, 1999).

**PROPORTION** Ratio of one thing to another (Putnam, 1996).

**PUMICE WICK** A natural way to harvest rainwater and control erosion. Pumice is extremely hygroscopic and absorbs several times its own weight in water. Trees and shrubs can be planted on either side of the wick. The roots take in water from the underground sponge and establish more quickly with much less supplemental water.

**RECOVERY ZONE** A clear recovery area free of hazards along the edge of the traveled roadway.

**REGIONALLY ADAPTED PLANT SPECIES** Species adapted to the soil conditions present on the site and in the region of the state where it will be grown.

**REVEGETATION** The replacement of plant material on a land area.

**RHYTHM** Rhythm is achieved when the elements of a design create a feeling of motion which leads the viewer's eye through or even beyond the designed area. Tools like color schemes, line and form can be repeated to attain rhythm in landscape design. Rhythm reduces confusion in the design (Ingram, 2006).

**RIGHT-OF-WAY** A general term denoting land, property, or interest therein, usually in a strip, acquired for or devoted to transportation or utility purposes (AASHTO, 1991).

**RIPARIAN VEGETATION** Plant communities occurring in association with any spring, lake, river, stream, creek, wash, arroyo, or other water body having banks and a bed through which water flows at least occasionally.

**RIPRAP** A layer of stones, broken concrete, or boulders placed on a slope to stabilize it against slope failure or erosion due to precipitation, natural drainage, waves, or wind.

**ROAD SERVICES** Areas along the highway that provide travelers with designated spaces to rest, interpret history and geography, and discover information about nearby activities and communities.

**SCALE** Spatial proportion. Scale refers to the size of an object or objects in relation to the surroundings. Size refers to definite measurements while scale describes the size relationship between adjacent objects (Ingram, 2006). Items at pedestrian scale may be much smaller than those at motor vehicle scale, where speeds are much faster.

**SCENIC BYWAY** Roads that are outstanding examples of scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological and/or natural qualities ([http:// www.upperdeleware.com/route97/whatis.cfm](http://www.upperdeleware.com/route97/whatis.cfm)).

**SCENIC DESIGNATION** Highway zone that includes existing and proposed scenic byways where scenic, cultural, historic, recreational, and/or natural qualities dominate the highway landscape.

**SCENIC EASEMENTS** The right for a public agency or other group to use an owner's land for scenic enhancement, such as roadside landscaping or vista preservation, by restrictions on the area of the easement.

**SCORING PATTERN** A pattern cut or scratched into a surface.

**SECTION DIAGRAM** A drawing of a structure, landform, object, etc., as it would appear if cut by an imaginary plane, showing any internal portions and outer edges along the intersection.

**SENSE OF ENTRY** An introduction to a site or place. The impression of having arrived at a site or community.

**SENSE OF PLACE** The unique impressions, perceptions and memories along with physical representations of a site.

**SENSE OF SCALE** The feeling created or perceived when one is placed next to a very large object (such as a 50-story building 500 feet wide) or a small object (a toolshed six feet tall and eight feet wide).

**SEQUENCE OF ARRIVAL** Transition between spaces as a destination is approached.

**SHADOW PATTERNS** Shadow patterns in structures occur due to relief of planes and specific shadow lines and may be part of the ornament of the structure.

**SHRUB** A plant with many stems or much branching near the ground. It is woody and forms new wood from old wood each year.

**SIGNAGE SYSTEM** A coordinated system of visual communications in symbols, pictures, letters, drawing, photographs, or words whose function is to communicate directions, identifications, warnings, advertisements, etc. to passersby.

**SITE ANALYSIS** Observing, considering and evaluating the physical and man-made elements including the environmental, climatic, visual, cultural, historical and other factors relating to a particular location, corridor or region (AASHTO, 1991).

**SITE CONTEXT** Where the site in question is located in relation to the greater landscape. The surrounding area, whether city, town, wilderness, etc.

**SITE PLAN** A plan of a site showing the positions, size, and types of elements such as roads, drives, parking lots, play areas, land uses, or structures existing or proposed for a site. It may or may not show dimensions, contours, or have a legend.

**SITE RISK ASSESSMENT** The process of evaluating the adverse effects caused by a substance, activity, lifestyle, or natural phenomenon.

**SITE SPECIFIC** Peculiar to only one particular location (AASHTO, 1991).

**SITE-SENSITIVE MATERIALS** Materials with qualities that blend with the surroundings.

**SOFTSCAPE** The plantings used in a landscape.

**SOFTSCAPE TREATMENT TYPE** Softscape treatments are compositions of plant materials including trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, and ground treatments.

**SPIRIT OF PLACE** The unique, distinctive and cherished aspects of a place, including both cultural components and physical aspects such as rivers, architectural style and views.

**STREET TREE** Trees that are tolerant of city conditions, including pollution, poor soils, low soil moisture, strong winds and soil compaction. Many communities have a list of accepted trees for their area.

**STRUCTURES AND HARDSCAPES TREATMENT TYPE** Varying levels of treatment for bridges, retaining walls, acoustic walls, pedestrian crossings, railings, barrier railings, lighting, and transportation art.

**SUB-SEGMENT** A portion of a landscape design segment where unique historic, cultural or environmental features may result in a slightly different interpretation of the overall design theme.

**SUSTAINABILITY** The ability to sustain ecological integrity, including human needs throughout generations. The ability to maintain with little deviation, with little waste, with renewable energy, etc.

**SUSTAINABLE DESIGN** Landscape designs that work with nature rather than against it (Booth, 1999).

**TRACK WALKING** A method of erosion and sediment control. Track walking with machinery up and down a slope provides grooves that will catch seed, fertilizer, mulch, and rainfall, and reduce runoff.

**TRANSITION** A gradual change. Transition can be obtained by the arrangement of objects with varying textures, forms, or sizes in a logical sequential order (Ingram, 2006).

**TRANSPORTATION ART** Artwork along a transportation route that enhances the travel experience and relates to the surrounding place, the unique culture and environment of the area. Artwork should be of a scale appropriate to highway travel speed.

**TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR** A strip of land between two termini within which traffic, topography, environment and other characteristics are evaluated for transportation purposes; also a strip of land for transmission of a utility (AASHTO, 1991).

**UNDERSTORY SHRUB** The lower canopy in a layered planting.

**UNITY** The state when independent elements contribute harmoniously to the whole (Williams, 1990).

**URBAN BACKGROUND** Highway zone within urban regions that comprise areas dominated by commercial and residential development.

**URBAN CONFLUENCE** Highway zone within urban regions that serves as an important connector for people and commerce.

**VERNACULAR FORMS** Forms in indigenous styles constructed from locally available materials following traditional building practice and patterns not architect-designed.

**VERTICAL DESIGN ELEMENT** Site elements such as the facades of buildings, walls, fences, trees and tall shrubs, or steeply sloped ground. Vertical elements may be used as enclosures or for visual interest (Booth, 1999).

**VERTICAL DIVERSITY** Vertical elements that vary in texture, color, transparency, etc. in order to add visual interest to a site (Booth, 1999).

**VIEW POINT** A “pulloff” area on a highway where travelers can enjoy a view.

**VIEWSHED** The total area visible from a point or series of points along a linear transportation facility and conversely the area which views upon the facility (AASHTO, 1991).

**VIEWSHED ANALYSIS** Scrutinizing a viewshed to determine the positive and negative aspects.

**VISUAL RELIEF** A unique feature in an otherwise monotonous landscape or structure.

**WATER HARVESTING** Catching and holding rain where it falls for future use. It may be stored in tanks or used to recharge groundwater.

**WATTLES** Poles intertwined with reeds or plants (willows, etc.) to create a fence, barricade, etc.

**WETLAND** An area that is inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency, duration, and depth sufficient to support a predominance of emergent plant species (cattails, etc.) adapted to growth in saturated soil conditions.

**WILDLIFE CROSSING** Structures built to facilitate wildlife crossing highways and minimize wildlife-related automobile accidents.

**WILDLIFE HABITAT CORRIDORS** Corridors that connect patches of wildlife habitat. These corridors allow wildlife to move between habitats and allow individual animals to move between groups, helping to restore or maintain genetic diversity that is essential both to the long-term viability of populations and to the restoration of functional ecosystems.