# Acronyms & Glossary of Terms

Acronyms

AA: Appropriate Assessment

ABTA: Area Based Transport Assessment ACA: Architectural Conservation Area AHB: Approved Housing Body

BER: Building Energy Rating

CARO: Climate Action Regional Office

CFRAM: Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management CIRIA: Construction Industry Research and Information Association CMP: Construction Management Plan

CPO: Compulsory Purchase Order CSO: Central Statistics Office DAP: Drainage Area Plan

DCCAE: Department of Climate Action and Environment DCHG: Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht DES: Department of Education and Skills DHLGH:

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (previously DHPLG, DHPCLG, DECLG, DEHLG) DMURS: Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

DTTaS: Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment

EIAR: Environmental Impact Assessment Report EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

ESA: Ecosystems Services Approach ESB: Electricity Supply Board

EU: European Union EV: Electric Vehicle

GBI: Green Blue Infrastructure GHG: Greenhouse Gas

GI: Green Infrastructure GZT: General Zoning Types

HNDA: Housing Need and Demand Assessment ICW: Integrated Constructed Wetland

ICT: Information Communications Technology IDA: Industrial Development Agency

LAP: Local Area Plan

LCA: Landscape Character Assessment

LCDC: Local Community Development Committees

LDA: Land Development Agency

LECP: Local Economic and Community Plan LEO: Local Enterprise Office

LIHAF: Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund MASP: Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

NBS: Nature Based Solutions NC: Neighbourhood Centre

NDP: National Development Plan

NECP: National Energy and Climate Plan NMPF: National Marine Planning Framework NPF: National Planning Framework

NPO: National Planning Objective

NPWS: National Parks and Wildlife Service NSO: National Strategic Outcome

NTA: National Transport Authority NZEB: Nearly Zero Energy Building OPR: Office of the Planning Regulator OPW: Office of Public Works

PE: Population Equivalent

PLUTS: Waterford Planning Land Use & Transportation Strategy PPN: Public Participation Network

PV: Photovoltaic

RBMP: River Basin Management Plan RMP: Record of Monuments and Places ROW: Right of Way

RPO: Regional Policy Objective

RPS: Record of Protected Structures

(S)RSES: (Southern) Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy RSO: Regional Strategic Outcome

SAC: Special Area of Conservation SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals SDZ: Strategic Development Zone

SEA: Strategic Environmental Assessment SEAI: Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland SEC: Sustainable Energy Community

SFRA: Strategic Flood Risk Assessment SHD: Strategic Housing Development

SMART: Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic and Time-Related SPC: Strategic Policy Committee

ST: Septic Tank

SUDS: Sustainable Urban Drainage Solutions TIA: Transportation Impact Assessment

TII: Transport Infrastructure Ireland TPO: Tree Preservation Order

TUSE: Technological University for the South East UHW: University Hospital Waterford

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization URDF: Urban Regeneration and Development Fund

WCCC: Waterford City and County Council WCQ: Waterford Cultural Quarter

WIT: Waterford Institute of Technology

WMASP: Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

WMATS: Waterford Metropolitan Area Transportation Strategy WWTW: Wastewater Treatment Works

**Glossary**

This glossary is a summary of phrases relating to land use and planning matters. It covers a variety of issues ranging from new development and regeneration, to conservation and environmental protection.

The Glossary is neither a statement of law nor an interpretation of the law, and its status is only an introductory guide to planning phrases/ issues and should **not** be used as a source for statutory definitions.

# A

Access Road

The primary function of access roads is to provide access to houses, factories, offices and other business premises etc.

Active Open Space

In this Plan, the term Active Open Space is used to describe parks, playgrounds, areas for outdoor activities, recreation, sports centres, sports pitches, training centres and landscaped areas. (Compare to the separate definition for Passive Open Space).

Active Travel

Active Travel is travelling with a purpose using your own energy. Generally, this means walking (including all users of footpaths) or cycling as part of a purposeful journey. Increasingly, non-motorised scooters are also being used for urban transport, especially by school children, and this would also be considered as active travel. Walking as part of a commute to work, cycling to the shop or scooting to school are all considered active travel, whereas walking or cycling for purely leisure purposes is not.

Adaptability

The potential to modify the spaces of a home by altering the fabric of the building to cater for the

different needs of an individual’s or family’s life cycle (e.g. a study space becomes a bedroom; a living room area enlarges by merging with an adjacent room etc).

Affordable Housing

This term, which is used in the housing strategy, means owner-occupier, or shared ownership housing, provided at a price below market value.

Appropriate Assessment

A requirement to consider the possible nature conservation implications of any plan or project on the Natura 2000 site network before any decision is made to allow that plan or project to proceed. Not only is every new plan or project captured by this requirement but each plan or project, when being considered for approval at any stage, must take into consideration the possible effects it may have in

combination with other plans and projects when going through the process known as appropriate assessment.

Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)

Designated areas, defined in the Development Plan, where significant groupings or concentrations of heritage structures in towns or villages require protection and conservation and, in the countryside, where there are strong concentrations of particular types of buildings or buildings related to a certain period of history. The special character of an ACA could include its traditional building stock, material finishes, spaces, streetscape, landscape and setting

# B

Backland Development

Development, which takes place to the rear of existing structures fronting a street or roadway.

Bed and Breakfast

A building or part thereof where sleeping accommodation and breakfast are available on a commercial basis.

Bike Rental Schemes

Bike Rental Schemes are short term bike rental or sharing schemes which are a means of cycling without using your own vehicle. In more recent times public electric bike schemes are becoming more common.

Biodiversity

The variety of life (wildlife and plant life) on earth.

Brownfield Land/Site

Land within an urban area that has been subjected to building, engineering or other operations (excluding temporary uses, agricultural buildings or urban green spaces), which has become derelict due to obsolescence, vacancy or due to the demolition of a structure or building.

Building Lines

A development line along a street or roadway behind or in front of which development is discouraged.

Building Regulations

The Building Control Acts 1990 and 2007 and the Regulations made under constitute a system for regulating building works and lay down minimum standards for design, construction, workmanship, materials etc. Different standards apply depending on the use of the building.

# C

Car Sharing Schemes

Car sharing schemes involve members pre-booking the use of communal cars for their personal use, thereby reducing the number of cars on the roads. They allow members access to a car when they need it, from a place near their home or workplace, without the potential difficulties or costs of owning a car. They are an important method of facilitating the reduction of car ownership, reducing GHG emissions and supporting the shift to low carbon modes.

Carbon Capture

The process of trapping carbon dioxide at its emission source, transporting it to a usually underground storage location, and isolating it there so that it is not released into the air.

Carbon sequestration

A technique for the long-term storage of carbon dioxide or other forms of carbon, for the mitigation of global warming. Carbon dioxide released by the burning of fossil fuels is usually captured from the atmosphere through biological, chemical or physical processes.

Circular Economy

The circular economy is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended.

Climate change

Climate change includes both the global warming driven by human emissions of greenhouse gases, and the resulting large-scale shifts in weather patterns.

Community Facilities: Facilities, which are operated for the benefit of the public and which, are open to the public.

Combined System

A sewerage network where both foul and surface waters are conveyed in the same pipe. This is very inefficient as some of the capacity of the sewage treatment works is utilised in treating what is simply surface water.

Comparison Retail

This term describes the retail of goods which include: clothing and footwear; furniture, furnishings and household equipment (excluding non-durable household goods); medical and pharmaceutical products, therapeutic appliances and equipment; and, educational and recreation equipment and accessories. It specifically does not include the wholesale of goods.

Convenience Retail

This term describes the retail of goods which include food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, tobacco and non-durable household goods. It specifically does not include the wholesale of goods.

# D

Demand Management

Demand management, traffic demand management or travel demand management (TDM) is the application of strategies and policies to reduce travel demand, or to redistribute this demand in space or in time.

Density (Housing)

This is a measure of the intensity of use of land, specifically with regards to housing, the number of dwelling units provided on a given area of land, usually expressed in dwelling units per hectare. When a ‘gross’ density figure is used, land for main distributor roads, public open spaces and other facilities is added into the calculation. The area used for ‘net’ density figures includes only private open space, access roads and incidental public open spaces.

Development Contribution Scheme

A scheme which allows a Planning Authority to levy financial contributions for the provision of public infrastructure, facilities, projects or services as a condition of planning permission.

Development management:

This is a term to describe the process where the local authority assesses the merits of a proposed development through the planning process (where planning applications are lodged) including the processing, evaluation, decision making and notification components of that process.

District Heating

A district heating scheme consists of an insulated pipe network, which allows heat generated from a single or several larger centralised source(s) (energy centres) to be delivered to multiple buildings to provide space heating and hot water.

# E

Ecological Impact Assessment

Ecological Impact Assessment is a process by which the potential ecological impacts of a development proposal are assessed. The results of the assessment are presented either as a standalone Ecological Impact Statement or the ecology (flora and fauna) chapter of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Ecosystem

An ecosystem is that it is a community or group of living organisms that live in and interact with each other in a specific environment. Ecologically Resilient: In ecology, resilience is the capacity of an ecosystem to respond to a perturbation or disturbance by resisting damage and recovering quickly

Ecosystem Services Approach

Ecosystem services approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way

Electric vehicles

A battery-only electric vehicle or all-electric vehicle derives all its power from its battery packs and thus has no internal combustion engine, fuel cell, or fuel tank. A plug-in hybrid vehicle (PHV) is a hybrid electric vehicle which utilizes rechargeable batteries, or another energy storage device, that can be restored to full charge by connecting a plug to an external electric power source. A PHEV shares the characteristics of both a conventional hybrid electric vehicle, having an electric motor and an internal combustion engine (ICE), and of an all-electric vehicle, having a plug to connect to the electrical grid.

Enterprise Units/ Centre

Space made available for enterprise units and starter businesses to operate from, with overheads being shared.

# F

Fascia

The fascia on a shop or store front is any surface on the outside of the shop or store that displays the company name, company logo and company colour scheme. The fascia is the most visible part of a retail brand - it is the name of the retailer, but it is also the logo and the graphics.

Framework Plan/ Masterplan

A non-statutory plan, prepared by or on behalf of the Planning Authority, for a specific area providing detail on the desirable framework for future development, design and/or layout.

Freestanding Sign

A stand alone sign that generally has one or two columns supporting it.

# G

General Zoning Types

Generalised Zone Types (GZTs) were developed specifically for the Myplan.ie project. They represent a consistent scheme for categorising land use zonings across all local authorities, and complement the existing statutory zonings used for each individual plan.

Green Belt

An area of countryside with particular planning controls aimed at maintaining the distinction in character between a town or city and its hinterland and preventing unrestricted sprawl of urban areas into the countryside. A green belt also helps to prevent individual settlements merging into one another, focuses attention on suitable development land within settlements, provides a source of recreation and amenity within easy reach of most built up areas and helps to retain land in agriculture, forestry and other uses that could be susceptible to pressure for inappropriate development.

Green-Blue Infrastructure

Blue-Green Infrastructure (BGI) is an approach to urban flood resilience, recognised globally and in international literature that capitalises on the benefits of working with urban green spaces and naturalised water-flows ‘blue’.

Green field land/ sites

Potential open development land within/ on the periphery of urban settlements having no previous building on it. Development on such lands will generally require the provision of new infrastructure, roads, sewers and ancillary social and commercial facilities, schools, shops, employment and community facilities.

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is defined as a strategically planned network of high quality natural and semi- natural areas with other environmental features, which is designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services and protect biodiversity in both rural and urban settings.

Green Roof

A green roof, also known as a living roof or rooftop garden, is a vegetative layer that is grown on a rooftop. They are living organisms and so, they change on a daily basis and are highly dependent on the weather conditions.

Guesthouse

A building or part thereof where sleeping accommodation, meals and other refreshments are available to residents and non-residents and which has a minimum of five rooms and no more than nineteen rooms.

# H

Habitable Room

A bedroom or living room, including a combined kitchen/family dining room but not a bathroom or small kitchen.

Hard Landscaping

The use of inorganic and inanimate materials, for example rock and stone, in the landscaping of an area, frequently including artificial and manmade objects, such as seating, paving, railings etc.

Heat Island

Heat islands are urbanized areas that experience higher temperatures than outlying areas. Structures such as buildings, roads, and other infrastructure absorb and re-emit the sun’s heat more than natural landscapes such as forests and water bodies.

Hedgerows (Significant) A natural or semi-natural row of bushes, shrubs and/ or trees forming a boundary. Hedgerows help define places, act as shelterbelts, add to bio-diversity and offer significant wildlife habitat.

Home Based Economic Activities

Small scale commercial activities, which are secondary to the use of the premises as a residence.

Households

One or more persons occupying a dwelling, which has kitchen and bathroom facilities.

Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA)

An HNDA estimates the future number of additional homes to meet existing and future need and demand within the local authority area. It also captures information on the operation of the housing system to assist Waterford City and County Council develop policies for new housing supply, management of stock and provision of housing related services.

Housing Strategy

A Housing Strategy for Waterford City and County. Its aim is to enable the people of Waterford, now and in the future, to have a place to live, suited to their needs, at a price they can afford. The provisions of the housing strategy are incorporated in this Development Plan.

# I

Infill

New building which fills in a gap in otherwise continuous built-up frontage, i.e. a small unused site within a built-up area.

Infrastructure

‘Includes drainage, water supplies, sewage treatment plants, sewerage networks, lighting, and telephone lines. Electricity supply, railways, roads, buildings, schools, community facilities, cultural and recreational facilities.

Integrated Constructed Wetland

A constructed wetland is a type of sustainable wastewater treatment system that is designed to look and function as a natural wetland does. Constructed wetlands are created for the purpose of treating wastewater from small, rural communities in an environmentally-friendly way before allowing it to return to the water system safely. Constructed wetlands are usually made up of a primary settlement tank where wastewater from the community is collected and from that, several ponds follow which are planted with wetland plants including reeds, rushes and sedges. The ponds are usually gently sloped towards a river to allow water to flow very slowly through the wetland before flowing away. Any particles that have been carried in the water will settle on the bottom and the plants and natural microorganisms (e.g. bacteria, algae and fungi) in the wetlands will break down and remove certain pollutants and elements e.g. phosphorus in the water.

Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

Invasive Alien Species are animals and plants that are introduced accidentally or deliberately into a natural environment where they are not normally found, with serious negative consequences for their new environment.

Landscape Character

The character of a landscape is derived from topography, landform, land cover, geology and other features that explain its distinctiveness. The Waterford Landscape & Seascape Character Assessment (LCA) Appendix 8 provides a thorough assessment of Waterford with respect to character, value and sensitivity of its landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape sensitivity describes the extent to which a particular landscape can absorb a particular kind of development without affecting its distinctive character. As an example, some landscapes may be very sensitive to large electricity pylons while others may be more robust to this kind of development.

Living over the Shop

The utilisation of upper floor space in urban areas for residential purposes. The term ‘Living over the Shop’ has also been used to refer to the package of financial incentives which the Government has made available for this purpose.

Local Area Plan (LAP)

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) provides that these may be provided in certain circumstances including in areas likely to be subject to large scale development during the lifespan of

the plan. They should be consistent with the Development Plan and detailed plans for the proper planning and sustainable development of such areas should be drawn up.

Low Carbon Economy

A low carbon economy is simply an economy that causes low levels of GHG emissions compared with today’s carbon-intensive economy.

# M

Mitigation

An action that helps to lessen the impacts of a process or development on the receiving environment. It is used most often in association with measures that would seek to reduce negative impacts of a process or development.

Modal shift

The process where people change their travel behaviour (usually between home and work) from a particular type of transport (private car for example) to another more sustainable form of travel (public transport for example).

Modal Split

The split of users of different modes of public and private transport.

Multi-storey Car Park

A free standing or multi-level parking facility generally used for the parking of cars on a short-term basis with an hourly fee being charged.

# N

Natural Heritage Area (NHA)

Areas which cover nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms or geomorphological features, wild plant and animal species or a diversity of these natural attributes. It is important that that the conservation value of these areas, which are proposed for designation by the national heritage service, be maintained.

Nature-based solutions

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines NBS as “actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems, which address societal challenges [such as food security, climate change, water security, human health, disaster risk, social and economic development] effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits.

Nature conservation area

In this plan, the term nature conservation area is used to describe the protected nature conservations sites i.e. the Natural Heritage Areas, the Special Areas of Conservation and the Special Protection Areas.

Net Residential Density

This is the measure of housing density used as a basis for development control. It is the number of houses divided by the site area in hectares or acres, including dwellings and gardens, any incidental open space (e.g. children’s play space, parking areas) and half the width of the surrounding roads up to a maximum of 6m. Excluded from Net Residential Density are most open spaces, local shops, primary schools and all other types of development.

Non-structural elements (conservation of built heritage)

These include elements such as historic gardens, stone walls, landscapes and demesnes, curtilage features and street furniture which contribute to built heritage.

# O

Open Space

Open space is one of the land use categories used in this plan. The plan makes a clear distinction between Active Open Spaces and Passive Open Spaces.

Outdoor Advertising Structures

The policy for outdoor advertising structures pertains to advertisements unrelated to the land or premises on which they are erected. Such advertisements contrast with shop-front advertising which concerns the goods or services provided on the premises.

# P

Park and ride

Park and Ride is a facility that offers a choice to car users to change from their cars into public transport (rail or bus) with the benefit of reducing the number of cars entering the urban areas and thus easing congestion.

Passive Open Space

In this plan, the term Passive Open Space is used to describe open land with uses such as agriculture, private landscaped gardens, woodland etc. While not necessarily providing active public access, passive open spaces provide important visual settings that add to the character of a settlement or locality and enhance the surroundings.

Permeability

The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.

Planning Policy

For any particular topic in this plan, the planning policy is made up of the planning principles (found throughout the text) and the numbered planning policy objectives (set out in tables in the various chapters).

Plot Ratio

This is the gross floor area of the building/s divided by the area of the site and is used to depict the intensity of use of a site. In calculating the area of a site adjoining road widths are excluded.

Protected Structure

A building, feature, site or structure identified in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) as worthy of protection or preservation in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

# R

Record of Protected Structures (RPS) The principal mechanism for protection of buildings and structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical importance in the county is through inclusion on the 'Record of Protected Structures'. This provides a positive recognition of the structures' importance, protection from adverse impacts and potential access to grant aid for conservation works.

Retail Strategy

The National Retail Planning Guidelines for planning authorities (Dec. 2000) have a requirement for strategic retail policies and proposals to be incorporated into Development Plans. With this in mind, the Planning Authority commissioned the Waterford City and County Retail Assessment and Strategy which is incorporated as Appendix 4 of this Development Plan.

Ribbon Development

Where 5 or more houses exist on any one side of a given 250 metres of generally rural road frontage. Generally, such housing is expensive to service as extensive service pipes etc. are required. Frequently, such housing is not connected to public sewerage and is dependent on septic tank systems.

# S

Scenic route

This plan (Appendix 8 Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment) describes certain roads as scenic routes, based on designations established by previous Development Plans. People travelling along these routes generally have an opportunity to experience the quality of some of most important areas

of natural beauty and cultural significance in the city and county. The main intention is to ensure that the character of the views and prospects that can be obtained from these routes are preserved.

Sequential test

A means of checking that the most suitable and best available location has been chosen for a new retail operation or commercial leisure operation.

Services (general)

Activities directly relating to serving the needs of the public, which do not involve any manufacturing processes. They include restaurants, shops, professional services and entertainment outlets. Service Sector This is the employment sector, which involves the provision of services, frequently referred to as the tertiary sector.

Settlement Policy

In this plan, the term ‘settlement policy’ describes the set of planning policies that deal with strengthening the network of settlements in the county, preserving the identity of settlements, and safeguarding the needs of rural communities. It includes in particular objectives for the different types and sizes of settlements, objectives for green belts and objectives for houses in rural areas.

Shop –Front Advertising

This is advertising on the premises, which provides goods or services. Shop-front advertising embraces advertising related to hotels or other streetscape frontages and thus is not restricted to “shops” per se.

Site Coverage

Site coverage is the portion of the site, which is built on and is determined by dividing the total site area by the ground floor of the building.

Social housing

Rented housing provided either by the local authority, or a voluntary or co-operative housing body.

Social Infrastructure

Buildings and other structures related to serving the needs of the public for social, health, educational and/or recreational needs; it includes such facilities as schools, community centres, parish halls and recreational facilities.

Soft Landscaping

The use of water and natural vegetation, including trees, plants, shrubs, in the landscaping of an area.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Areas of special interest containing/ support habitats and plant and animal species that are rare or threatened in Europe and require particular measures, including the designation of protected sites, to conserve them.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Areas of special interest for the conservation of wild bird habitats, especially listed, rare or vulnerable species and migratory species. They are established under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC), and form part of the ‘Natura 2000’ network of sites throughout Europe.

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals or Global Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". The SDGs were set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment is a process which attempts to evaluate the likely consequences on the environment of implementing the Development Plan. (Note: it is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000 for a Development Plan to include information on the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan).

Streetscape Character

The visual elements of a street, including the road, adjoining buildings, sidewalks, street furniture, trees, and open spaces, etc., that combine to form the street’s character.

Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDs)

Sustainable urban drainage systems aim towards maintaining or restoring a more natural hydrological regime, such that the impact of urbanisation on downstream flooding and water quality is minimised. SuDS involve a change in our way of managing urban run-off from solely looking at volume control to an integrated multi-disciplinary approach which addresses water quality, water quantity, amenity and habitat. SuDS minimise the impacts of urban runoff by capturing runoff as close to source as possible and then releasing it slowly.

Sustainability

Refers to development, which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**T**

10-Minute Settlement / Neighbourhood Concept

The 10-minute settlement / neighbourhood concept is where homes have access to a range of facilities and services, such as sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure or local shops, are accessible from homes within a short 10-minute walk or cycle OR there is access to high quality public transport within a 10-munite walk from homes that provide access to a range of facilities or services.

Traffic Impact Assessment

A detailed assessment of the nature and extent of the impact of any substantial development on the immediate and surrounding road network and, if deemed necessary, on the wider transportation system.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

A mechanism available to Planning Authorities under Section 205 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended, to make orders for the preservation of trees in the interest of amenity.

# U

Urban Consolidation

The development or re-development of under-utilised urban land in an efficient, compact and robust fashion.

Urban Generated Housing

Housing in rural locations sought by people living and working in urban areas, including second homes

Urban Renewal

The revitalisation of urban areas through specific development objectives and strategic planning principles.

Urban Sprawl

The excessive outward expansion of built development, away from the core city/ town centre and into the surrounding countryside. This form of development is viewed as unsustainable.

# V

Vernacular

The way in which ordinary buildings were built in a particular place, making use of local styles, techniques and materials and responding to local economic and social conditions.