



City Planning Key Terms & Concepts

Introduce students to these important city planning terms and concepts. Or encourage students to research the terms and discover the definitions on their own in the *City Planning Word Investigation Activity*.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
City Zone	An area or district within a city set aside for a specific use.
Industrial zone	An area of land set aside for factories and warehouses.
Commercial Zone	An area of land set aside for for-profit businesses like office complexes, shopping malls, service stations, and restaurants.
Residential Zone	An area of land set aside for housing.
Zoning density: high, medium, low	Designation of the ratio of building space to open space (eg., high-density residential includes high-rise apartment buildings).
Infrastructure	A public system of services needed by industry, commercial, and residential zones such as power, water, transportation, communications, and schools.
Transportation systems	A network of roads, streets, water, or rails that allows the vehicular movement of people and goods.



Utilities: water, electrical, natural gas	An organization that maintains the infrastructure that generates, transmits, or distributes electricity, water, or gas from facilities that it owns or operates.
Water sanitation system	A public utility that provides removal of waste water
High-tech industrial	An industry that develops or uses advanced technology (eg., aerospace, biotech, telecom, robotics).
Municipality	A town, city, or region that has its own local government.
Land fill	A site where waste material has been buried.
Power plant: coal, natural gas, nuclear, wind, solar, bio, etc.	An industrial plant that generates power such as electricity from another source like burning coal, nuclear reactions, or flowing water.
Geothermal energy	An area of land where energy is generated from the heat in the interior of the earth.
Retail establishment	A place of business that sells goods such as groceries, clothing, or furniture.
Government facility	A place that houses government services such as a courthouse or government offices.
Cultural and entertainment facility	A place such as an art museum, theater, or sports arena.



Service Industry	An industry or facility that provides services rather than sells goods (for example, banking or communications).
Proportion	The relationship between two or more amounts of a number or between the parts of a whole.
Inter-relationships	A connection or association between multiple things.
Connectivity	The direct links or associations between multiple things. In city design, connectivity refers to the links between different parts of a city that provide accessibility and easy transport from one area to another.

Key Concepts

Term	Definition
City planning and design	Prioritizing and placing city services and city features for maximum benefit to the quality of life for the citizens, the environment, and the economic future of the city.
Connectivity	Placing infrastructure so that all areas of the city are served and linked for maximum benefit of citizens, businesses, industry, safety, education, and recreation.
Systems thinking	Taking into consideration that a system is made up of individual parts that function in unison or in a cooperative way and always have an impact on one another.