



Appendix D

Glossary of Housing Terms



Glossary of Housing Terms

Above Moderate-Income Household. A household with an annual income usually greater than 120 percent of the area median family income adjusted by household size, as determined by a survey of incomes conducted by a city or a county, or in the absence of such a survey, based on the latest available eligibility limits established by the U.S. Department of housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 Housing Program.

Accessory Dwelling Unit. A self-contained living unit, either attached to or detached from, and in addition to, the primary residential unit on a single lot. “Granny Flat” is one type of second unit.

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH): Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) is a legal requirement that federal agencies and federal grantees further the purposes of the Fair Housing Act. AFFH means “taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics. Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns with integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws.

Apartment. An apartment is one (1) or more rooms in an apartment house or dwelling occupied or intended or designated for occupancy by one (1) family for sleeping or living purposes and containing one (1) kitchen.

Assisted Housing. Generally multi-family rental housing, but sometimes single-family ownership units, whose construction, financing, sales prices, or rents have been subsidized by Federal, State, or local housing programs including, but not limited to Federal Section 8 (new construction, substantial rehabilitation, and loan management set-asides), Federal Sections 213, 236, and 202, Federal Sections 221 (d) (3) (below-market interest rate program), Federal Sections 101 (rent supplement assistance), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) Sections 515, multi-family mortgage revenue bond programs, local redevelopment and in lieu fee programs, and units developed pursuant to local inclusionary housing and density bonus programs.

Below-Market-Rate (BMR). Any housing unit specifically priced to be sold or rented to low- or moderate-income households for an amount less than the fair-market value of the unit. Both the State of California and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development set standards for determining which households qualify as “low income” or “moderate income.” The financing of housing at less than prevailing interest rates.

Build-Out. That level of urban development characterized by full occupancy of all developable sites in accordance with the General Plan; the maximum level of development envisioned by the General Plan.

Build-out does not assume that each parcel is developed to include all floor area or housing units possible under zoning regulations.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). A grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on a formula basis for entitled communities and administered by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for non-entitled jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development.

Condominium. A structure of two or more units, the interior spaces of which are individually owned; the balance of the property (both land and building) is owned in common by the owners of the individual units. (See “Townhouse.”)

Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs). A term used to describe restrictive limitations that may be placed on property and its use, and which usually are made a condition of holding title or lease.

Deed. A legal document which affects the transfer of ownership of real estate from the seller to the buyer.

Density Bonus. The allocation of development rights that allow a parcel to accommodate additional square footage or additional residential units beyond the maximum for which the parcel is zoned, usually in exchange for the provision or preservation of an amenity at the same site or at another location.

Density, Residential. The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. Densities specified in the General Plan may be expressed in units per gross acre or per net developable acre.

Developable Land. Land that is suitable as a location for structures and that can be developed free of hazards to, and without disruption of, or significant impact on, natural resource areas.

Down Payment. Money paid by a buyer from his own funds, as opposed to that portion of the purchase price which is financed.

Duplex. A detached building under single ownership that is designed for occupation as the residence of two families living independently of each other.

Dwelling Unit (DU). A building or portion of a building containing one or more rooms, designed for, or used by one family for living or sleeping purposes, and having a separate bathroom and only one kitchen or kitchenette. See Housing Unit.

Elderly Housing. Typically, one- and two-bedroom apartments or condominiums designed to meet the needs of persons 62 years of age and older or, if more than 150 units, persons 55 years of age and older, and restricted to occupancy by them.

Emergency Shelter. A facility that provides immediate and short-term housing and supplemental services for the homeless. Shelters come in many sizes, but an optimum size is considered to be 20 to 40 beds.

Supplemental services may include food, counseling, and access to other social programs. (See “Homeless” and “Transitional Housing.”)

Extremely Low-Income Household. A household with an annual income equal to or less than 30 percent of the area median family income adjusted by household size, as determined by a survey of incomes conducted by a city or a county, or in the absence of such a survey, based on the latest available eligibility limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program.

Fair Market Rent. The rent, including utility allowances, determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for the purpose of administering the Section 8 Program.

Family. (1) Two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption [U.S. Bureau of the Census]. (2) An Individual or a group of persons living together who constitute a bona fide single-family housekeeping unit in a dwelling unit, not including a fraternity, sorority, club, or other group of persons occupying a hotel, lodging house or institution of any kind [Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, General Plan Guidelines].

General Plan. A comprehensive, long-term plan mandated by State Planning Law for the physical development of a city or county and any land outside its boundaries which, in its judgment, bears relation to its planning. The plan shall consist of seven required elements: land use, circulation, open space, conservation, housing, safety, and noise. The plan must include a statement of development policies and a diagram or diagrams illustrating the policies.

Goal. A general, overall, and ultimate purpose, aim, or end toward which the City will direct effort.

Green Building. Green or sustainable building is the practice of creating healthier and more resource-efficient models of construction, renovation, operation, maintenance, and demolition. (US Environmental Protection Agency)

Historic Preservation. The preservation of historically significant structures through restoration and rehabilitation of the building(s) to a former condition.

Historic Property. A historic property is a structure or site that has significant historic, architectural, or cultural value.

Household. All those persons—related or unrelated—who occupy a single housing unit. (See “Family.”)

Housing and Community Development, California Department of (HCD). The State agency that has principal responsibility for assessing, planning for, and assisting communities to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income households.

Housing Element. One of the seven State-mandated elements of a local general plan, it assesses the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community, identifies potential

sites adequate to provide the amount and kind of housing needed, and contains adopted goals, policies, and implementation programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing.

Housing Payment. For ownership housing, this is defined as the mortgage payment, property taxes, insurance, and utilities. For rental housing this is defined as rent and utilities.

Housing Ratio. The ratio of the monthly housing payment to total gross monthly income; also called Payment-to-Income Ratio or Front-End Ratio.

Housing Unit. The place of permanent or customary abode of a person or family. A housing unit may be a single-family dwelling, a multi-family dwelling, a condominium, a modular home, a mobile home, a cooperative, or any other residential unit considered real property under State law.

Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of (HUD). A cabinet-level department of the federal government that administers housing and community development programs.

Implementing Policies. The City's statements of its commitments to consistent actions.

Implementation. Actions, procedures, programs, or techniques that carry out policies.

Infill Development. The development of new housing or other buildings on scattered vacant lots in a built-up area or on new building parcels created by permitted lot splits.

Jobs-Housing Balance. A ratio used to describe the adequacy of the housing supply within a defined area to meet the needs of persons working within the same area. The General Plan uses SCAG's definition which is a job total equal to 1.2 times the number of housing units within the area under consideration.

Land Use Classification. A system for classifying and designating the appropriate use of properties.

Live-Work Units. Buildings or spaces within buildings that are used jointly for commercial and residential purposes where the residential use of the space is secondary or accessory to the primary use as a place of work.

Low-Income Household. A household with an annual income usually no greater than 51 percent to 80 percent of the area median family income adjusted by household size, as determined by a survey of incomes conducted by a city or a county, or in the absence of such a survey, based on the latest available eligibility limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program.

Low-income Housing Tax Credits. Tax reductions provided by the federal and State governments for investors in housing for low-income households.

Manufactured Housing. Residential structures that are constructed entirely in the factory, and which since June 15, 1976, have been regulated by the federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety

Standards Act of 1974 under the administration of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). (See “Mobile home” and “Modular Unit.”)

Mixed-Use. Properties on which various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, and residential, are combined in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development project with significant functional interrelationships and a coherent physical design. A “single site” may include contiguous properties.

Moderate-Income Household. A household with an annual income usually no greater than 81 percent to 120 percent of the area median family income adjusted by household size, as determined by a survey of incomes conducted by a city or a county, or in the absence of such a survey, based on the latest available eligibility limits established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program.

Monthly Housing Expense. Total principal, interest, taxes, and insurance paid by the borrower on a monthly basis. Used with gross income to determine affordability.

Multiple Family Building. A detached building designed and used exclusively as a dwelling by three or more families occupying separate suites.

No Net Loss. Requires sufficient adequate sites to be available at all times throughout the RHNA planning period to meet a jurisdiction’s remaining unmet housing needs for each income category. To comply with the No Net Loss Law, as jurisdictions make decisions regarding zoning and land use, or development occurs, jurisdictions must assess their ability to accommodate new housing in each income category on the remaining sites in their housing element site inventories. A jurisdiction must add additional sites to its inventory if land use decisions or development results in a shortfall of sufficient sites to accommodate its remaining housing need for each income category.

Ordinance. A law or regulation set forth and adopted by a governmental authority, usually a city or county.

Overcrowded Housing Unit. A housing unit in which the members of the household, or group are prevented from the enjoyment of privacy because of small room size and housing size. The U.S. Bureau of Census defines an overcrowded housing unit as one which is occupied by more than one person per room.

Parcel. A lot or tract of land.

Planning Area. The area directly addressed by the general plan. A city’s planning area typically encompasses the City limits and potentially annexable land within its sphere of influence.

Policy. A specific statement of principle or of guiding actions that implies clear commitment but is not mandatory. A general direction that a governmental agency sets to follow, in order to meet its objectives before undertaking an action program. (See “Program.”)

Poverty Level. As used by the U.S. Census Bureau, families and unrelated individuals are classified as being above or below the poverty level based on a poverty index that provides a range of income cutoffs or “poverty thresholds” varying by size of family, number of children, and age of householder. The income cutoffs are updated each year to reflect the change in the Consumer Price Index.

Program. An action, activity, or strategy carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve a specific goal or objective. Policies and programs establish the “who,” “how” and “when” for carrying out the “what” and “where” of goals and objectives.

Redevelop. To demolish existing buildings; or to increase the overall floor area existing on a property; or both; irrespective of whether a change occurs in land use.

Regional. Pertaining to activities or economies at a scale greater than that of a single jurisdiction and affecting a broad geographic area.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). A quantification by the local council of governments of existing and projected housing need, by household income group, for all localities within a region.

Rehabilitation. The repair, preservation, and/or improvement of substandard housing.

Residential. Land designated in the General Plan and Zoning Code for buildings consisting of dwelling units. May be improved, vacant, or unimproved. (See “Dwelling Unit.”)

Residential Care Facility. A facility that provides 24-hour care and supervision to its residents.

Residential, Multiple Family. Usually three or more dwelling units on a single site, which may be in the same or separate buildings.

Residential, Single-Family. A single dwelling unit on a building site.

Retrofit. To add materials and/or devices to an existing building or system to improve its operation, safety, or efficiency. Buildings have been retrofitted to use solar energy and to strengthen their ability to withstand earthquakes, for example.

Rezoning. An amendment to the map to effect a change in the nature, density, or intensity of uses allowed in a zoning district and/or on a designated parcel or land area.

Section 8 Rental Assistance Program. A federal (HUD) rent-subsidy program that is one of the main sources of federal housing assistance for low-income households. The program operates by providing “housing assistance payments” to owners, developers, and public housing agencies to make up the difference between the “Fair Market Rent” of a unit (set by HUD) and the household’s contribution toward the rent, which is calculated at 30 percent of the household’s adjusted gross monthly income (GMI). “Section 8” includes programs for new construction, existing housing, and substantial or moderate housing rehabilitation.

Shared Living Facility. The occupancy of a dwelling unit by persons of more than one family in order to reduce housing expenses and provide social contact, mutual support, and assistance. Shared living facilities serving six or fewer persons are permitted in all residential districts by Section 1566.3 of the California Health and Safety Code.

Single-Family Dwelling, Attached. A dwelling unit occupied or intended for occupancy by only one household that is structurally connected with at least one other such dwelling unit. (See “Townhouse.”)

Single-Family Dwelling, Detached. A dwelling unit occupied or intended for occupancy by only one household that is structurally independent from any other such dwelling unit or structure intended for residential or other use. (See “Family.”)

Single Room Occupancy (SRO). A single room, typically 80-250 square feet, with a sink and closet, but which requires the occupant to share a communal bathroom, shower, and kitchen.

Subsidize. To assist by payment of a sum of money or by the granting to terms or favors that reduces the need for monetary expenditures. Housing subsidies may take the forms of mortgage interest deductions or tax credits from federal and/or State income taxes, sale or lease at less than market value of land to be used for the construction of housing, payments to supplement a minimum affordable rent, and the like.

Substandard Housing. Residential dwellings that, because of their physical condition, do not provide safe and sanitary housing.

Supportive Housing. Housing with no limit on length of stay, that is occupied by the target population as defined in California Health and Safety Code Section 53260(d), and that is linked to onsite or offsite services that assist the supportive housing resident in retaining the housing, improving his or her health status, and maximizing his or her ability to live and, when possible, work in the community. “Target population” means adults with low incomes having one or more disabilities, including mental illness, HIV or AIDS, substance abuse, or other chronic health conditions, or individuals eligible for services provided under the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act and may, among other populations, include families with children, elderly persons, young adults aging out of the foster care system, individuals exiting from institutional settings, veterans, or homeless people. [California Health and Safety Code Sections 50675.14(b) and 53260(d)]

Target Areas. Specifically, designated sections of the community where loans and grants are made to bring about a specific outcome, such as the rehabilitation of housing affordable by Very-Low and Low-income households.

Tax Increment. Additional tax revenues that result from increases in property values within a redevelopment area. State law permits the tax increment to be earmarked for redevelopment purposes but requires at least 20 percent to be used to increase and improve the community’s supply of very low- and low-income housing.

Tenure. A housing unit is owner-occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit, even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. A cooperative or condominium unit is owner-occupied only if the owner or co-owner lives in it. All other occupied units are classified as renter-occupied including units rented for cash rent and those occupied without payment of cash rent.

Townhouse. A townhouse is a dwelling unit located in a group of three (3) or more attached dwelling units with no dwelling unit located above or below another and with each dwelling unit having its own exterior entrance.

Transitional Housing. Shelter provided to the homeless for an extended period, often as long as 18 months, and generally integrated with other social services and counseling programs to assist in the transition to self-sufficiency through the acquisition of a stable income and permanent housing. (See “Homeless” and “Emergency Shelter.”)

Undevelopable. Specific areas where topographic, geologic, and/or superficial soil conditions indicate a significant danger to future occupants and a liability to the City.

Underutilized. Areas in the City that are capable of being developed at a higher density which may include: nonvacant publicly owned surplus or excess land; portions of blighted areas with abandoned or vacant buildings; existing high opportunity developed areas with mixed-used potential; nonvacant substandard or irregular lots that could be consolidated; and any other suitable underutilized land.

Vacant. A vacant site is a site without any houses, offices, buildings, or other significant improvements on it. Improvements are generally defined as development of the land (such as a paved parking lot or income production improvements such as crops, high voltage power lines, oil-wells, etc.) or structures on a property that are permanent and add significantly to the value of the property.

Acronyms Used

ACS: American Community Survey
BMPs: Best Management Practices
CALTRANS: California Department of Transportation
CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act
CHAS: Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy
CIP: Capital Improvement Program
DDS: Department of Developmental Services
DIF: Development Impact Fee
DU/AC: Dwelling Units Per Acre
EDD: California Employment Development Department
FAR: Floor Area Ratio
FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency
HCD: Department of Housing and Community Development
HOA: Homeowners Association
HUD: Department of Housing and Urban Development
LAFCO: Local Agency Formation Commission
MFI: Median Family Income
NPDES: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
RTFH: Regional Task Force on the Homeless
RTP: Regional Transportation Plan
SCAG: Southern California Association of Governments
SPA: Sectional Planning Area
STF: Summary Tape File (U.S. Census)
TOD: Transit-Oriented Development
TDM: Transportation Demand Management
TSM: Transportation Systems Management
WCP: Water Conservation Plan