Housing Element Key Terms

Accessory Dwelling Unit

An accessory dwelling unit is a detached or attached dwelling unit that includes permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation and is generally smaller and located on the same parcel as a proposed or existing primary dwelling.

Cost Burden

A household is cost-burdened when it spends more than 30 percent of its income on rent and utilities. A household is considered severely cost-burdened when it spends more than 50 percent of its income on these expenses. Cost burden is also known as “overpayment.”

Density

The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. Densities specified in the General Plan are expressed in residential dwelling units (not including Accessory Dwelling Units) per gross acre or per net developable acre.

Displacement

The involuntary relocation of current residents or businesses caused by foreclosure, eviction, rent increases, negligent landlords, or environmental catastrophe. Displacement mitigation strategies may include tenant protections, conservation of existing stock, preservation of units at-risk of conversion to market-rate uses, acquisition and rehabilitation of existing stock, including naturally occurring affordable housing, and removing barriers to building affordable housing.

Duplex/Triplex/Fourplex

Two, three, or four attached dwelling units on a single parcel.

Dwelling Unit

One or more habitable rooms designed for occupancy by only one household for living and sleeping purposes.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

The gross floor area of a building or buildings on a parcel divided by the net parcel area or site area.

Housing Mobility Strategies

Actions that work to remove barriers to housing in areas of opportunity or strategically enhance access to education and economic development opportunities.

Missing Middle Housing

Housing types that fall somewhere between a single-family home and apartment buildings, such as townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and courtyard clusters. These housing types bring “gentle density” to neighborhoods while seamlessly fitting additional housing into existing residential areas.

Mixed-Use

Developments that allow residential, retail, commercial, office and/or public uses with flexible parking and setback requirements. Individual mixed-use projects are not expected to contain any specific combination of these uses.

Multifamily Residential

A building used and designed as a residence for two or more households living independently of each other with individual entrances and living space.

Overcrowding

A residential unit is considered overcrowded when it is occupied by 1.0 persons or more per room (excluding bathrooms and kitchens). Units with more than 1.5 persons per room are considered severely overcrowded.

Place-based Strategies

Actions focused on conserving and improving assets in areas of lower opportunity and concentrated poverty such as targeted investment in neighborhood revitalization, preserving or rehabilitating existing affordable housing, improving infrastructure, schools, employment, parks, transportation and other community amenities.

Single-family

A building or structure designed exclusively for occupancy by one household.

Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) Unit

Housing composed of individual efficiency dwelling units, where each unit has a minimum floor area of 150 square feet and a maximum size of 500 square feet intended for occupancy by a single eligible individual. The unit need not, but may, contain food preparation or sanitary facilities, or both. To qualify as an SRO, no more than 10 percent of the units may contain individual kitchens and bathrooms. Any unit not developed with an individual kitchen or bathroom must have access to common areas containing kitchen and bathroom facilities.

Transitional and Supportive Housing

Supportive Housing means housing with no limit on length of stay that is linked to services that assist the supportive housing resident in improving their health status, while maximizing their ability to live and work in the community. Transitional Housing consists of housing which offers Supportive Services, usually for a period of up to 24 months, to facilitate movement to permanent housing for persons with low incomes who may have one or more disabilities, and may include adults, emancipated minors, families with children, elderly persons, young adults aging out of the foster care system, individuals exiting from institutional settings, veterans, and homeless people.