

Glossary of Common Terms

There are several sections of the LDC Revision text which provide definitions of terms in use in the Land Development Code. See <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/land-development-code-drafts> to get the full code. Glossary items can be found in these sections:

- 23-3A-2 (Page 225) – Establishment of Zones – lists all the zoning categories
- 23-3C-2 (page 269) – Land Use Definitions – terms specific to the zones and their descriptions that follow
- 23-12A-1 (page 1337) – General Definitions – terms used throughout the code

In case you don't use the LDC regularly, these are definitions of terms used in material published by NWACA.

- **ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT**
 - **RESIDENTIAL.** A subordinate dwelling unit added to, created within, or detached from a primary residential structure that provides basic requirements for independent living, sleeping, cooking, and sanitation for one or more persons and which is located on the same lot as the primary structure.
 - **COMMERCIAL.** A subordinate dwelling unit added to, created within, or detached from a primary commercial structure that provides basic requirements for independent living, sleeping, cooking, and sanitation for one or more persons and which is located on the same lot as the primary structure.
- **COTTAGE COURT.** A series of small detached structures (cottages), each containing a single dwelling unit. The cottages are arranged to define a shared courtyard, typically perpendicular to the thoroughfare. The shared courtyard takes the place of a private yard.
- **FAR - Floor Area Ratio**
 - **GROSS (GFA).** The total enclosed area of all floors in a building with a clear height of more than five feet, measured to the outside surface of the exterior walls. The term excludes loading docks, porches, stoops, basements, attics, stories below grade plane, parking facilities, driveways, and enclosed loading berths and off-street maneuvering areas.
 - **RESIDENTIAL GROSS.** Gross floor area occupied by residents or serving residents without being open to the general public. Includes areas planned or proposed for these purposes.
 - **FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR).** The ratio of gross floor area to gross site area.
- **HEIGHT.** Height can be determined in two ways: top of top plate; or maximum overall height.
 - **OVERALL.** The vertical distance measured from the midpoint of the lowest and highest points of the structure adjacent to the finished grade to:
 - (i) For a flat roof, the highest point of the coping;
 - (ii) For a mansard roof, the deck line;
 - (iii) For a pitched or hip roof, the average height of the highest gable; or
 - (iv) For other roof styles, the highest point of the building.
 - **TO TOP OF TOP PLATE.** The vertical distance measured from the midpoint of the lowest and highest points of the structure adjacent to the finished grade to the top of the top plate [*top plate = top horizontal member that supports the roof*]

- **LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE (LDC)** – The Land Development Code applies to all development, division, and use of land and shall be construed broadly to accomplish this scope. Specific standards apply within the full purpose, limited purpose, and extraterritorial jurisdiction, as provided under Section 23-2A-1020 [ed. note: that section of the code identifies which specific portions apply to each type of jurisdiction; the Revised LDC is section 23 of the City Code; the prior LDC is Section 25, and portions of it still apply as zoning category F25 in the Revised LDC]
- Mixed-middle housing – duplexes, townhomes, and small multi-family developments (From Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint Implementation)
- **Mixed-Use** - (MU) zone category allows a horizontal and vertical mix of uses, including housing, office, and services.
- **USE.** The conduct of an activity, or the performance of a function, on a parcel or in a structure.
 - **CONDITIONAL USE.** A use that is allowed on a discretionary and conditional basis in compliance with the conditional use permit process established in Section 23-3B-1040 (Conditional Use Permit).
 - **MINOR USE.** A use allowed on a discretionary and conditional basis in compliance with the minor use permit established in Section 23-3B-1050 (Minor Use Permit).
 - **PERMITTED USE.** Uses that are allowed by right and are not subject to the conditions of approval, mandatory review periods, or expiration periods as required for conditional use permits, minor use permits, or other discretionary approvals.
- **WIDTH (MEASUREMENT).** Distance between side lot lines measured parallel to front lot line and at the minimum front setback line.
- Zoning District (aka Zone) – the category assigned to a parcel of land; characteristics of the zone define what can legally be constructed on that parcel