

A Technical Guide to Zoning for AB 2923 Conformance

PUBLIC DRAFT: JUNE 2020

APPENDIX 1 Glossary of Terms and Acronyms





Photo Credit: Sergio Ruiz

Glossary of Terms

2017 TOD Guidelines: A document written by BART to inform local jurisdictions and developers about the type of development BART wishes to see in station areas. TOD Place Types and their development targets from the 2017 TOD Guidelines, along with the law’s calculations for FAR, serve as the baseline zoning standards for AB 2923, which are shown in Exhibits 5 and 6.

AB 2923- Eligible Parcels: Land owned by BART that meets each of the AB 2923 criteria.

Affordability Restriction: Also known as a “Deed Restriction,” refers to a period of time in a recorded document stating where the owner of an affordable unit is prohibited from transferring the unit, whether through a rental agreement or sale, to another party who meets the stated income standards.

Affordable Housing: Housing subject to a recorded covenant, ordinance, or law that restricts rents or sale prices to affordable levels. Typically, there are different levels of affordability based on household income and size, from extremely low to middle/moderate-income.

Baseline Zoning Standards: Derived from the 2017 TOD Guidelines and AB 2923, these are the zoning standards that will apply to AB 2923- eligible parcels as of July 1, 2020, and are outlined in Exhibits 5 and 6 of this document. They provide TOD-supportive zoning to meet the AB 2923 requirements for residential density, building height, floor area ratio, and parking (vehicle and bicycle).

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): A State law requiring State and local agencies to analyze the potential impacts of a project on the environment, disclose their findings to the public, and to mitigate impacts where feasible.

Density Bonus: A density increase over and above the otherwise maximum allowable gross residential density and/or FAR under the State Density Bonus Law (Cal. Gov. Code section 65915 – 65918).

District (The): Shorthand for the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District, or BART.

Dwelling Units per Acre (DU/acre): The ratio of the number of dwelling units of the development proposed for the project divided by the total area of the parcel or parcels used by the project. The “total area of the parcel or parcels used by the project” means the parcel or parcels on which a TOD project is situated, as determined by BART.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR): The ratio of gross building area of the development, excluding structured parking areas, proposed for the project, divided by the total area of the parcel or parcels used by the project, where “gross building area” means the sum of all finished areas of all floors of a building included within the outside faces of its exterior walls. (PUC section 29010.1(a)(3)). The “total area of the parcel or parcels used by the project” means the parcel or parcels on which a TOD project is situated, as determined by BART.

Form-Based Code: Emphasizes the form and character of development rather than land use classification or numeric standards. It often does not include development intensity (FAR) or density (DU/acre) standards.

General Plan: A local jurisdiction’s long-term blueprint for future growth. It is the foundation for amending the zoning code, which “implements” the general plan.

Gross Building Area: The sum of all finished areas of all floors of a building included within the outside faces of its exterior walls. (PUC section 29010.1(a)(3)).

Local Jurisdiction: A city (including a charter city), a county, or a city and county.

Local Zoning Ordinance or Code: A local jurisdiction’s written regulation and/or laws which define how land in specific geographic locations can be used.

Lot Area: Expressed in square feet, refers to the TOD project area, which is the parcel(s) of land on which a TOD project is situated, as defined by PUC section 29010.1(9) and determined by BART.

Low Income Household: Persons and families whose income does not exceed the qualifying limits for lower income families as established and amended from time to time pursuant to Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937. (Cal. Health & Safety Code section 50079.5)

Lowest Permissible Density Limit: The density limit that a jurisdiction is permitted to set according to AB 2923. The baseline zoning standard is 75 dwelling units per acre for all Place Types.

Lowest Permissible Floor Area Ratio Limit: The FAR limit that a jurisdiction is permitted to set according to AB 2923. The baseline zoning standards vary by TOD Place Type.

Lowest Permissible Height Limit: The building height limit that a jurisdiction is permitted to set according to AB 2923. The baseline zoning standards vary by TOD Place Type.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC): The transportation planning, financing and coordinating agency for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

Minimum Allowable Density Limit: The density limit that a jurisdiction is permitted to set according to AB 2923. The baseline zoning standard is 75 dwelling units per acre for all TOD Place Types.

Minimum Allowable Floor Area Ratio Limit: The FAR limit that a jurisdiction is permitted to set according to AB 2923. The baseline zoning standards vary by TOD Place Type.

Minimum Allowable Height Limit: The building height limit that a jurisdiction is permitted to set according to AB 2923. The baseline zoning standards vary by TOD Place Type.

Mixed-Use Development: A development with various uses, like residential, office, commercial, and institutional, in one building or multiple buildings, on a single site, with significant functional interrelationships and a coherent physical design. A “single site” may include contiguous properties.

Neighborhood/Town Center: A TOD Place Type with a mix of uses, located in an area that offers relatively robust transit services within urban areas, that serve a more localized population of residents and workers, rather than attracting significant patronage from beyond the local area.

Parcel: A lot in single ownership or under single control, usually considered a unit for purposes of development.

Priority Development Area (PDA): Neighborhoods near transit and other amenities that city or county governments have identified and approved for future growth. PDAs are key to the “Focused Growth” strategy at the heart of MTC’s Plan Bay Area, the nine-county region’s long-range transportation and land use plan.

Regional Center: A TOD Place Type which is located in the most urbanized centers of the region’s major cities and are assumed under Plan Bay Area to accommodate high volumes of housing growth in the coming decades.

Residential Density: The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land, typically referred to as dwelling units per acre (DU/acre).

Secure Bike Parking: Individual storage units or a locked enclosure with racks within the enclosure to which bikes can be locked, providing protecting from inclement weather and theft.

Setback: Separation between a lot line (and/or right-of-way line) and a building or structure.

Shared Parking: vehicle parking spaces that are shared by more than one user, which allows parking facilities to be used more efficiently, allowing motorists to access parking regardless of their status as a resident, retail customer, worker, BART patron, and so forth.

Specific Plan: A local land use plan to implement the goals and policies of a general plan, and generally containing the intended distribution of land uses, detailed development standards, infrastructure requirements, and implementation measures for the development of a specific geographic area.

Station Entrance: The entry point into an enclosed station structure, or, where that point is not clear or does not exist, the station fare gates.

Step-back: A setback of the upper-story of a development (i.e. of the building plane) to reduce building mass and increase light and air to the street and surrounding area. It is the portion of a building above a certain height that is further pushed-in towards the center of the property.

TOD Place Type: The type of TOD development appropriate for a BART station area, as defined in BART’s 2017 TOD Guidelines, based on neighborhood context, frequency and type of transit, quality of the streets, concentration of jobs, and range of services. The three TOD Place Types are Regional Center, Urban Neighborhood/City Center, and Neighborhood/Town Center.

TOD Project Area: The parcel or parcels of land on which a TOD project is situated. (PUC section 29010(1)(a)(9)).

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD): A pattern of development that encourages greater concentration and intermixing of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces oriented around public transportation services.

Transportation or Travel Demand Management (TDM) Program: A strategy for reducing demand on the road system by reducing the number of vehicles using the roadways and/or increasing the number of persons per vehicle. For example, TDM attempts to reduce the number of persons who drive alone during the commute period and to increase the number in carpools, vanpools, buses or trains, carpools, vanpools, or walking or biking.

Unbundled Parking: The practice of leasing parking spaces separate from the lease of commercial space or a residential unit. Unbundling allows office tenants and residents to choose and pay for how much parking they want, ensures that non-vehicle owners do not pay for parking they neither want nor need, and reduces parking demand.

Urban Neighborhood/City Center: A TOD Place Type describing communities that have a mixed-use character including both job centers and existing housing at various densities.

Very Low-Income Household: Persons in a household and families whose incomes do not exceed the qualifying limits for very low-income families as established and amended from time to time pursuant to Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937. (Cal. Health & Safety Code section 50105).

Zoning Envelope: Parameters for development on AB 2923-eligible parcels created through zoning, allowing for dwelling units per acre, building height, and FAR by TOD Place Type. This envelope is the set of zoning parameters within which a TOD Project is built.

Acronyms and Initialisms

The following is a summary of the acronyms and initialisms used in this document

AB	Assembly bill
BART	San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
DU	Dwelling unit
FAR	Floor area ratio
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GIS	Geographic information systems
MTC	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
PDA	Priority development area
PUC	Public Utilities Code
TDM	Travel demand management
TOD	Transit-oriented development