



# DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

## BUILDING & SAFETY

### ADU Conversion of Existing Attached Structure (Garage)

44933 N. Fern Avenue  
Lancaster, CA 93534  
(661)723-6144  
www.cityoflanasterca.org

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## ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT CONVERSION OF EXISTING ATTACHED STRUCTURE (GARAGE CONVERSION)

California State Government Code Section 65852.2 requires that local jurisdictions allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by-right under certain mandatory development standards. Any subsequent revisions to Government Code Section 65852.2 or adoption of a local ordinance will govern.

This document is intended to provide guidance to applicants on **prescriptive provisions** for the conversions of **legally existing** one-story attached structures such as garages, utility rooms, storage rooms, recreation rooms, hobby shops, accessory living quarters, etc. to ADUs. This does not apply to new construction of ADUs, conversion of detached structures, removal of more than 50% of existing walls (major remodel), or conversion to ADUs accompanied with any addition or expansion. This document is for reference only and is not a substitute for accurate drawings prepared for each proposed construction project. Any deviation from these prescriptive provisions will require compliance with the California Residential Code (CRC) and the California Building Code (CBC).

**Each property may be subject to site-specific conditions and additional requirements may apply.** The Department of Building and Safety may request covered or concealed work to be exposed for examination prior to issuance of Certificate of Occupancy.

### FOUNDATION

1. Exterior walls and interior bearing walls shall be supported on continuous footings.
2. Depth of footings below the natural and finished grades shall not be less than 12 inches, including footings underneath an infilled garage door opening or match existing footing depth if deeper than 12 inches. If any portion of the structure has an existing slab without any footing or is less than 12-inch in depth, the foundation shall be underpinned to a minimum of 12-inch in width and 24-inch in depth.
3. Minimum concrete strength for new or underpinned footings shall be 2,500 psi.
4. Existing footings are permitted to remain. New footings shall be reinforced with four ½-inch diameter deformed reinforcing bars (two bars at top of footing, two bars at bottom of footing).
5. An approved vapor barrier coating shall be applied on top of the slab if it does not have the required moisture barrier membrane. New concrete floor slabs on grade shall be placed on a 4-inch fill of coarse aggregate or on a 2-inch sand bed covered with a minimum 6 mil moisture barrier membrane.
6. Existing slabs are permitted to remain. New concrete floor slabs shall be at least 3-½ inches thick and shall be reinforced with ½-inch diameter deformed reinforcing bars. Reinforcing bars shall be spaced at maximum 16 inches on center.
7. Existing anchor bolts are permitted to remain. New anchor bolts shall be a minimum of ½-inch diameter x 10" long with 7" embedment spaced at a maximum 6 feet on center. Post-installed anchor bolts shall have



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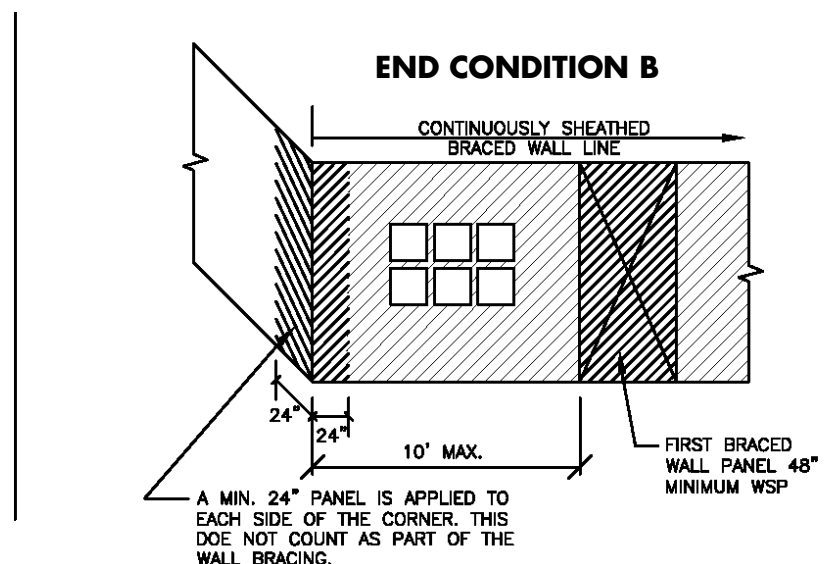
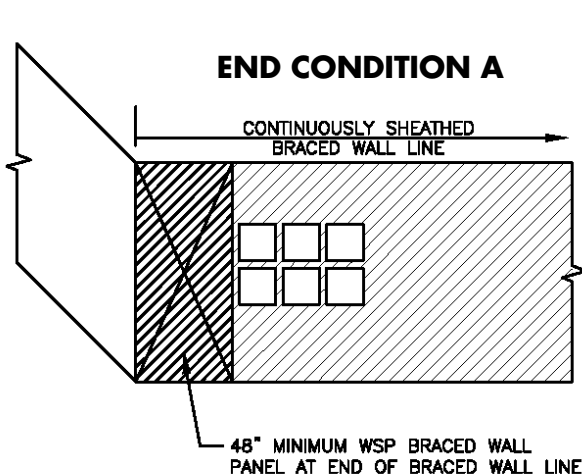
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an approved ICC-ES Report or IAPMO Evaluation Report and shall require special inspection by a deputy inspector.

- Existing sills and sleepers are permitted to remain. New sills and sleepers on a concrete slab which is in direct contact with the ground shall be preservative-treated wood in accordance with American Wood Protection Agency (AWPA) U1.
- Concrete foundation walls shall extend a minimum of 6 inches above the finished grade adjacent to the foundation.
- New exterior plaster (stucco) walls shall be provided with a corrosion resistant weep screed.

## FRAMING

- Existing wall framing may remain unless there is an increase in load of over 400 pounds (i.e. mechanical equipment). If there are no ceiling joists, ceiling joists shall be required to accommodate additional loads (i.e., ceiling drywall, lighting, and mechanical equipment). New framing or altered framing shall comply with current CRC regulations and Wood Frame Prescriptive Provisions ("Type V Construction Guidelines").
- Existing roof framing must comply with current CRC regulations and Wood Frame Prescriptive Provisions.
- The infill walls of existing openings such as a garage door opening shall be 2x4 studs at a maximum 16 inches on center. Existing garage door headers are permitted to remain.
- Headers for new openings in existing walls shall comply with current CRC regulations.
- Bracing for new openings in existing walls shall comply with the following requirements. Walls with new openings shall provide a minimum total length of 10 feet of Wood Structural Panel (WSP) braced wall panels and shall meet End Condition A or B below. WSP braced wall panels shall be a minimum of 4 feet in length and shall have 15/32-inch minimum thickness with 8d common nails at 6 inch spacing along panel edges, 12 inch spacing at intermediate supports, and 3/8-inch distance to panel edge. 1/2-inch minimum thickness gypsum wall board shall be installed on the side of the wall opposite the bracing material. If these conditions are not met, or new braced walls with post-installed hold downs are proposed, engineering will be required.





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## FIRE PROTECTION AND FIRE-RESISTANCE RATED CONSTRUCTION

1. Automatic residential fire sprinkler system shall not be required for the ADU conversion when the existing house does not have an automatic residential fire sprinkler system.
2. Exterior walls less than 5 feet from the property line of a non-sprinklered ADU conversion or less than 3 feet from the property line of a sprinklered ADU conversion shall be 1-hour fire-resistance rated construction. The 1-hour fire-resistance wall can be achieved by installing 5/8" type X gypsum board on the entire interior side of the wall up to the roof line and 7/8" stucco on the exterior side.
3. No openings shall be permitted in the exterior walls of a non-sprinklered ADU conversion where the exterior wall is less than 3 feet to the property line. The area of exterior wall openings of a non-sprinklered ADU conversion located between 3 feet and 5 feet of the property line shall be limited to 25% of the wall area.
4. Shared walls between the primary dwelling unit and the conversion shall be 1-hour fire-resistance rated construction. The 1-hour fire-resistance wall can be achieved by installing 5/8" type X gypsum board on the both sides of the wall up to the roof line or underside of floor joists.
5. Smoke alarms shall be provided in each sleeping room and immediately outside of each separate sleeping area. Smoke alarms or smoke detectors shall be installed a minimum of 20 feet horizontal distance from a permanently installed cooking appliance.
6. Carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed where the unit contains fuel burning appliance and shall be provided immediately outside of each separate sleeping area.

## MEANS OF EGRESS AND EMERGENCY ESCAPE

1. The egress (main entry) door shall be side-hinged and shall be a minimum of 3 feet in width and 6 feet 8 inches in height. All interior doors through which occupants pass shall have a minimum width of 32 inches.
2. Emergency escape openings shall be provided from every sleeping room and shall open directly to a yard or public way. Emergency escape openings shall have a minimum clear height of 24 inches, a minimum clear width of 20 inches, and a minimum openable area of 5 square feet. The bottom of the emergency escape opening shall not be greater than 44 inches above the finished floor.

## INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT

1. Habitable room shall have a floor area of not less than 70 square feet and shall not be less than 7 feet in any horizontal dimension. A minimum ceiling height of 7 feet shall be provided throughout.
2. The ADU shall provide permanent provisions for cooking, at a minimum: kitchen sink, cooktop, and refrigerator, each with 30 inches minimum clear space in front.
3. Habitable rooms shall have natural ventilation through an opening of not less than 4 percent of the room's floor area, unless a whole-house mechanical ventilation system is installed.



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4. Habitable rooms shall have natural lighting through an aggregate glazing (window) area of not less than 8 percent of the room's floor area, unless an artificial lighting is installed to produce an average illumination of 6 foot-candles at a height of 30 inches above the floor in conjunction with a whole-house mechanical ventilation system.
5. The unit shall provide heating facilities capable of maintaining a room temperature of not less than 68°F at a point 3 feet above the floor and 2 feet from exterior walls. Portable space heaters shall not be used to achieve compliance with this section.
6. The unit shall provide air conditioning to maintain a maximum temperature of 80 °F in all habitable rooms.
7. The unit shall provide a separate bathroom containing a toilet, sink, and bathtub or shower. Bathrooms shall provide mechanical exhaust fans with a minimum intermittent ventilation rate of 50 cubic feet per minute and humidistat in unit or at switch. The center line of any toilet shall be located a minimum 15" from any side wall or obstruction, and a minimum 24" clear space in front of the toilet shall be provided.
8. Attics shall provide a minimum cross ventilation of 1/150 of the area of the vented space. An attic access opening shall be provided with minimum dimensions of 22 inches by 30 inches and a minimum headroom clearance of 30 inches. The attic access opening shall be located in a hallway or other readily accessible location.

## DRAINAGE

1. Provide a minimum grade fall of 6" within the first 10 feet from the foundation wall (5%) to a swale sloped at 1% towards the front of the property.

## ENERGY / GREEN / PLUMBING / ELECTRICAL

1. The ADU shall comply with California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24). The CF1R Residential Certificate of Compliance shall be attached to the plans (CF1R-ALT-05-E). If the CF1R requires Home Energy Rating System (HERS) field verification, the CF1R shall be registered with a certified HERS provider.
2. The ADU shall comply with applicable CALGreen Building Code Mandatory Measures.
3. Detached ADU shall have an independent connection with a public or private sewer.
4. The ADU shall have a separate water shut off valve, accessible in the unit.
5. The ADU shall require a separate electrical panel.



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## MINIMUM PLAN SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT OR ADDITION

*Building plans for new **Accessory Dwelling Unit or Residential Addition** construction must contain the following items in order to be submitted for plan check:*

All plans must be legible, fully dimensioned, and drawn to scale. Plan sheets must be 11" x 17" minimum and submitted in digital format (PDF only).

### SITE PLAN + ADMINISTRATIVE

- **Site Plan:** Lot size, locations and dimensions of property lines, adjacent streets, setbacks from property lines, locations of other structures, easements, north arrow, scale, contours/drainage pattern.
- **Drainage Plan:** Show drainage away from the structure towards the front of the property in compliance with required grade and slope.
- **Cover Sheet/ General Notes:** Provide complete information for owner, applicant, and designer. Applicable codes and editions (2022 CBC, 2022 CRC, 2023 LA County Fire Code, etc.), occupancy classification, type of construction, description detailing scope of work, lot area, existing and proposed building area, number of existing and proposed bedrooms and bathrooms, material specifications, and index of drawings.

### ARCHITECTURAL

- **Floor Plans:** Walls, partitions, door and window locations and schedule, existing and intended room uses. Floor plan must identify all existing and new construction for all affected floors.
- **Roof Plan:** Roof drainage pattern, roofing material and slopes, locations of hips/valleys/ridges, eave overhang dimensions, attic vent locations (for attic spaces).
- **Exterior Elevations:** Wall covering material, plate and building heights, window/door locations, roofing material and slopes, attic vent locations, finish grade lines, veneers.
- **Cross Sections:** Full height and width, indicating framing, foundation, and insulation in at least two orthogonal directions.
- **Schedules:** Doors and windows, and exterior/interior finishes

### STRUCTURAL

- **Foundation Plan:** Locations of all new footings, anchor bolt and hold-down schedules, complete foundation details.
- **Framing Plan:** Size, spacing, and span of all floor and ceiling joists, roof rafters, valleys, hips, beams and headers. All lateral force resisting elements, including shear wall locations and schedule, and diaphragm construction specifications.
- **Shear Wall Schedule:** Shear wall specifications, nailing, and allowable capacity.
- **Prefabricated Trusses:** Plans must indicate type of truss and connection details. Truss Plans must be stamped and signed by the architect or engineer of record stating that he/she has reviewed the plans for compliance.
- **Details:** Complete framing and foundation details for all new structural elements.
- **Structural Analysis:** Calculations shall be provided to substantiate the structural plans if deviating from the conventional construction provisions of the Residential Code. The structural calculations shall address both vertical and lateral forces, and shall be wet stamped and signed by a licensed engineer or architect registered in the state of California.
  - **Exception:** An ADU or addition of wood frame construction, no more than one story in height and designed per the Wood Frame Prescriptive Provisions (City of Lancaster DPW0551; formerly Type V Construction) is exempt from this requirement.



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#### ENERGY + GREEN + MISC. REQUIREMENTS

- **Building Energy Efficiency:** Certificate of compliance (CF1R) or Energy Calculations with HERS verification. All for Climate Zone 14
- **Green Building:** Requirements, details, and notations shall be included in the plans for new buildings and additions/alterations.
- **Mechanical:** Locations and manufacturer specifications of all heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment.
- **Electrical:** Locations and specifications of outlets, fixtures, smoke/carbon monoxide detectors, exhaust fans and locations and sizes of subpanels and main panels and connection of electrical. Include wire sizes and types. Include notes for conduit burial depth.
- **Plumbing:** Locations and dimensions of plumbing fixtures. Gas line size calculations for high BTU equipment. Connections for gas, water, waste – include pipe types and conduit burial depths.
- **Fire Sprinklers:** (Deferred submittal) Fire sprinkler plans must be submitted to LA County Fire for all new detached ADUs if the primary residence is sprinklered, regardless of size and for all new ADUs over 1200 square feet whether or not the primary residence is sprinklered.
- **Solar:** (Deferred Submittal) Solar plans demonstrating compliance with the minimum photovoltaic size requirements per California Energy Code Section 150.1(c)14 are required for all new detached ADUs.

#### NOTE:

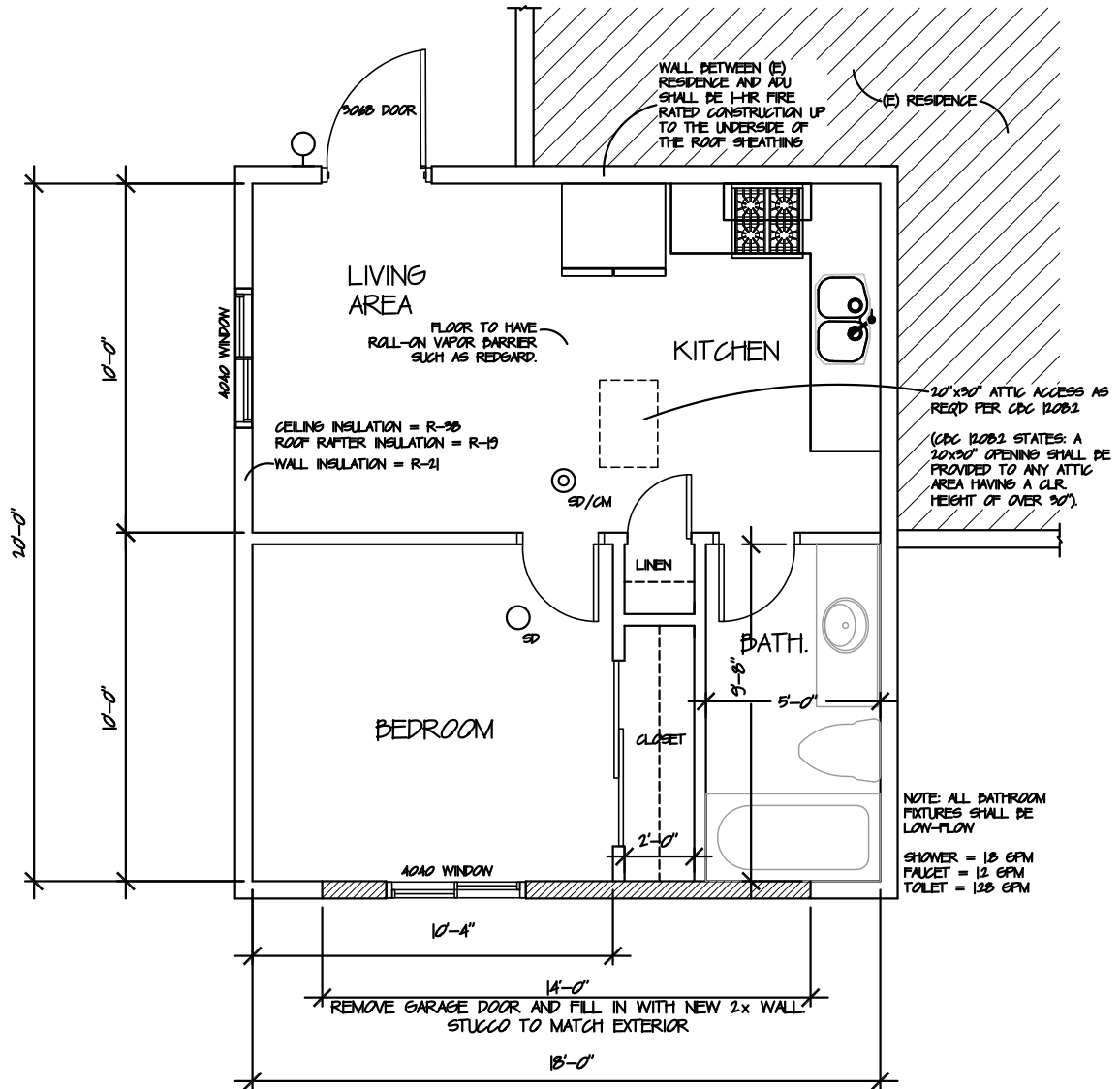
1. This is not a complete list of all document submittal requirements. Additional information may be required after plan review.
2. Other departments and agencies review and approvals may be required.



# GARAGE CONVERSION EXAMPLE\*

\*THIS IS ONLY AN EXAMPLE, CONDITIONS MAY VARY

SHT. 1 OF 2



\*ALL CONSTRUCTION SHALL BE PER WOOD FRAME PRESCRIPTIVE PROVISIONS (TYPE V) GUIDELINES

INSULATION SHALL BE PER CA. ENERGY CODE (TITLE 24) PRESCRIPTIVE REQUIREMENTS, IN THE ABSENCE OF A TITLE 24/ENERGY COMPLIANCE REPORT:  
 CEILING = R-38, RAFTERS = R-19  
 EXT. WALLS = R-21 (REQUIRES 2X6 WALLS, EXISTING 2X4 WALLS CAN USE R-15)

WINDOWS SHALL HAVE MIN. AREA = 8% OF ROOM FLOOR AREA AND  
 SHGC = 0.23 & U-FACTOR = 0.30



# GARAGE CONVERSION EXAMPLE\*

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SHT. 2 OF 2

MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING

