



Garage Conversions, Residential Second Units (RSUs), Outdoor Lighting (Table 6) Fact Sheet & Focus Questions:

BACKGROUND

Converting a garage to habitable living space is a common means of gaining more space without the expense and disruption of constructing an addition.

A residential second unit (RSU) is a dwelling unit on a permanent foundation that provides complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons in addition to a primary dwelling on the same lot. The units may be either attached or detached.

Generally, most building details such as garage treatment are not codified. Lighting is one example that is often regulated through zoning requirements. The BAR Guidelines contain a few principals for outdoor lighting (see discussion below).

Well-designed outdoor lighting provides adequate light but never over-lights, uses fully shielded lighting fixtures, uses carefully installed fixtures that minimizes the impact on adjacent properties, uses high efficiency lamps, while still considering color and quality as essential design features.

RELATIONSHIP TO GUIDELINES AND LUDC

GARAGE SIZE, LOCATION

A garage can become a significant architectural feature depending on its size and location. Garages generally are large voids in the building facade. It is difficult for a garage to provide interest at the pedestrian level unless it located in a manner to reduce its visibility. In addition, the materials for the garage door also play a role in its appearance. The type of garage door may also be influence by the level of the garage in relation to grade and the amount ventilation.

URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

The Summerland Community Plan established two subareas for the community. These two areas are the **Urban Area** where principally urban land uses exist and the **Rural Area** where land uses are rural or agricultural in nature. An understanding of the character and land uses plays an important role in the development of new design guidelines. When considering garage conversions, Residential Second Units and Outdoor Lighting, it is important to recognize the different characteristics of each area and the important issues of each.

GARAGE CONVERSIONS

What is allowed under the Santa Barbara County LUDC?

Garage conversions are allowed provided building codes and off-street parking requirements are met. A building permit is required. Most residential uses require 2 spaces per dwelling unit and they do not have to be covered.

With garage conversions, the SBAR is looking to ensure that the conversion is compatible with and complementary to the main structure.

What other County Design Guidelines are provided for Garage Conversions?

The Eastern Goleta Valley Design Guidelines for garage conversion include:

- Windows and doors the same or similar to the main dwelling.
- Materials and colors matching the existing dwelling.
- Mitigate additional hardscape required for on-site parking with landscaping.
- New doors should avoid facing the street frontage—it should be obvious where the front door is located.

The Mission Canyon Design Guidelines for garage conversion include:

- Materials and colors matching the existing dwelling.
- Mitigate additional hardscape required for on-site parking with landscaping.
- Use permeable materials for the required off street parking to avoid additional stormwater runoff from the property.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- Appropriate location and treatment for garages?
- Encourage the use of basements for garages?

RESIDENTIAL SECOND UNITS (RSUs)

The LUDC designates second unit exclusions for Special Problems Areas. RSUs can be approved by the Planning Director under two scenarios:

1. The project can make all of the following findings:
 - a. Project application involves two contiguous legal lots under one ownership, one of which is vacant
 - b. The owner submits an offer to dedicate a Covenant of Easement over the vacant lot so long as the RSU is maintained on the developed lot
 - c. The vacant lot is residentially developable in compliance with stated criteria
 - Legally created
 - Adequate water resources
 - Served by public sewer system or onsite wastewater treatment
 - Served by existing private road that meets fire standards that connects to public road or right-of-way easement or legal access can be established
 - The Special Problems Committee has reviewed the lot and determined that site conditions would not cause recommendation of denial

OR

2. Provided all applicable development standards have been met (LUDC pages 4-52 – 4-57) and the project has been reviewed by Special Problems Area Committee

How are RSUs reviewed?

RSUs are typically not subject to discretionary review but they require review and approval from the SBAR chairperson or designee if the project would otherwise be subject to design review (such as in the design control overlay).

What other County Design Guidelines are provided for RSUs?

The Eastern Goleta Valley Design Guidelines for RSUs include:

- Should not encroach on neighbor privacy
- Should avoid boxy appearance
- Mass, bulk and scale should be consistent with main dwelling
- Detached RSUs should be placed away from main dwelling to avoid crowding
- Materials and color should be compatible with main dwelling

RSUs are not permitted in Mission Canyon due to the severe fire hazard and inaccessibility of the area.

LIGHTING

Lighting is an important issue in Summerland and has been included in the existing BAR Guidelines (page 24). The following language is from the existing BAR Guidelines.

The lighting of buildings, landscaping, driveways, signs and other exterior uses of lighting should be handled in a way that is in keeping with the light-sensitive character of Summerland. The following are of primary concern:

1. The amount of outdoor lighting should not be excessive and should only be the amount that is reasonable and necessary.
2. The use of outdoor lighting should not result in incident or ambient light rising over or falling on off-site areas in ways or at times that impact the use and enjoyment of those areas.

The LUDC contains a few regulations for outdoor lighting including:

- All exterior lighting shall be hooded and no unobstructed beam of exterior light shall be directed toward any area zoned or developed residential
- Lighting shall be designed so as not to interfere with vehicular traffic on any portion of a street

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- Level of illumination: quality over quantity
- Variety of lighting fixtures versus simplicity or sparsity of fixtures
- Encourage low energy lighting
- Importance in **Urban** versus **Rural Areas**

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. *Are garage conversions working in terms of design and parking issues in Summerland? What could be improved?*
2. *Are RSUs working in terms of design and parking issues in Summerland? What could be improved? **Urban Area? Rural Area?***

3. What specific guidelines are needed for applicants who wish to construct RSUs?
Urban Area? Rural Area?
4. What are the desirable and undesirable types of outdoor lighting in Summerland?
5. Should additional outdoor lighting requirements be added? If so, what is important and why?

