

Internal Conversion Info Sheet

What is an internal conversion?

An internal conversion is a conversion of a single-family detached house at least 20 years into two or more dwelling units, effectively a retrofit duplex or 3-plex. It is distinct from a duplex 3-4 plex because it must be converted from an existing house, rather than built new. It different from an Accessory

Dwelling Unit (ADU) because the two (or more) units may be any size relative to each other, rather than the ADU limitation of 800 sq. ft. or 60% of the primary dwelling, and because internal conversions must be located within the existing house rather than the option for a detached ADU.



This larger house was internally converted into four separate units while maintaining the scale and character of a single-family house.

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Where can I build an internal conversion in the city?

Internal conversions can be developed in any existing single-family detached house at least 20 years old in all residential zones. Consult the Housing Explorer mapping tool online to see where internal conversions can be developed: <https://www.orcity.org/maps/housing-explorer>.

What are the key zoning requirements?

- Internal conversions are only permitted with single-family detached houses at least 20 years old at the time of conversion, to encourage preservation and adaptation of existing houses.
- The total number of units permitted through an internal conversion, including the original unit and any ADUs, is tied to the lot size: one unit is permitted per 2,500 sq. ft. of lot size, up to a maximum of four units.
- An internal conversion must meet the dimensional standards of the zone in which it is located, including height and setbacks.

- To preserve the size and character of the existing house, expansions in conjunction with an internal conversion are limited to 500 sq. ft. Any expansion or modification must be constructed with building materials similar to the existing house.
- Only one entrance may be located on the front façade of the house facing the street, and any additional entrances including any exterior stairs to access upper-story units must be located on the side or rear façades of the house.
- Off-street parking is required for internal conversions: one parking space is required for an internal conversion with two units, and two parking spaces are required for internal conversions with three or four units.

Internal Conversion Allowances in all Residential Zones

Lot size	Total number of units ¹ permitted	Total number of parking spaces
5,000 to 7,499 sq. ft.	2	1
7,500 to 9,999 sq. ft.	3	2
10,000 or more sq. ft.	4	2

1. Total includes units created through internal conversion as well as an ADU, if present.

What zoning standards apply to internal conversions?

This handout is intended as a summary of key standards. For more complete information, see:

- Base zone standards
- OCMC 17.20.030 – Internal Conversions

What permits, applications and fees are required?

A Type I Land Use application is required for an internal conversion.

- Land Use process timelines: <https://www.orcity.org/planning/processes-and-timelines>
- Webpage for Internal Conversions: <https://www.orcity.org/planning/internal-conversion>
- Application for Internal Conversion:
https://www.orcity.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/13327/internal_conversion.pdf
- Planning Review Fees: Fees: <https://www.orcity.org/planning/planning-fee-schedule>

Building permits and engineering permits may be required as well.

- Building permits: <https://www.orcity.org/building>
- Engineering permits: <https://www.orcity.org/publicworks/engineering-development-services>

In addition to application and review fees, System Development Charges will be assessed for all internal conversion units. Internal conversion units are assessed at the “multi-family” per unit rate. Further SDC information may be found at the following link:

- <https://www.orcity.org/publicworks/system-development-charges-sdcs>