



City of RANCHO PALOS VERDES

Community Development Department

SITE PLAN REVIEW APPLICATION – MAJOR

A Site Plan Review Application is required for projects which constitute the conversion of space or alter lot coverage (please reference Chapter 17.70 of the City's Development Code). Typical examples of projects requiring the approval of a Major Site Plan Review Application include:

- Additions under 16' in height.
- Conversions that do not require exterior modification other than flush mounted doors/windows.
- Covered patios or trellises.
- Decks greater than 30" in height (including railing) on slopes less than 35% grade.
- Improvements that result in lot coverage alterations (ie driveway expansions).

The City's primary concern in processing a Site Plan Review is to ensure that the proposed construction is consistent with the City's Development Code and if applicable, compatible with the immediate neighborhood. Some of the major items staff will be checking are:

- **Setbacks** - How far the structure is located from the side, front, and rear property lines.
- **Height** - The height and location of proposed structures, including walls and fences.
- **Lot Coverage** - How much of the lot will be covered by structure/impervious hardscape.
- **Neighborhood Compatibility** - Compatibility with the character of the immediate neighborhood based on scale, size, architectural style, bulk, mass, materials, etc.

IMPORTANT

- If unsure of any of the City's requirements in areas relating to the proposed development, it is suggested that the Planning Division be contacted before going to the expense of having plans drawn. Preliminary discussions with the City's Planning staff may reveal potential conflicts with the City's Development Code.
- When filing your application, make certain the entire residential planning application is completed and that all the required submittal materials are included, **OTHERWISE THE APPLICATION MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR FILING.**
- Pursuant to Section 17.86.050 of the RPVMC, the City will not accept any development application(s) for a lot or parcel that is in violation of the city's municipal code, unless an application is submitted to correct a violation.
- Notice: CC&R's are private restrictions or agreements. Therefore the City is not responsible for a property owner's compliance with any CC&R's that may govern their property and the City does not enforce private CC&R's. The City recommends that property owners review their title report to see if any CC&R's govern their property, and if so, consult such CC&R's prior to submittal of their application. Additionally, property owners should review their title report for any other private property restrictions (Deed Restriction, Private Easement, etc.) that may govern their property.

Required Application Filing Fees¹:

- _____ Site Plan Review Application Fee¹
- _____ "Neighborhood Compatibility" Analysis¹
- _____ Foliage Analysis¹

¹ Please refer to the City's [Master Schedule of Fees](#) for Planning Division application fees.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY

The Development Code is a part of the City's Municipal Code that guides the growth and development of the City consistent with its land use policies. On November 7, 1989, the voters of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes approved, as a part of the Development Code, the "Cooperative View Preservation and Restoration Ordinance" (Proposition M). The adopted Ordinance, among other things, "insures that the development of each parcel of land or additions to residences or structures occurs in a manner that is harmonious and maintains neighborhood compatibility and the character of contiguous sub-community development." In other words, the modernization of the City's existing housing stock must be done in a manner that recognizes and respects the unique features and characteristics of a neighborhood, and properly balances residential development with the preservation of the rural and semi-rural character of the City to ensure continued enjoyment of the City's quality of life. This is the concept of Neighborhood Compatibility.

In recent years, many of the City's residential housing stock have become the subject of significant modernization because of size, floor plan and aging conditions. In an attempt to preserve and improve the "character" of established neighborhoods when new homes or additions to existing homes are proposed, the City Council recently amended the City's Development Code and residential development process for regulating the size and appearance of single-family residential development projects through the Neighborhood Compatibility requirement. The newly adopted Neighborhood Compatibility Ordinance and residential development process is briefly summarized as follows:

When Does Neighborhood Compatibility Apply?

Pursuant to Section 17.02.030(B) of the Rancho Palos Verdes Municipal Code (RPVMC), the Neighborhood Compatibility analysis is required for the following type of residential development projects:

1. A new residence that is proposed to be developed on a vacant lot;
2. A new residence that is proposed to replace an existing residence;
3. An existing residence that is proposed to be remodeled or renovated such that fifty percent or greater of any existing interior and exterior walls or existing square footage is demolished;
4. An addition to an existing single-family residence or the construction of any new detached structure that individually, or when combined with prior additions cumulatively, results in greater than: (i) 750 square feet of additional floor area, or (ii) a 25% expansion of the total square footage of all of the original structures constructed on the property, including the main residence, the garage, and all detached structures;
5. The construction of, or an addition to, a new second story or higher story; pursuant to Chapter 17.02 of the Development Code;
6. Projects that result in lot coverage that exceeds the maximum allowed in Chapter 17.02 of the Development Code;
7. The construction of, or an addition to a deck, balcony or roof deck to a second story or higher story if the total area of the deck, balcony or roof deck is eighty (80) square feet or larger or projects more than six (6) feet from the existing building; and,
8. An addition of a mezzanine to an existing structure that modifies the exterior of the structure other than the placement of flush mounted doors and windows.

The projects listed in the following subparagraphs (a through d) shall be exempt from the Neighborhood Compatibility requirements of this Paragraph B. However, no property shall be issued a permit for a project that is subject to the same subparagraph more than once in a two-year period without complying with the Neighborhood Compatibility requirements:

- a. An addition to an existing single-family residence that meets the following criteria:
 - i. Is 16-feet or less in height, as measured according to the criteria stated in Section 17.02.040(B); and,
 - ii. Is not being constructed along the facade facing any street;
 - iii. Is 250 square feet or less in floor area; and,
 - iv. Complies with all of the City's residential development standards.
- b. An addition or conversion of non-habitable floor area to habitable floor area that does not result in exterior modifications other than the placement of flush mounted doors and windows.
- c. The construction of a minor non-habitable accessory structure, such as, but not limited to, a cabana, a pool changing room, a storage shed, or a playhouses, that meet the following criteria:
 - i. Is 12-feet or less in height, as measured from lowest adjacent grade as stated in Section 17.48.050(D); and,
 - ii. Is less than 250 square feet in floor area; and,
 - iii. Complies with all of the City's residential development standards.
- d. The enclosure of a roofed breezeway between legally permitted structures or the enclosure of a 250 square foot or less patio cover, provided the enclosure:
 - i. Is 16-feet or less in height, as measured according to the criteria stated in Section 17.02.040(B); and,
 - ii. Is attached to the primary structure; and,
 - iii. Complies with all of the City's residential development standards.

If the Neighborhood Compatibility requirement is triggered, the analysis is based, at a minimum, on the review of the residences within the immediate neighborhood. For the purposes of Neighborhood Compatibility, the immediate neighborhood is normally considered to be at least the twenty (20) closest residences within the same zoning district. Pursuant to Section 17.02.030(B)(2) of the RPVMC, the analysis of Neighborhood Compatibility is based on the following criteria:

- A. Scale of surrounding residences
- B. Architectural styles and building materials
- C. Front, side, and rear yard setbacks

Neighborhood Compatibility Review Process

The Neighborhood Compatibility requirement is evaluated by the City in conjunction with the processing of a residential development application. The type of residential development application that needs to be submitted is determined by the nature of the proposed project. It is suggested that a property owner/applicant contact the Planning Department to determine the appropriate development application.

Neighborhood Compatibility Voluntary Pre-Application Step

If a proposed project requires the Neighborhood Compatibility analysis, the City strongly encourages the property owner to complete a "Pre-Application Step." This is a voluntary step in the residential development process, but has been found to be helpful in addressing neighborhood issues early in the process that commonly cause delays in the formal process and added expense to the applicant. The Pre-Application Step involves three action items:

1. Notification to at least the 20 closest Neighbors
2. Conducting a neighborhood meeting to review preliminary plans
3. Documentation of meeting attendance

Silhouette Construction

If the Neighborhood Compatibility analysis is required, the property owner/applicant will be required to construct a silhouette, certified by a licensed engineer or architect, that depicts the proposed project.

Who Reviews a Neighborhood Compatibility Project Application?

The analysis of the Neighborhood Compatibility requirement shall be made by either the Director of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement or the Planning Commission, depending upon the review process of the requested development application. Notwithstanding, the Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement shall refer a development application directly to the Planning Commission for consideration, as part of a public hearing, if any of the following are proposed (see next page):

1. Any portion of a structure that exceeds sixteen (16) feet in height and extends closer than twenty-five (25) feet from the front or street-side property line; or,
2. The area of the structure that exceeds sixteen (16) feet in height (the second story footprint) and exceeds seventy-five percent (75%) of the existing first story footprint area (residence and attached garage); or,
3. Sixty percent (60%) or more of an existing garage footprint that is covered by a structure that exceeds sixteen (16) feet in height (a second story); or,
4. Based on an initial site visit, the Director determines that any portion of a structure that is proposed to exceed sixteen (16) feet in height may significantly impair a view as defined in Section of the RPVMC 17.02.040; or,
5. The portion of the structure which exceeds sixteen (16) feet in height is being developed as part of a new single-family residence; or,
6. Grading involving more than 1,000 cubic yards of combined cut and fill.

Public Notification

Regardless of whether a development application requiring the Neighborhood Compatibility analysis is considered by the Director of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement or by the Planning Commission, a public notice is required to be published in a newspaper and given to owners of property within a 500-foot radius of the proposed project. A public notice shall be given at least 15 days prior to a decision being rendered, unless a Height Variation application is requested, which requires a public noticing period of at least 30 days. It is important to note that comments and concerns raised by the public during the noticing period will be considered in the determination of a development application requiring Neighborhood Compatibility.

Neighborhood Compatibility Handbook

In order to better inform the general public of the City's residential development process, specifically pertaining to the Neighborhood Compatibility requirements and procedures, the City Council adopted a Neighborhood Compatibility Handbook. The Handbook provides a detailed explanation of the City's Neighborhood Compatibility procedures and process, as well as includes suggested design tips and guidelines that may be used when preparing architectural plans for a new residence or an addition to an existing residence. The Handbook is intended to assist residents, architects, designers, and real estate professionals in understanding the City's procedure for processing residential development applications requiring the analysis of Neighborhood Compatibility.

For more information regarding the City's Neighborhood Compatibility requirements or to view the Neighborhood Compatibility Handbook contact the Planning Department at 310-544-5228 or visit the City's Website at www.palosverdes.com/rpv.

An additional processing fee of \$1,846 is required to perform the “neighborhood compatibility” analysis (payable at the time of application submittal). The additional fee is not necessary if the “neighborhood compatibility” analysis is performed in conjunction with a planning application other than a Site Plan Review (e.g. Height Variation).

Removal of Foliage as a Condition of Permit Issuance

As a result of a voter approved initiative in 1989, Section 17.02.040(B)(4) of the City's Municipal Code prohibits the issuance of a permit or other entitlement to construct, or to add livable area to a residential structure unless the owner removes foliage on the lot which exceeds sixteen (16) feet in height or the ridgeline of the primary structure, whichever is lower, that significantly impairs a view from the viewing area of another parcel. For the purpose of this requirement, "livable area" means an area of 120 square feet or more in size which 1) consists of habitable space (room expansions, additions); **or** 2) can be used as a gathering space **and** viewing area (decks, covered patios). Additions or structures which are less than 120 square feet in area and projects which do not involve habitable space (antennas, skylights, storage shed/garage, garden windows, etc.) are exempt from the requirements.

If it is determined that a proposed project is not exempt from the "foliage removal" requirements, a foliage analysis of the applicant's property must be conducted by Staff **prior to approval of the Site Plan Review Application**. An additional processing fee¹ is required to perform the foliage analysis (payable at the time of application submittal). The purpose of the foliage analysis is to determine if any existing foliage on the applicant's property, which exceeds 16 feet or the ridgeline of the primary residence, whichever is lower, impairs a view from any surrounding properties. Project plans cannot not be approved until Staff completes the foliage analysis. In general, foliage analyses will be completed within 1 week from application submittal.

If after conducting a foliage analysis, foliage on the applicant's property is found to exceed the prescribed height limits and to significantly impair a view, specific conditions of approval will be placed on the Site Plan Review Application to trim, lace or remove such vegetation **prior to issuance of a building permit**. The property owner has the ability to appeal the conditions of approval or findings of the Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement to the Planning Commission. Once the foliage is trimmed, laced or removed, the applicant must contact the City Staff to inform them that the work has been completed. City Staff will then verify that the work was performed in accordance with the specific conditions of approval. Once trimmed to a specific height, it will be the responsibility of the property owner to maintain the foliage at the prescribed height.

If you have any questions regarding the City's requirements described above please contact a planner by phone at (310) 544-5228, or in person, between the hours of 7:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 7:30 a.m-12:00 p.m and 1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m. on Friday.

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