



# STEPS for Obtaining City Approval for Residential Construction in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes

If you are considering renovations or additions to your home, please be aware that most home improvement projects require the preparation of plans and a 2 step City approval of those plans before any actual construction can occur. Also, some projects require the preparation of a geology report to accompany your plans and approval from the LA County Fire Dept.

## STEP 1 – Planning Approval

The Planning Division's review focuses on whether your proposed project is consistent with the City's Development (Zoning) code regulations (Title 17 of the RPV Municipal Code). Once an application and accompanying plans are submitted, as noted on the attached "[Residential Development Submittal Checklist](#)," a planner will ensure that the project meets height, open space, setback requirements and if applicable, whether it creates any view impacts and is compatible with the immediate neighborhood. Everything from certain new fences, BBQs, skylights, garden windows, spas, swimming pools, flag poles, roof modifications and storage sheds to grading, retaining walls, balconies, decks, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> story additions and new homes require planning approval.

Always talk to a Planner **first** before preparing plans and submitting an application for a proposed project. Important questions you should ask are: What are the lot coverage limits, required setbacks and allowable building/structure heights for the property? Is my project required to go through neighborhood compatibility review? To obtain preliminary feedback on your proposal, it always helps the Planners if you come in with some kind of sketch or drawing to exhibit what kind of project is being proposed.

Please consult the City's website ([www.rpvca.gov](http://www.rpvca.gov)) to download Planning Applications and access other helpful documents such as the [Neighborhood Compatibility Handbook](#), and the [Height Variation Guidelines](#).

## STEP 1A - Geology Report Approval

Given the unique geologic and soil conditions of the City, many construction projects require that you hire a geologist to prepare a soils report and/or a geology report to ensure that your project is feasible and designed in a manner that takes into account any unique geologic and/or soil conditions on your property. The report will need to be reviewed prior to submittal to Building and Safety. Sometimes approval by the City's geotechnical consultant is required either as part of the Building and Safety plan check process or as part of the Planning review process. [Click here for a handout](#) that describes which projects require the preparation of geology and/or soils report and the fees for the City review of your geology report.

If you are unsure whether you need to prepare a geology report for your project, you may arrange for a City Geologist visit to your property to see if a geology report will be needed for a particular project. To arrange for a visit, a fee and site plan of the property, showing what currently is on site and where the proposed project is occurring will need to be submitted to the Building and Safety Division or visit [www.rpvca.gov/geology](http://www.rpvca.gov/geology) to learn more.

## **STEP 2 - Building & Safety Plan Check Is Now Completely Electronic :**

Please visit [www.rpvca.gov/plancheck](http://www.rpvca.gov/plancheck)

After receiving Planning approval and Geology Report approval, your project plans will need to go through a plan check review by the Building and Safety Division to ensure your project is designed and built in accordance with the State Building Code adopted by the City. To help you understand what items need to be shown on the plans you submit to Building and Safety please see the [Plan Check Submittal Checklist](#), [Residential Plan Check List](#) and [Drainage Plan Check Requirements](#) that will be used by Building and Safety to review your plans.

## **LA County Fire Department Approval :**

Projects involving new construction and additions or tear-down / rebuilds will require approval from the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Prior to planning application submittal, it is highly recommended that you take your plans to the Fire Department's Hawthorne Office to obtain their requirements, which may include costly upgrades. The LA County Fire Department Fire Prevention Division at the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, located at 4475 W. El Segundo Blvd, Hawthorne, CA 90250-4411. You can also call them at (323) 890-4125 to discuss submittal requirements.

[https://epicla.lacounty.gov/energov\\_prod/SelfService/#/home](https://epicla.lacounty.gov/energov_prod/SelfService/#/home)