



CITY OF SAN LEANDRO

Community Development Department · Planning Services
835 East 14th Street · San Leandro, CA 94577
(510) 577 – 3325 · www.sanleandro.org
Hours: Monday – Thursday 8:30 am – 3:00 pm; Friday by appointment

HOMEOWNER PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS

Eight Things Homeowners Should Know About Making Improvements to Their Property

1. Check with the San Leandro Community Development Department (Planning - 577-3325, or Building - 577-3405) to find out the history of planning and building permit approvals that have been granted for the property. For a nominal fee, the Building Division may be able to supply copies of construction plans for past work that has been done on your house where a building permit was required. You may also obtain a copy of your Assessor's parcel map, which shows your lot dimensions. This can save you and your architect or designer a lot of time.
2. Before preparing or submitting plans for an addition, accessory structure, fence, or exterior or interior remodeling, check with Community Development to find out what City regulations, public review process, permits and fees apply to the proposed improvement. There is no charge for this service.
3. Plan ahead and allow sufficient time for the City review and approval process. Typically, six to eight weeks should be allowed for site plan review approval, if required, and six to eight weeks for building permit processing depending on the size of the project. At the property owner's option, site plan review and building permit processing can occur concurrently.
4. Before submitting plans to the City, we strongly encourage that you share them with your neighbors so that they are aware of your proposed improvements and might share any questions or concerns that they may have. This is particularly encouraged if you are proposing a second-story addition or a structure that will be located close to property lines.
5. If you are building an addition to your house, it should be consistent with the original design of the structure. Check items such as roof pitch and material, window placement and design, siding material, and architectural elements that are commonly associated with the style of the house. Break up large blank wall surfaces with windows, wall or roof offsets, or other design features. Consider stepping back a large second story addition from the front and sides of the house to reduce the perceived mass.
6. When hiring an architect, engineer or contractor, it is beneficial if the firm has done previous work in the City and is familiar with the City's requirements and procedures. The City cannot give recommendations on design professionals or contractors. Always try to get two or three bids. Before entering into a contract, ask for references, verification of a business license and, for contractors, evidence of workmen's compensation and liability insurance. Ask for a written contract and understand the scope of work and terms before you sign. (For more information, see www.cab.ca.gov for hiring an architect and www.cslb.ca.gov/consumers for hiring a contractor)
7. Allow sufficient time for construction to occur as it is almost inevitable that unexpected items or changes will occur during the construction process. Make sure that the changes are coordinated with the Building Division.
8. Before you make a final payment to your contractor, ask him/her to give you the Certificate of Occupancy or proof that the permit has been finalized, which is issued by the Building Division. This certificate will certify that the work has satisfactorily passed all City inspections.