



Planning Division

City of San Rafael
Community Development
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Current Planning Division

The Current Planning Division is responsible for providing information to the general public regarding the land use and zoning regulations that apply to properties within the City, conducting review of proposed land use and development projects to ensure consistency with City Ordinances and General Plan Policies, and making environmental determinations for projects consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Planning Division also provides staff support for the City Planning Commission and the Design Review Board, supports the Advanced Planning Division, and supports other City Departments such as Building, Business License Division and Public Works by reviewing permits for construction or license applications for compliance with the City's zoning, land use and development standards.

Examples of zoning applications that require discretionary review and approval by the Current Planning Division include *Environmental & Design Review Permits, Use Permits, Variances, Exceptions, Second Dwelling Units, Major and Minor Subdivisions, Lot Line Adjustments, Rezoning and Planned Developments, General Plan Amendments, and Annexations*. If a decision requires a public hearing (by the City Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission) a notice will be mailed to surrounding property owners and residents. The public can attend the hearing and provide comments on the project. The Design Review Board provides design recommendations on certain application types (e.g., hillside residential and new non-residential development, and sign programs) but is not a decision-making body.

Building Permits

Development projects typically must obtain a Building Permit regardless of whether a prior zoning review or application approval is required for the use or development. Check with the Building Division for permit requirements (485-3367). Although a zoning review may still be required, building permits are typically not required for non-habitable accessory structures under 120 square feet in size, fences 6 feet or less in height, or decks less than 30-inches above grade.

Good Neighbor Strategy

To you it looks like this:



To your neighbor it looks like this:





Development on Your Lot

When you make changes to your property your neighbors could be affected, and would appreciate the courtesy of being informed of your intentions. We encourage you to share your plans with your neighbors before bringing the application to the Planning Division. Your neighbors may or may not have suggestions. This does not mean that they are redesigning your house/plans, but give some thought to their concerns. Not only will this help you in the long run if your project involves a public hearing, in which the public's comments may affect the outcome of your project, but it will also help maintain a good relationship with your neighbors. Ultimately, the project is still yours.

Development on Your Neighbor's Lot

When your neighbor makes changes to their property, you may want to know how it might affect you. Hopefully, your neighbors will inform you of the scope of their proposed project and provide an opportunity for you to view their plans. Should they do so, consider how you would like your neighbor to respond to you. Make sure to inform them of any potential concerns you have regarding their project. Remember that nothing has been built yet, and by sharing their plans they are showing interest in hearing your concerns or comments. If your neighbor chooses to do so, they may make changes to their plans in response to your suggestions. Ultimately, the project is still theirs.