



City of Laguna Beach

Community Development
Department

INFORMATION GUIDE

VIEW PRESERVATION RECORD OF VIEWS

The Laguna Beach City Council adopted the View Preservation and Restoration ordinance, Laguna Beach Municipal Code (LBMC) Chapter 12.16 on June 17, 2014 which was later enacted on December 17, 2014. LBMC Section 12.016.040, View Preservation, allows a property owner to establish a protected or preserved view from selected viewing locations in their primary residential structure by filing a record of views with the city. Once a record of views is established the protected view shall not become significantly impaired by vegetation. The record of views does not establish maximum height limits on vegetation but rather sets a benchmark for determining significant view impairment should vegetation grow into the visual scene.

How do I record my unobstructed view with the city?

A property owner can apply to establish a protected or preserved view from their primary residential structure and secondary residential units such as guest houses and granny flats. With submittal of the view preservation application and applicable fee city staff schedules a site visit to record the visual scene. The documented record of views is maintained in the property address files for the parcel. Affected property owners in the view corridor within 500 ft. of the applicant's property are noticed that a record of views has been documented with the city.

How many views can I protect?

Views from multiple levels of the primary residential structure may be documented in the record of views. Hallways, closets, mechanical rooms, bathrooms, decks and garages are not be considered or used as selected viewing locations or areas.

My neighbor just trimmed his trees and I want to keep the trees at the trimmed height. Will the record of views set the height limit on vegetation?

The documented record of views does not determine the height limit on the vegetation on the date the photographs are taken but rather sets a benchmark for determining significant view impairment. Future growth of vegetation in the documented view may be limited with a finding of significant view impairment. Should a property owner believe their documented view has become significantly impaired by vegetation, the property owner, initially, should contact the vegetation owner and work to resolve the issue. If the matter cannot be resolved with neighborly communication the property owner may file a claim with the Code Enforcement division

How is significant view impairment determined?

The determination of a significant view impairment is evaluated by balancing the types and benefits of the view to be protected and the significance of the vegetation benefits. Criteria for Determining Significant View Impairment, LBMC Section 12.16.030, is applied to evaluate the significance of the alleged view obstruction.

My neighbor's tree fell and I already recorded my view. Can I re-record my view?

A property owner may record their view one time. The record of views may not be changed unilaterally by the property owner unless there is a subsequent remodel or physical change to the selected viewing locations in the primary residential structure. The ordinance does not allow a property owner to re-record a documented view should the visual scene improve when neighboring vegetation has been removed voluntarily or when vegetation may have fallen due to other factors.

Can I include my own photographs with the record of views?


Pursuant to the ordinance, city staff shall photograph the unimpaired view from selected viewing locations in the primary residential structure. Personal photographs are not included in the property file as part of the documented view and, therefore, are not enforceable documents in the view preservation process.

Are neighbors noticed that my view has been recorded?


Affected property owners in the view corridor within 500 ft. are noticed that the view has been recorded from the applicant's parcel. A copy of the documented view is sent to the applicant and posted on the city's web page at www.lagunabeachcity.net. Noticed property owners can access the recorded view corridor from documents posted on the city's website.

What is the fee to record my view?

The View Preservation application fee collected by the city is \$1,048. In addition, the applicant is required to contract with a noticing list agency to provide city staff with the noticing list for the affected properties that lie in the view corridor within 500 ft. of the applicant's property. The applicant contracts directly with the noticing list agency and those fees are paid directly to the selected agency.



RECORD OF VIEW **VPP 19-5390**



Property Address

The photograph above was taken from the dining room on the main level of the primary residential structure.
 Visual scene description: San Clemente and Catalina Islands and ocean horizon.
 Date of photograph: 12/31/19 Photographed by: _____ Submitted to property file: _____

Document
1 of 7

Example: Record of Views

The documented Record of Views contains a series of photographs taken from selected viewing locations from the primary residential structure.