



## ***Working With Your HOA***

### **Want to transform your water-guzzling landscape, but live in a community with a homeowners association? Follow our five-step way to woo your HOA.**

If you live in a community managed by a homeowners association, historical society, or similar organization and you want to make major landscape changes, it's not an impossible task. But it is a process that takes time, costs money (sometimes), and more often than not, requires compromise.

Creating a beautiful landscape is just one way to increase your property value. And while your HOA wants you to do that, their job is to make sure residents are keeping with the integrity of the neighborhood. That means they must review and approve your landscape plans before you begin any work.

#### **Follow these tips to help avoid any unnecessary frustration.**

- Be flexible and be prepared to revise your plan. Going back and forth with HOAs is part of the process — landscape companies have to do it, too. In fact, if your budget allows you may want to hire a landscape company to do the plan and submittals for you
- Talk to a neighbor who has recently gone through the process successfully and do what they did. If they got approved and your plans are similar, you've just increased your chances of a smooth experience.
- HOAs outline specific requirements for submitting plans for landscape changes — follow them to the letter. When you submit your plans, ensure your package is complete and send it in with delivery confirmation/tracking so date of receipt is accurate.
- Get familiar with [Senate Bill 198](#) (pdf), which basically prevents homeowners associations from prohibiting use of native grasses or xeriscapes in landscaping.
- Follow-up with a phone call or e-mail to make sure they received everything they need; also find out when the next meeting to consider landscape plan approvals is scheduled.

All of these things can go a long way toward saving you time and headaches later. It helps to think of your HOA as a team member — not the enemy.

And if the movement towards sustainable landscapes is moving too slow for you in your community, consider getting involved with your HOA. Be on the board and become a part of the process to change what the typical landscape looks like.

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