

# **Making Home Improvements**

## **Homeowner's guide to assessments and permits for home improvement**

Some people are reluctant to make improvements to their property for fear that their assessment, thus their taxes will go up. This guide is intended to assist you in knowing which improvements may impact your assessment and which ones probably will not.

Beyond that, your home is without question the largest single investment most of us will make in our lifetimes. Keeping your property up and making improvements to your home will pay off in the long term. If everyone does the same, not only will the value of your property increase, but the value of the neighborhood and the collective quality of life in the City of Lockport will only go up.

### **Policy**

It is the policy of the City of Lockport to encourage all property improvements...

It is in the best interest of all, when those improvements enhance your home, your neighborhood and our city.

“Assessment” is an official valuation term for real property based on the property’s market value used exclusively for the purpose of taxation. All properties within the city are assessed including those properties entitled to tax exemption.

While many items listed below fall within the scope of normal maintenance, the policy of no assessment increase will not apply when items are grouped so that the total change in the property results in a substantial increase in the value of the property.

### **UNASSESSED HOME IMPROVEMENTS**

Normal maintenance and repair jobs which can be done to protect your property investment without increasing your property assessments.

### **No Permit Required**

- Exterior painting
- Repairing or replacing exterior trim
- Minor repair of existing porches or steps
- Repairing sidewalks or driveways
- Repointing, repairing or cleaning brickwork stone or other masonry
- Improving lawns or landscaping
- Adding or replacing gutters or downspouts
- Adding exterior lighting
- Repairing existing fencing
- Installing weather stripping, storm windows and doors
- Interior painting and wallpapering
- Repairing existing walls and ceilings
- Installing carpeting

### **Permit Required**

- Removing existing porches or sheds
- Adding or replacing above ground swimming pools
- Remodeling, alterations and repairs that include changes to or replacement of portions of the structural system of the building (structural system includes all framing, masonry and sheathing materials)
- Replacement of roofs
- Installing new or replacement of fences
- Major plumbing additions or replacement\*\*
- Major heating changes (i.e. furnace replacement)\*\*
- Exterior repairs where the work to be done, including scaffolding or ladders used, extends beyond property lines
- Replacing existing ceiling and wall materials (plaster, etc.)
- Adding or replacing wood-burning stoves or fireplace inserts

\*\*Where no new rooms or remodeling.

## **ASSESSED HOME IMPROVEMENTS**

Extensive improvements which substantially increase the value of your property will affect the assessment.

### **Permit Required**

- All new structures or additions to existing structures
- Major exterior structural changes
- Interior alterations which provide additional rooms
- Adding new basements where none existed
- Changing from one-family to multi-family use
- Changing from multi-family to one-family
- Adding central heating or central air conditioning systems
- Adding fireplaces
- Converting a room in a residence into commercial use (i.e. mixed use property)
- Adding vinyl siding where none existed

### **Contact Us**

If you have any questions please contact the City Assessor's Office at (716) 439-6614 or Code Enforcement's Building Permit Office at (716) 439-6754.