
VARIANCE

How to apply for a Variance

What is a Variance?

A Variance is a special request to the City to waive or alter a normal development requirement of a zoning district. For example, a builder may ask that a new structure be allowed to be closer to the property lines or cover more of the property than allowed.

When would I need a Variance?

A variance may be granted when a regulation restricts the use of your property because of some unique feature, which does not apply to other owners with the same zoning restrictions.

You may request a Variance, for example, when the property on which you are building is unusually narrow or has some other topographical peculiarity. A Variance is never granted to allow uses that are not already permissible within a zoning district.

What conditions must exist in order for a Variance to be granted?

There are two. First, the special physical circumstances of your property on which you base your request must be so unusual that it prevents you from enjoying the same use of your property as do other property owners in the same zoning district under generally similar circumstances. Secondly, the Variance you request must not result in substantial detriment to adjacent property.

Who decides whether to approve a request for a Variance?

If the request for a variance involves the construction of any new structures, the application will be reviewed by the Design Review Committee, which will make a recommendation to the Planning Commission for a final decision. If no new construction will be involved, only the Planning Commission considers the application.

How long does the process take?

Normally, about eight to ten weeks. This period will be longer if there is a Design Review Committee hearing, the project is subject to City Council approval, or an appeal has been filed of the Planning Commission's decision.

What Documents do I Submit?

- A completed application form signed by the property owner
- Application Fee - Refer to Fee Sheet
- Project Description
- Site Photographs
- Colors and Materials Board, Colored renderings (see attached)
- Environmental Assessment Form
- A statement of justification and support for your application, which describes the special physical circumstance(s) of the property site and explains why your property is disadvantaged while your neighbor's property is not
- 16 copies of complete plan sets (see attached)
- Scenic Corridor Information, if needed
- One 8.5" x 11" reduction of all drawings on paper and transparencies