



City of Woodland
Community Development Dept.
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ZONING ADMINISTRATOR VARIANCE

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When Required:

The City of Woodland Zoning Ordinance regulates site design by defining such things as minimum parcel sizes or setbacks, maximum building heights, and parking requirements for different land uses. Each parcel in the City has been assigned a zoning designation with specific property development standards. A variance is required if a project proposal does not meet these requirements due to practical difficulties or unusual site conditions unique to the property. Variances may be granted with respect to fences, walls, landscaping, screening, site area, site dimensions, yards, height of structures, distances between structures, open space, signs, off-street parking and loading, frontage, and performance standards. Variances may not be granted with respect to land use.

Most variances granted by the City are reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission. However, the Community Development Director is responsible for the issuance of minor variances especially those related to single-family residences and smaller scale projects. The Community Development Director or his/her designate serves as the Zoning Administrator for hearing purposes for staff-level variance applications.

Pre-Application Review:

You may request a pre-application review of your project by City staff. By meeting with staff early in the review process, many issues can be resolved which would otherwise cause later delays. Information on pre-application review can be obtained from any Planning staff member.

Application:

The submittal requirements for a variance are on the reverse side of this information sheet. All items must be submitted. If you have any questions regarding the specific submittal requirements for your project, contact the Community Development Department for assistance. Once submitted, the application will be reviewed for completeness. You will be contacted if additional information is required.

Environmental Review:

The California Environmental Quality Act categorically exempts most minor variance applications from environmental review. This exemption does not apply if the application could result in a change in land use or residential density, or involves areas with an average slope greater than 20%. You will be informed if such review is required. Please refer to the separate "Environmental Review" handout concerning additional submittal requirements.

Scheduling:

Once an application is determined to be complete, it is formally accepted. Copies of the application are sent to reviewing agencies and departments. The application is then scheduled for a public hearing before the Zoning Administrator.

Zoning Administrator hearings are scheduled on an as needed basis usually on Thursdays. The hearing date for your project will be confirmed following acceptance of the application. Public hearing notices are advertised in the newspapers and are mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the site at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Hearings are normally scheduled during normal business work hours.

Action:

At the scheduled hearing, the Zoning Administrator will be presented with a staff report on the application. A copy of the recommended findings, conditions, and action is also provided to the applicant prior to the meeting. The Zoning Administrator then hears testimony from the applicant and any other interested parties. Following the criteria contained in Article 31 of the Zoning Ordinance (see, "Required Findings" on reverse side), the Zoning Administrator will act to approve, approve with conditions, continue the hearing for additional information, or refer the project to the Planning Commission. The Zoning Administrator's action is final unless appealed within 10 calendar days of the date of action. Zoning Administrator decisions may be appealed to the Planning Commission. Information on appeals can be found in a separate handout. An approved variance is not effective until the close of the appeal period. Requirements for building permits should be discussed with the Building Inspection Division.

Submittal Requirements:

To file a variance application, the following items must be submitted:

1. A completed application form and 300 foot mailing list with map (see Forms A and D).
2. 6 copies of a site plan for the project area, **drawn to scale**, which clearly and accurately shows:
 - a. All property lines (with dimensions).
 - b. Location of all existing or proposed structures, with dimensions of all wall lines and distances to nearest property lines noted.
 - c. Existing frontage improvements (curbs, sidewalks, edge of paving, etc.).
 - d. Adjoining streets (names, locations, public rights-of-way).
 - e. Existing or proposed driveways, parking and service areas, fully dimensioned.
 - f. Location, dimensions, and use of any outdoor activity areas or outdoor equipment.

g. Site landmarks (trees, pathways).

h. Easements.

A "Sample Plot Plan" information sheet is available which provides more detailed information on how to prepare a site plan for an application.

3. 6 copies of building elevations, **drawn to scale**, for any proposed structures which are the subjects of the proposed variance.
4. A written justification statement describing the special circumstances or conditions applicable to the development site, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, which justify a variance. (See "Required Findings" below.)
5. An Environmental Checklist form (only if staff determines that environmental review will be needed for your project).
6. Filing fee (see Fee Schedule on Form B for correct amount). Make checks payable to "City of Woodland."

Required Findings:

To approve a variance, the Zoning Administrator must make all five of the following findings. These findings, or determinations, are taken directly from Section 25-28-30 of the City of Woodland Zoning Ordinance. Your written statement (see #4 above) should address the reasons that you feel these findings can be made about your project:

Sec. 25-28-30 ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

The Zoning Administrator shall have the power to grant variances, exclusive of use variances, when the Zoning Administrator has found and determined that the following circumstances apply:

- A. That any variance granted shall be subject to such conditions as will assure that the adjustment thereby authorized shall not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which the subject property is located.
- B. That because of special circumstances applicable to the subject property, including size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings, the strict application of the zoning regulation is found to deprive the subject property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under the same zone classification.
- C. That the granting of such variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity or the zone in which the subject property is located.
- D. That the granting of such variance will be in conformity with the general purpose and intent of this chapter and the General Plan.
- E. A variance shall not be granted for a parcel of property, which authorizes a use, or activity, which is not otherwise expressly authorized by the zoning regulations governing the parcel of property.