



Post Office Box 310
115 Bolstad Avenue West
Long Beach, WA 98631
Telephone 360-642-4421
FAX 360-642-8841
planner@longbeachwa.gov

VARIANCE FACT SHEET

What is a Variance?

Under Long Beach zoning regulations, a variance is defined as an adjustment in the application of specific zoning regulations to a particular piece of property. For a variance to be considered, the subject property—because of special circumstances applicable to it—must be deprived of privileges commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same vicinity and zoning district. The zoning regulation adjustment remedies the subject property's disparity in privileges.

Does the City Grant Use Variances?

The City may not grant a variance that would result in a use otherwise not permitted in the zoning district in which the subject property is located. In other words, the City does not grant "use variances". For example, the City is frequently asked for a variance to allow a vacation rental in a zoning district where vacation rentals are neither a use by right nor a possible conditional use. This is a "use variance" that would grant a special privilege to a specific property, and is not allowed.

If Not a Variance for Use, then for WHAT?

A variance is used to "even the playing field" for a lot or parcel that is at a clear disadvantage relative to its neighbors regarding its size, shape, or features.

What do I have to Demonstrate to be Considered for a Variance?

Before any variance may be granted, you must demonstrate the following to the City:

1. Strict application of the bulk, dimensional or performance standards set forth in the City's regulations would preclude or significantly interfere with a reasonable use of the property not otherwise prohibited.
2. Need for the variance is directly related to the property, and is the result of unique conditions such as irregular lot shape, size, or natural features combined with strict application of the zoning regulations and not, for example, from deed restrictions or the applicant's own actions.
3. The design of the project is compatible with other permitted activities in the area and will not cause adverse effects to adjacent properties.
4. The requested variance does not constitute a grant of special privilege not enjoyed by other properties in the area, and is the minimum necessary to afford relief.
5. The public interest will not suffer any substantial detrimental effect.

How do I Apply for a Variance?

If you own property that you believe you can clearly demonstrate is at a physical disadvantage, you can apply for a variance by filling out an application and paying a fee. All property owners within 300 feet of your property will be notified, a notice will be published in the newspaper, and your request will be heard by the Long Beach Hearing Examiner at a public hearing. The Hearing Examiner will take testimony, evaluate the law and the facts of your application, and will make a written decision.