



Variance – Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Variance?

A Variance is a request for relief from specific development standards set forth in the Solano County Zoning Regulations. Pursuant to State Law, variances may not be applied to change the use of the property.

How is a Variance application decided?

The Solano County Planning Commission acts as the hearing authority for a Variance. Variances are granted based, in part, on special circumstances that are unique to the property due to the size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings which would deprive the subject property of privileges enjoyed by other properties in the vicinity and under the identical zone classification.

Does the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) apply to the Variance application?

Generally, Variance applications are exempt from CEQA; however, there may be exceptions. Depending on the project, further environmental review and processing time may be necessary.

What is the process?

Pre-Application Consultation. Potential applicants are encouraged to discuss the development proposal with Planning staff prior to filing. More complex projects may warrant filing a pre-application request to identify key issues early on, prior to filing a formal entitlement application.

Step 1 – Completeness. Staff will perform an initial review of your project once a complete Land Use application is filed with the Planning Services Division. Refer to the [Variance Submittal Requirements Checklist](#) for a comprehensive range of information and documents necessary to file a complete application. Within 30 days of filing you will be notified if your application is deemed complete or whether additional information is necessary for evaluation and processing. If an application is deemed incomplete, you will receive a letter detailing the additional information necessary to continue processing.

Step 2 – Public Hearing. The Planning Commission acts as the hearing authority for a Variance. Public notice of the project is mailed out to nearby property owners and anyone requesting notice at least 15 days in advance of the hearing. Prior to the hearing, staff will provide the applicant a report which describes the project, details conditions of approval, and makes a recommendation to the Planning Commission.

How long does the process take?

A Variance is typically processed within two to three months from the time an application is deemed complete. More complex applications may require increased processing time.

My Variance is approved. What's next?

Once the Planning Commission acts on a Variance, there is a ten (10) day appeal period where any person or party aggrieved or affected by the decision may file an appeal to the Board of Supervisors. If an appeal is filed, a noticed public hearing before the Board of Supervisors will occur, typically within 30 to 60 days. During an appeal period, no permits can be issued related to the project. Any decision by the Board of Supervisors on an application is final.

Is additional permitting required?

Granting of a Variance does not authorize approval, application, or fees for other potential land development requirements, such as grading, building, encroachment, sewage disposal, or water supply. Development proposals often require a separate building permit. Please contact the Building and Safety Division at (707) 784-6765 to discuss building permit requirements.

How do I apply for a Variance?

Reference the [Planning Application Submittal Guide](#) for specific details regarding contact information, office hours, and application filing.

This application packet includes:

- Variance - Submittal Requirements Checklist**
- Land Use - Application**
- Project Description**
- Application Processing Agreement**