



Guidelines

Request for a Variance

What is a variance?

A variance allows property owners to deviate from the strict terms of zoning laws where, due to unique circumstances of their property, strict enforcement would cause unnecessary hardship. Essentially, it grants the owner relief from specific zoning requirements under certain conditions.

When can someone request a variance?

- If following the local bylaws about where a building can be placed (siting), its size, or its dimensions would cause hardship.
- If the bylaw rules about where a manufactured home can be placed within a manufactured home park would cause hardship.
- If requirements for providing water, sewer, and other systems in areas zoned for agricultural or industrial use (under specific subdivision servicing requirements) would cause hardship.
- If there's a prohibition on making structural changes or additions to a property that's being used in a way that doesn't conform to current zoning (but was allowed when it began) that would cause hardship.
- If a bylaw related to tree protection causes hardship, except in cases where the bylaw prevents all uses of the property and the council has already acted to compensate or mitigate the hardship.

Items to include in your variance request:

- **Site Plan:** Include a detailed site plan showing existing conditions, proposed changes, and the area affected by the variance.
- **Architectural Drawings:** Provide any relevant architectural drawings or plans.
- **Photographs:** Attach photographs of the property and affected area.
- **Other Supporting Materials:** Include any additional documents or materials supporting the variance request (e.g., letters from neighbors, professional assessments).
- Explain the special circumstances or conditions affecting the property that justify the variance (e.g., irregular lot shape, natural obstacles, existing structures).
- Demonstrate that the variance is necessary for the reasonable use of the land or building.
- Indicate that the variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.
- Confirm that the hardship or difficulty is not self-created.