



Variance

Frequently Asked Questions and Tips

The City of Algona has created customer tip sheets to inform the general public about the City's land use processes, effect of codes and regulations, and commonly asked questions relating to land development and construction projects. These sheets are not intended to be complete statements or advise customers of all applicable codes and regulations.

The codes and regulations may be revised or amended, please consult City staff to confirm your understanding of requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to understand all requirements and ensure the project meets the City's applicable codes and regulations.

What is a Variance?

A Variance gives permission to the property owner to depart from specified development codes so that it can enjoy the same privilege as designated by the zoning code.

When is a Variance required?

A Variance is necessary when the size, shape, topography, location or surrounding environment of the subject property prohibits the land from enjoying the privileges permitted to other properties in the same zoning district.

How long does a Variance application take?

A Variance permit typically takes four (4) to six (6) months to process and approve. The length of time may vary depending on the complexity of the project and the responsiveness of the applicant.

How long will a Variance Permit be valid for?

The Variance permit shall be valid for a period no longer than six months unless in special circumstances such as dependence upon erection or alteration of building.

What is the application process for a Variance?

1. Submit the Variance application and required materials by email to: juliek@algonawa.gov.
2. The City will review the application for completeness within 28 days.
3. When the application is deemed complete, the submittal materials will be circulated to various departments for review and commenting.
4. Once City staff approves the application, a staff report is prepared to present to the Hearing Examiner at a public hearing for review and recommendation.
5. Hearing Examiner reviews the application and adopts a decision. If approved, the City will issue the permit.

How much does a Variance permit cost?

The City's fee schedule for permits is updated on an annual basis. The fee schedule is located in [Chapter 2.50](#) in the Algona Municipal Code (AMC).



Note: This Tip Sheet does not include all codes and regulations that may be applicable to your project. The applicant is responsible for demonstrating compliance with adopted codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

For more information: City of Algona | www.algonwawa.gov | (253) 833-2897

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call (253) 833-2897. TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Service.



What do I need to submit?

All application materials must be submitted in electronic PDF format. Additional materials are potentially required depending on the nature of your application. Please contact the City to confirm if additional materials are anticipated to be required.

At minimum, a complete Variance application includes:

- Completed Variance application form
- Project Narrative
- Application Fee
- Vicinity Map
- A map showing property and all parcels within 300' of property
- Survey of property
- Detailed site plan
- building plans
- Elevation plans

What is a Project Narrative?

A project narrative is the applicant's opportunity to describe the proposed project's intent, design, and operations. The project narrative should describe how the project meets the City's approval criteria for a Variance. Responses to each of the approval criteria is required and should be answered as completely as possible.

Is a pre-application meeting required?

Any person considering the variance of land is strongly encouraged but not required to participate in a pre-application meeting with city staff before any plans are drawn. The preapplication meeting shall be an informal review of the proposed variance where recommendations can be offered by planning, engineering, building, public works, police, and fire reviewers.

What are the approval criteria?

The applicant is responsible for demonstrating how the project meets the following approval criteria, listed in [Chapter 22.35.010 AMC](#).

A Variance may only be granted by the City upon the following findings:

1. The Variance shall not result in privileges inconsistent with other properties in the vicinity and zone in which the property is located
2. That such variance is necessary because of special circumstances relating to the size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings of the subject property, to provide it with use, right and privileges permitted to other properties in the vicinity and in the zone in which the subject property is situated
3. 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 and zone in which the subject property is situated; and
4. The reasons set forth in the application justify the granting of the variance and that the variance is the minimum variance that would make possible a reasonable use of the land, buildings or structures; and
5. The granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this title and will not be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise be detrimental to the public welfare.

Can I get a Variance for any code?

A variance can be granted for yards, signs, height, lot coverage, and parking requirements. Variances do not cover use of land or structures.



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