



VARIANCE, ADJUSTMENT & EXCEPTION REQUESTS

Variance:

Section 2.08 of the Thurston County Roads Standards discusses Variance from the Standards. It states the following:

These Standards represent reasonable approaches based on past experience in Thurston County and other jurisdictions. These Standards indicate the appropriate practice under most conditions.

Engineering design is an endeavor that examines alternative solutions in real world situations and accordingly, these Standards are not provided to hamper the introduction of new ideas. It is fully expected that creative engineering will continue to take place. Situations will present themselves where alternatives may be preferred to allow conformance with existing conditions, to overcome adverse topography or to allow for more affordable solutions without adversely affecting safety, maintainability or aesthetics. These Standards are intended to provide predictability yet still allow for the flexibility necessary for innovation.

A variance request shall not be evaluated until an application for the required permit/approval has been applied for.

Adjustment:

Volume I, Section 2.7 of the Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual discusses Adjustments to the Minimum Requirements. It states the following:

Adjustments to the Minimum Requirements may be granted prior to permit acceptance and construction. The Administrator may grant an adjustment subject to a written finding of fact that documents the following:

1. The adjustment provides substantially equivalent environmental protection.
2. The objectives of safety, function, environmental protection and facility maintenance, based upon sound engineering, are met.

Exception:

Volume I, Sections 2.8 of the Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual discusses Exceptions to the Minimum Requirements. It states the following:

Exceptions to the Minimum Requirements or the design standards, submittal requirements, or any other standards provided in the Manual may be allowed at the discretion of the Administrator provided that the applicant will substantially meet flow control and water quality goals established by or implicit in these standards. The Administrator may grant an exception subject to a written finding of fact that documents the following:

1. There are special physical circumstances or conditions peculiar to the land, such as size, shape, topography, or location, such that the strict application of these provisions would deprive the property owner of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties similarly situated; OR
2. The site is being redeveloped and certain site investigations or installed stormwater facilities would require that existing structures be removed or damaged; OR

3. The site is being redeveloped and the changes are either very small or configured in such a way that in the Administrator's or designee's opinion some requirements of the manual cannot practically be met; OR
4. The project is to be completed within an existing right-of-way which is of inadequate size to install required facilities and which cannot be expanded due to encroaching structures or setbacks;

AND

1. That the granting of the exception will not be detrimental to the public health and welfare, nor injurious to other properties in the vicinity and/or downstream, and to the quality of waters of the state; AND
2. The exception is the least possible exception that could be granted to comply with the intent of the Manual; AND
3. A fee-in-lieu, based on the avoided cost or value of the exception, may be collected by the County subject to specific requirements regarding fee-in-lieu set by Thurston County at such time as a fee-in-lieu program is established.

How Do I apply?

Submit a completed application package to the Permit Assistance Center with the applicable application fee. Complete application package requirements are outlined on the application.

Review Process and Timing?

The information provided in your application package shall be used by the Engineer in evaluating requests for variances from these Standards. The Engineer will endeavor to evaluate and respond in writing to the variance request within 15 working days of receipt of the request. Variance requests that

do not meet the International Fire Code also require concurrence from the County Fire Marshall.

NOTE: Variances made during the construction of a project shall be approved prior to any changes being made in the field.

I Still Have Questions...

The information in this bulletin is a general guideline of the procedures and rules. For additional information, speak with a staff member at the Permit Assistance Center. Contact information is listed below. You may also review all Thurston County Codes online on the County website referenced at the bottom of this page.