WHAT IS A VARIANCE?

The Variance and Administrative Variance provide a process for the City to consider requests to waive or modify certain standards of the Land Use & Development Code (ILUDC) when, **because of special circumstances applicable to the property including location, shape, size, surroundings, topography, or other physical features,** the strict application of the development standards otherwise applicable to the property denies the property owner privileges enjoyed by other property owners in the vicinity and in the same zoning district.

Where unique conditions are present ILUDC standards subject to a Variance include minimum lot sizes, building setback lines, lot coverage, building height, and parking requirements.

An application for a variance must stand on its own. A previous variance does not set a precedent for granting other variances. Variances must be consistent with the General Plan.

WHEN IS A VARIANCE NOT ALLOWED?

A variance cannot allow a use other than one permitted by the zoning district where the property is located. Variances may not be used to modify allowed land uses, density, specific prohibitions in the code, procedural requirements, or policies established in the General Plan.

PROJECT REVIEW/NOTICING/HEARING

Each application for Variance and Administrative Variance shall be reviewed by staff for compliance with applicable development standards.

VARIANCES

Variances are required to have a public hearing before the Planning Commission. Notice of the public hearing is mailed to all property owners within a radius of 300' from the site. Planning Commission decisions are final and effective on the 11th day following the date the decision was rendered, unless appealed to the City Council.

Administrative Variance

Administrative Variances are reviewed and approved/disapproved by the Community Development Director. The Director may grant an Administrative Variance to reduce certain requirements of the ILUDC up to a maximum of 25%. Consult the ILUDC Section 18.71.070 for more information about zoning requirements subject to Administrative Variances.

For Administrative Variances, the City provides a public notice to property owners within a 300' radius from the site. The public notice includes a description of the project request, whether the Director will approve or disapprove the Administrative Variance application on the date specified in the notice, and states that a public hearing will be held only if requested in writing by any interested person.

The decision of the Community Development Director is final and effective on the 11th day following the date the decision was rendered, unless appealed to the Planning Commission. Decisions of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council.

NOTICE TO APPLICANTS

All development applications are subject to the regulations set forth in the City of Fort Bragg Inland Land Use & Development Code (ILUDC) and Fort Bragg Municipal Code. Please be advised that, prior to submittal of a complete application and set of plans, staff comments and interpretations should be considered preliminary and subject to change pending full review of a complete application package by all City, County, and State departments/agencies as necessary.

City of Fort Bragg
Community Development Department
416 North Franklin Street
Fort Bragg, California 95437
Telephone (707) 961-2827, ext.111
Fax (707) 961-2802
Email: CDD@fortbraggca.gov

2026

Variances and Administrative Variances

for properties outside the Coastal Zone (Inland)

City of Fort Bragg

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Consult the City of Fort Bragg Inland Land Use & Development Code (ILUDC), Section 18.71.070, for further information about Variances and Administrative Variances outside the Coastal Zone.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

A planning application shall be submitted for development projects requiring discretionary review by the Planning Commission or Director. One application may be used for multiple permits processed concurrently for a project. Applicants must submit **one (1), copy** of each of the following scaled plans and at least one set on reproducible-sized paper (11"x17" maximum) with all dimensions shown. Additional copies may be necessary upon request. Digital copies accepted.

SITE PLAN

Submit one (1) Copy of a site plan. The sheet size should be at least 8 ½" x 11"; however, a larger sheet size may be required (check with Planner). Digital copies are also accepted. The site plan shall include the following information:

A. The lot or parcel involved, showing shape and dimensions.

B. Abutting street and name, indicating distance from property line.

C. North arrow and scale.

D. The location of proposed new or existing buildings, if any, and their uses and distances to property lines.

E. All driveways, approaches, barriers, parking and loading areas.

F. Location of utility lines (power, telephone, sewer, water).

G. Addition(s) to an existing structure, if applicable. Use dotted lines.

H. Drawings must be to scale.

I. Show proposed landscaping on the site plan unless a separate landscape/planting plan is included in the application.

J. Identify the size and species of all trees. Label each tree to be removed with an "X" through it.

K. Indicate potential phasing limits of the project. Describe the manner of installing and maintaining parking, lighting, landscaping, private grounds, streets, utilities, and open space.

ARCHITECTURAL ELEVATIONS

A. Elevations of all sides of new structures shall be shown.

B. If the exterior of an existing structure is to be changed, all existing and proposed elevations of the structure shall be shown.

C. Exterior materials and colors of all proposed and existing structures shall be indicated or generally described. Color and material samples shall be submitted.

D. All mechanical equipment or similar features located above the roof shall be shown.

FLOOR PLANS

Provide floor plans of all stories with rooms, exterior doors and windows, and seats (for eating establishments) indicated so that parking and coverage calculations can be made. Identify use of each room (office, bedroom, closet, etc.)

OTHER PLANS & REPORTS

Other plans and reports may be required based on the information provided. These include but are not limited to preliminary grading and drainage plans, botanical surveys, wetlands delineation, and soil reports.

EVALUATION OF PROJECT

Applications are evaluated according to the following criteria:

A. Conformance with the General Plan.

B. Because of special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, the strict application of the Zoning Ordinance deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and under identical zoning classification. Any variance granted shall be subject to such conditions as will assure that the adjustment thereby authorized shall not constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and zone in which such property is situated.

C. A variance shall not be granted for a parcel of property which authorizes a use or activity which is not otherwise expressly authorized by the zone regulation governing the parcel of property.

D. The granting of a variance shall be consistent with the stated purpose of the zoning district in question.

PROCESS

The application will be first reviewed by City staff for completeness and to determine whether the project is subject to review by the Planning Commission or Director.

If the application is to be reviewed by the Planning Commission, a public hearing will be scheduled. The decision of the Planning Commission shall be final unless appealed to the City Council.

If the application is subject to review by the Director, a Notice of Pending Action shall be issued. An interested third party may request a public hearing. Variance decisions by the Director may be appealed to the Planning Commission.

The Director may also choose to refer any Administrative Variance application to the Planning Commission for hearing and decision.

Please contact the Community Development Department at (707) 961-2827, ext. 111 for applicable fees.