

## **1.11 Variances to Engineering Design Standards**

- 1.11.1 As represented in other areas of this guideline, the Standards developed within may not directly apply to all situations and from time to time, an alternative standard may need to be evaluated. This section outlines the process by which a variance request to a particular standard may be considered.
- 1.11.2 To initiate a variance request, an applicant must first complete and submit a “Proposal for a Variance to the Standards” form along with all pertinent information and data including the applicable fees, outlined in the “Parkland County Departmental Fees and Charges” schedule. Upon acceptance of a “Proposal for a Variance to the Standards” form, the General Manager will determine if the request is a “Major” or “Minor” variance.
  - 1.11.2.1 “Minor” variances shall be approved by the General Manager. Once the variance has been deemed acceptable, a response will be provided in writing, indicating the variance has been approved and the project may continue.
  - 1.11.2.2 “Major” variances shall be reviewed and approved by the General Manager after the request has been further evaluated through an internal committee of managers and senior administration. A written response will be provided to the applicant detailing what was considered during the review and the outcome of the decision.
  - 1.11.2.3 For “Major” variances, ongoing developments, which may be in the development permit or subdivision application stage, will be suspended until a decision has been rendered by the County.
  - 1.11.2.4 The timeline to provide a response for a “Minor” variance shall be a maximum 10 business days. A response for a “Major” Variance will depend on the nature and complexity of the request. Communication shall be provided within the 10 business days of receiving the variance request, with an estimated time for a rendered decision. Expected timeline should be within 30 to 60 business days for a response for “Major” variances.
  - 1.11.2.5 Determining the difference between a “Minor” and “Major” variance, is the sole discretion of the General Manager. Upon request, the General Manager will provide a listing of historical “Minor” and “Major” variance requests including decisions rendered.
  - 1.11.2.6 Should a request for a “Minor” variance be received and the request is deemed a “Major” variance, in the sole discretion of the General Manager, the applicant shall be notified within 10 business days as to the change in variance level and the same protocol for a decision shall apply for a “Major” variance.

- 1.11.3 Submitting a variance may not result in an approval of that variance. No work shall continue or commence without a response in writing from the County that the variance has been received and approved.
- 1.11.4 An approval of a variance does not set precedence for future requests. Each request shall be reviewed independently and shall be evaluated on its own merits.

## **1.12 New and/or Updated Engineering Design Standards**

- 1.12.1 As represented in other areas of this guideline, the Standards developed within may not directly apply to all situations and from time to time, a standard may need to be established or refined. This section outlines the process by which a new standard may be submitted and considered for acceptance by the General Manager to incorporate into the Engineering Design Standards.
- 1.12.2 To initiate a new standard request, an applicant must first complete a “Proposal for a New and/or Updated Standard”.
- 1.12.3 Written notification accepting the submission and tabling for review will be provided within 10 business days. During that time, an application will be screened and accepted as information or will be returned with questions and/or follow up requirements identified.
  - 1.12.3.1 Upon acceptance, an applicant will be engaged in future discussions to analyse, review and approve the recommended change to a standard.
  - 1.12.3.2 This process is expected to be lengthy, without time being considered the sole priority. A variance request, as outlined in Section 1.11, may be reviewed in conjunction with a new and/or updated standard review.
- 1.12.4 The submission of a new and/or updated standard, may not result in an approval. Design and/or site work shall not commence or continue without a response in writing, granting approval of the new and/or updated standard.
- 1.12.5 Reasons for establishing a new and/or updated standard may include, but not limited to, the following:
  - 1.12.5.1 Address missing elements or develop standards that previously were not required or included in the existing standards
  - 1.12.5.1 Improvements to public safety
  - 1.12.5.4 Improvements to the environment or environmental management practises
  - 1.12.5.1 New or emerging materials and/or technology
  - 1.12.5.2 Improved lifecycle cost implications and potential long term cost savings for the County in regards to asset management
  - 1.12.5.3 Enhanced design, materials or practises that leads to improved maintenance and/or rehabilitation activities
- 1.12.6 Maintaining a current service level at or above existing standards should be the priority when establishing new standards. Cost is an important consideration however all the elements within 1.12.5 should be considered on an equal basis.