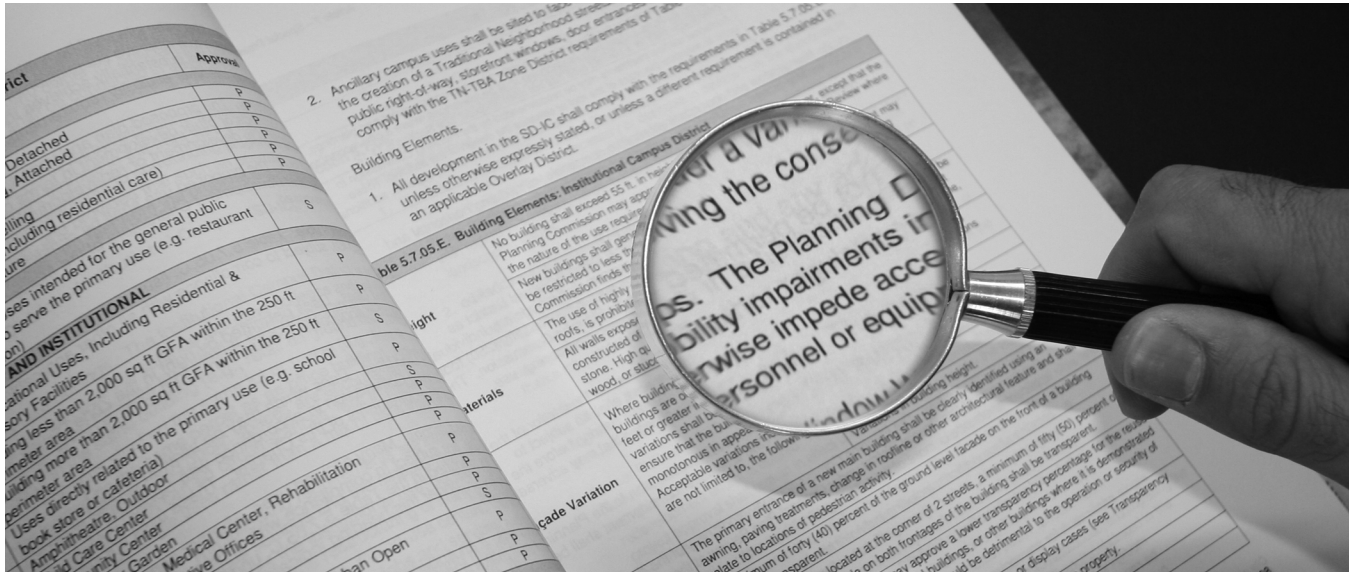


Code Interpretation



Purpose of the Code Interpretation Process

Under the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission and Planning Director are empowered to make decisions that affect how property is used and developed. In order to provide a fair and equitable process, the Zoning Ordinance allows property owners to request an interpretation of the text or maps of the Zoning Ordinance. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) is the entity that makes the interpretation.

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)

The Board of Zoning Appeals is a group of Grand Rapids residents who hear requests for variances, appeals and code Interpretations. For text interpretations, the BZA's review is narrow and only addresses the situation being interpreted, and is based on a thorough reading of the Zoning Ordinance. Map interpretations may be requested to determine the precise location of boundary lines between Zone Districts. In making its decision, the BZA is governed by the standards in Section 5.2.04. of the Zoning Ordinance.

In the event the BZA rules against the applicant's interpretation request, he or she may seek a Text Amendment or Zone Change (map) through the Planning Commission.



Application

Code Interpretation Application

Code Interpretation

A. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Property Address _____
Parcel Number _____ Zone District _____
Lot Size Frontage: _____ ft Depth: _____ ft Area: _____ Acres/Sq Ft ☐ Rectangle ☐ Irregular
Current use of property _____

B. APPLICANT INFORMATION

1. Applicant

Identify the person or organization requesting the Code Interpretation:

Name _____ Cell Phone _____
Organization _____ Business Phone _____
Mailing Address _____ Fax _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-Mail _____

2. Applicant Interest

The applicant must have a legal interest in the subject property:

- ☐ Property Owner ☐ Purchaser by Option or Purchase Agreement
☐ Purchaser by Land Contract ☐ Lessee/Tenant

3. Property Owner ☐ Check here if Applicant is also Property Owner

Identify the person or organization that owns the subject property:

Name _____ Cell Phone _____
Organization _____ Business Phone _____
Mailing Address _____ Fax _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-Mail _____

4. Agent

Identify any person representing the property owner or applicant in this matter:

Name _____ Cell Phone _____
Organization _____ Business Phone _____
Mailing Address _____ Fax _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-Mail _____

C. ZONING ORDINANCE SECTION(S) FOR INTERPRETATION

Section: _____ Title: _____
Section: _____ Title: _____
Section: _____ Title: _____



Code Interpretation

C. INTERPRETATION (CONT.)

Description of Request

Identify the specific language or map boundary in the Zoning Ordinance for which the interpretation is requested. Explain what you believe the language says or map shows (or is intended to say or show), and why your interpretation should be considered to be correct by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). Be specific, and use additional paper if needed.

D. REQUEST AND AFFIDAVIT

The applicant must read the following statement carefully and sign below:

The undersigned requests that the City of Grand Rapids review this application and related required documents and site plans as provided in Article 13 of the Grand Rapids Zoning Ordinance. The applicant further affirms and acknowledges the following:

- ☐ That the applicant has a legal interest in the property described in this application.
- ☐ That the answers and statements contained in this application and enclosures are in all respects true and correct to the best of his, her or their knowledge.
- ☐ That the approval of this application does not relieve the undersigned from compliance with all other provisions of the Zoning Ordinance or other codes or statutes, and does not constitute the granting of a variance.
- ☐ That the applicant will comply with any and all conditions imposed in granting an approval of this application.
- ☐ If also the owner, the applicant grants the City of Grand Rapids staff and the Board of Zoning Appeals the right to access the subject property for the sole purpose of evaluating the application.

Applicant Name (printed)

Applicant Signature

Date

If the applicant is not the property owner, the property owner must read and sign below:

The undersigned affirms and acknowledges that he, she or they are the owner(s) of the property described in this application, and:

- ☐ Is/are aware of the contents of this application and related enclosures.
- ☐ Authorizes the applicant to submit this application and represent the undersigned in the matter being reviewed by the City of Grand Rapids.
- ☐ Grants the City of Grand Rapids staff and the Board of Zoning Appeals the right to access the subject property for the sole purpose of evaluating the application.

Property Owner Name (printed)

Property Owner Signature

Date



Code Interpretation

1. General Information

The Zoning Ordinance is designed to ensure that development in Grand Rapids is harmonious with surrounding properties and does not endanger the health, safety or general welfare of the public. To that end, the Planning Commission and Planning Director are empowered to make decisions that affect how property is used and developed.

The purpose for seeking interpretations of the Zoning Ordinance is to ensure a process that is fair and equitable for all affected parties. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) may hear requests for code interpretations of the text or the maps of the Zoning Ordinance.

2. Application

An application packet for a code interpretation is available from the Grand Rapids Planning Department, located on the 3rd floor of 1120 Monroe Avenue NW or at the Planning Department's website, www.grcity.us/planning under Forms and Applications. You may also call 456-4100.

The application packet contains all the information necessary for you to request an interpretation. Please read the instructions carefully and then fill in the enclosed forms and attach the items listed on the application checklist. If you are not the property owner, it is necessary for you to obtain permission from the owner to apply for the interpretation.

A complete application may be submitted to the Planning Department Monday – Friday, from 7:30am to 4:00pm. See www.grcity.us/planning for the schedule of BZA meetings. Following the staff review, a Code Interpretation application will be put on the next available BZA agenda slot.

3. Application Fee

The application fee is applied to the cost of processing your application. The application fee cannot be refunded in the event of an interpretation contrary to your request.

4. Staff Review

The Planning Director will first review the application and make a recommendation regarding the code interpretation(s) to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). The staff will then forward the code interpretation request to the BZA.

5. Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting

All meetings of the BZA are held on the 2nd floor of 1120 Monroe Avenue NW. You will be notified of the date and time of the meeting.

Each public hearing item for consideration is assigned an approximate start time. The Planning staff introduces and explains each request to the BZA. The applicant is then asked to present information on his or her request. The BZA may ask questions of the staff and/or applicant. The BZA deliberates on the request in open session.

The BZA will base its interpretation of text on a thorough reading of the Zoning Ordinance. Text interpretations by the BZA shall be narrow and only address the situation being interpreted and will not have the effect of amending the Zoning Ordinance.

The BZA will base its interpretation of a map boundary line on the standards listed in Section 5.4.04. of the Zoning Ordinance.

6. Written Notice

The applicant will be provided with a letter that documents the decision of the BZA.

7. Appeal

If the BZA decides against the applicant's interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance, the applicant has no other appeal options with the City. However, the applicant may seek a Text Amendment or Zone Change (map) through the Planning Commission.



Application Checklist

Code Interpretation

The following items are required for a complete Code Interpretation application. Incomplete applications will be returned.

☐ **Signed Application Form**

Complete pages 2 - 3 of the Code Interpretation application form. If you need additional room to answer any question, attach additional sheets and identify the property address. Application must be signed by the applicant and the property owner (if different).

☐ **Fee (FY2026): \$1,780**

Payment options:

Check (payable to City of Grand Rapids)

Credit card in person at Development Center

Credit card by phone by calling (616) 456-4100

Additional Information

In the course of reviewing the application, the Planning Department staff may request additional information from the applicant.