

PORTIONS OF CITY OF ARANSAS PASS CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 5 –
BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION, ARTICLE VIII. – FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION

Sec. 5-114. - Definitions.

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Area of special flood hazard is the land in the floodplain within a community subject to a one-per-cent or greater chance of flooding in any given year. The area may be designated as zone A on the flood hazard boundary map (FHBM). After detailed ratemaking has been completed in preparation for publication of the FIRM, zone A usually is refined into zones, A, AE, AH, AO, A1-99, VO, V1-30, VE or V.

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Substantial improvement means any repair, reconstruction, or improvement of a structure, the cost of which equals or exceeds fifty (50) per cent of the market value of the structure either before the improvement or repair is started, or, if the structure has been damaged and is being restored, before the damage occurred. For the purpose of this definition, "substantial improvement" is considered to occur when the first alteration of any wall, ceiling, floor, or other structural part of the building commences, whether or not that alteration affects the external dimensions of the structure. The term does not, however, include either any project for improvement of a structure to comply with existing state or local health, sanitary, or safety code specifications which are solely necessary to assure safe living conditions, or any alteration of a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places or a state inventory of historic places.

Variance is a grant of relief to a person from the requirements of this article when specific enforcement would result in unnecessary hardship. A variance, therefore, permits construction or development in a manner otherwise prohibited by this article. (For full requirements see section 60.6 of the National Flood Insurance Program regulations.)

Sec. 5-127. - Same—Specific standards.

In all areas of special flood hazards where base flood elevation data has been provided as set forth in section 5-116, 5-123 (h) or 5-128 (d), the following provisions are required:

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- (2) *Nonresidential construction.* New construction and substantial improvements of any commercial, industrial or other nonresidential structure shall either have the lowest floor (including basement) elevated at a minimum to the base flood level plus one (1) foot of freeboard or, together with attendant utility and sanitary facilities, be designed so that below the base flood level the structure is watertight with walls substantially impermeable to the passage of water and with structural components having the capability of resisting hydrostatic and hydrodynamic loads and effects of buoyancy. A registered professional engineer or architect shall develop and/or review structural design, specifications, and plans for the construction, and shall certify that the design and methods of construction are in accordance with accepted standards of practice as outlined in this subsection. A record of such certification which includes the specific

elevation (in relation to mean sea level) to which such structures are floodproofed shall be maintained by the floodplain administrator.

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Sec. 5-125. - Variance procedures.

- (a) The city council shall hear and render judgment on requests for variances from the requirements of this article.
- (b) The city council shall hear and render judgment on an appeal only when it is alleged there is an error in any requirement, decision, or determination made by the floodplain administrator in the enforcement or administration of this article.
- (c) Any person or persons aggrieved by the decision of the city council may appeal such decision in the courts of competent jurisdiction.
- (d) The floodplain administrator shall maintain a record of all actions involving an appeal and shall report variances to the Federal Emergency Management Agency upon request.
- (e) Variances may be issued for the reconstruction, rehabilitation or restoration of structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the state inventory of historic places, without regard to the procedures set forth in the remainder of this article.
- (f) Variances may be issued for new construction and substantial improvements to be erected on a lot of one-half acre or less in size contiguous to and surrounded by lots with existing structures constructed below the base flood level, providing the relevant factors in this article have been fully considered. As the lot size increases beyond one-half acre, the technical justification required for issuing the variance increases.
- (g) Upon consideration of the factors noted above and the intent of this article, the city council may attach such conditions to the granting of variances as it deems necessary to further the purpose and objectives of this article.
- (h) Variances shall not be issued within any designated floodway if any increase in flood levels during the base flood discharge would result.
- (i) Prerequisites for granting variances:
 - (1) Variances shall only be issued upon a determination that the variance is the minimum necessary, considering the flood hazard, to afford relief.
 - (2) Variances shall only be issued upon:
 - a. Showing a good and sufficient cause;
 - b. A determination that failure to grant the variance would result in exceptional hardship to the applicant; and
 - c. A determination that the granting of a variance will not result in increased flood heights, additional threats to public safety, extraordinary public expense, create nuisances, cause fraud on or victimization of the public, or conflict with existing local laws or ordinances.
 - (3) Any application to whom a variance is granted shall be given written notice that the structure will be permitted to be built with the lowest floor elevation below the base flood elevation, and that the cost of flood insurance will be commensurate with the increased risk resulting from the reduced lowest floor elevation.

(j) Variances may be issued by a community for new construction and substantial improvements and for other development necessary for the conduct of a functionally dependent use provided that (1) the criteria outlined in section 5-125 are met, and (2) the structure or other development is protected by methods that minimize flood damages during the base flood and create no additional threats to public safety.

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