



GEORGIA REAL ESTATE EXAM GLOSSARY

Zoning variance

A zoning variance is official permission to depart from a specific zoning requirement when the applicant satisfies the ordinance's legal standard, commonly involving a property-specific hardship rather than personal convenience.

OFFICIAL AREA

Land Use Controls and Regulations

KNOWLEDGE CLUSTER

Land use controls

LEARNING SYSTEM

Define, distinguish, apply, retrieve

SOURCE STANDARD

Official exam outline plus authoritative Georgia or federal references where the topic has a controlling rule. Independent educational resource, not affiliated with GREC or PSI.

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01 / COMPLETE LESSON

Build the complete exam definition

Learn the rule, separate it from the nearest distractor, then apply it to a Georgia fact pattern.

CORE DEFINITION

What does Zoning variance mean?

A zoning variance is official permission to depart from a specific zoning requirement when the applicant satisfies the ordinance's legal standard, commonly involving a property-specific hardship rather than personal convenience.

CLOSEST DISTINCTION

How do you separate the nearest exam answer?

A variance grants relief from a current rule. A nonconforming use was lawful before the rule changed.

GEORGIA APPLICATION

What changes or stays the same in Georgia?

Local Georgia ordinances and boards control procedure and standards. A variance ordinarily does not rewrite zoning for the whole district.

WORKED EXAMPLE

An unusually shaped lot cannot meet the standard side setback, so the owner seeks limited relief for that dimensional requirement.

EXAM TRAP

Wanting a more profitable project is not automatically the hardship required for a variance.

Memory cue: Wanting a more profitable project is not automatically the hardship required for a variance.



02 / PRACTICE AND MASTERY

Retrieve the rule under exam conditions

Answer before reading the explanation. Then explain why every distractor belongs to a different term.

ORIGINAL PRACTICE CHECK

Which statement correctly explains Zoning variance?

- A** A nonconforming use is a land use that lawfully existed before a zoning change but no longer conforms to the current ordinance and is allowed to continue subject to local rules.
- B** Police power is the government's authority to regulate private property and conduct to protect public health, safety, morals, and general welfare, including zoning, building codes, and environmental regulation.
- C** Eminent domain is the government's power to take private property for a public use upon payment of just compensation.
- D** A zoning variance is official permission to depart from a specific zoning requirement when the applicant satisfies the ordinance's legal standard, commonly involving a property-specific hardship rather than personal convenience.

CORRECT ANSWER: D

Zoning variance is correct. A zoning variance is official permission to depart from a specific zoning requirement when the applicant satisfies the ordinance's legal standard, commonly involving a property-specific hardship rather than personal convenience. A variance grants relief from a current rule. A nonconforming use was lawful before the rule changed. Local Georgia ordinances and boards control procedure and standards. A variance ordinarily does not rewrite zoning for the whole district.

MASTERY TRACKER

Mark each box only when you can perform the skill without looking.

- ☐ I can define the term in one precise sentence.
- ☐ I can separate it from the closest look-alike.
- ☐ I can explain the Georgia rule or confirm that the national rule applies.
- ☐ I can answer the practice check and explain every option.



03 / CONNECTIONS AND AUTHORITY

Connect the term to the wider exam

Use these relationships to move from isolated recall to a connected exam model.

RELATED TERM

Nonconforming use

A nonconforming use is a land use that lawfully existed before a zoning change but no longer conforms to the current ordinance and is allowed to continue subject to local rules.

<https://www.passgeorgiarealestate.com/glossary/nonconforming-use>

RELATED TERM

Police power

Police power is the government's authority to regulate private property and conduct to protect public health, safety, morals, and general welfare, including zoning, building codes, and environmental regulation.

<https://www.passgeorgiarealestate.com/glossary/police-power>

RELATED TERM

Eminent domain

Eminent domain is the government's power to take private property for a public use upon payment of just compensation.

<https://www.passgeorgiarealestate.com/glossary/eminent-domain>

RELATED TERM

Highest and best use

Highest and best use is the reasonably probable use of land or improved property that is legally permissible, physically possible, financially feasible, and maximally productive.

<https://www.passgeorgiarealestate.com/glossary/highest-and-best-use>

RECOMMENDED NEXT COMPLETE LESSON

Land Use Controls and Regulations complete lesson

<https://www.passgeorgiarealestate.com/study-guide/land-use-controls/zoning-relief>

EXAM SOURCES AND AUTHORITY NOTES

1. PSI Georgia Candidate Information Bulletin, 7/1/2026

Official exam administration and content-outline source.

<https://test-takers.psiexams.com/api/content/bulletin/4672>