To: Plan Commission

From: Atefa Ghaznawi, AICP, LEED AP, City Planner
Daniel Ritter, AICP, Community Development Director

Date: November 12, 2026

Re: 1720 Cora Street, a Variation Request from Section 8.3-8 of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance for Maximum Fence Height in the Front and Corner Side Yards (Case # V-26-9-11-1)

Project Details

Project:	Variation Request for a Fence in the Front and Corner Side Yards
Applicant:	Meleenah I. Diaz and Jaden W. Banister
Requests:	A Variation Request from Section 8.3-8 of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance to increase the maximum permitted fence height from four (4) feet to five (5) feet in the front and corner side yards
Location:	1720 Cora Street (the "Subject Property")

Site Details

Lot Size:	Approximately 0.33 acre
Existing Zoning:	R-1 Single-Family Residence
Existing Improvements:	Approx. 1,450 SF existing single-family house, 832 SF detached garage, existing driveway and sidewalks.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use Summary

	Land Use	Comp Plan	Zoning
Subject Parcels	Single-Family Residence	Single-Family Detached	R-1
North	Single-Family Residence	Single-Family Detached	R-1
South	Single-Family Residence	Single-Family Detached	R-1

East	Single-Family Residence	Single-Family Detached	R-1
West	Single-Family Residence	Single-Family Detached	R-1

Exhibits

Application documents submitted by Applicant include:

1. Exhibit B – Application for Development 2026-06-23
2. Exhibit C – Legal Description 2026-09-14
3. Exhibit D - List of Requested Variations
4. Exhibit E – Plat of Survey with Location of Proposed Fence 2026-09-14
5. Exhibit F – Project Narrative 2026-09-14
6. Exhibit G – Proposed Fence Scope of Work 2026-09-14
7. Exhibit H – Response to Standards for Variation

Application Background and Project Summary

Meleenah I. Diaz and Jaden W. Banister (collectively the "Applicant") are the owners of the single-family house located at 1720 Cora Street, Crest Hill (the "Subject Property"). The applicant is requesting approval of a Variation to increase the maximum permitted fence height from four (4) feet to five (5) feet in the front and corner side yards. The proposed fence will be 50% open design and will maintain a five (5) feet setback from the property lines as required by the Zoning Ordinance. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, there is a 10-foot steep grade spanning from the west property line to the east property line, especially along the west property line facing Cora Street.

Figure 1: Location Map of 1720 Cora Street with Existing Grades



Figure 2: 1720 Cora Street existing condition photo, showing the west-east steep grade



Summary of Requested Petition

The applicant is requesting approval of a Variation request to increase the maximum permitted fence height from four (4) feet to five (5) feet in the front and corner side yards. The proposed fence will be a 50% open design and will maintain a five (5) feet setback from the property lines as required by the Zoning Ordinance.

Section 8.3-8 Permitted Obstructions in Yards, the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance

- Fences, natural, open: not greater than four (4) feet in height nor closer than five (5) feet from front and corner side lot lines.

Staff Analysis

The Subject Property is a single-family house located on a corner lot. There is approximately 10-foot steep grade spanning from the west to east property lines, especially along the western edge of the Property. The existing steep grade; irregular configuration of the home on its lot—being situated very near to the south and east property lines (such configuration results in the only useful green space being near Cora St. and Ludwig Ave.); and the lack of a true backyard, create unique site conditions that make compliance with the current fence height regulation in front and corner side yards challenging.

Due to the property's unique physical characteristics, a 4-foot fence permitted by the Zoning Ordinance will not provide adequate privacy, security, and screening from Cora St., Ludwig Ave., and neighboring properties. The requested Variation for a 5-foot fence will allow the property to be used and enjoyed in a manner consistent with its residential purpose while addressing the practical difficulties associated with the property's unique physical conditions. The Variation request is limited to only request what is required under these conditions. The proposed fence will be 50% open design, and will maintain a 5-foot setback from the west and north property lines, as required by the Zoning Ordinance. The requested Variation will not change the property's permitted use but will provide a reasonable accommodation for its unique physical characteristics. Therefore, Staff don’t oppose granting the requested Variation due to the limited and specific scope of the Variation request.

Variation Approval Standards and Findings

Section 12.6-2 of the Zoning Ordinance states the Plan Commission shall recommend, and the City Council shall grant a Variation only when it shall have been determined, and recorded in writing, that all of the following standards are complied with. Staff has drafted the following findings of fact identified in bold italic font. These drafted findings can be modified or changed as the Plan Commission deems fit and based on the specific findings from the public hearing.

1. That the property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted to be used only under the conditions allowed by the regulations in that zone.
   The Subject Property is a single-family house located on a corner lot. There is approximately 10-foot steep grade from the west to east property lines, especially along the western edge of the Property. The existing steep grade; irregular configuration of the home on its lot—being situated very near to the south and east property lines (such configuration results in the only useful green space being near Cora St. and Ludwig Ave.); and the lack of a true backyard create unique site conditions that make compliance with the current fence height regulation in front and corner side yards challenging.

   Due to the property's unique physical characteristics, a 4-foot fence permitted by the Zoning Ordinance will not provide adequate privacy, security, and screening from Cora St., Ludwig Ave. and neighboring properties. The requested Variation for a 5-foot fence will allow the property to be used and enjoyed in a manner consistent with its residential purpose while addressing the practical difficulties associated with the property's unique physical conditions. The Variation request is limited to only request what is required under these conditions. The proposed fence will be 50% open design, and will maintain a 5-foot setback from the west and north property lines, as required by the Zoning Ordinance. The requested Variation will not change the property's permitted use but will provide a reasonable accommodation for its unique physical characteristics.

2. That the plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances.
   The plight of the property owner is due to unique circumstances associated with the Subject Property's existing steep grade; irregular lot configuration of the home on its lot—being situated very near to the south and east property lines (such configuration results in the only useful green space being near Cora St. and Ludwig Ave.); and the lack of a true backyard. The significant changes in elevation, combined with the property's irregular configuration and exposure to two street frontages, create challenges in providing adequate privacy, security, and screening with a 4-foot fence that complies with the current Zoning Ordinance.

   These conditions are specific to the property's physical characteristics and are not generally applicable to other properties in the R-1 Zoning District. The requested Variation for a 5-foot fence will address these unique site conditions while maintaining the property's single-family residential use and compatibility with the surrounding residential neighborhood.

3. That the variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.
   The requested Variation for a 5-foot fence on a single-family residential corner lot with a steep grade and irregular lot configuration will not alter the essential character of the locality. The proposed 5-foot fence is intended to address the property's unique topographical conditions and corner-lot configuration while

providing adequate privacy, security, and screening. The proposed fence will remain accessory to the existing single-family residence and, provided it is appropriately designed and maintained, will be compatible with the surrounding residential properties. The Variation request will not change the permitted use of the property or negatively affect the established character of the neighborhood.

In addition, Section 12.6-2 Standards for Variations further suggest that the Plan Commission supplement the above standards by taking into consideration the extent to which the facts listed on Exhibit A have been established by the evidence presented during the public hearing process and further support the approval of the Applicant's requests. Please refer to Exhibit H for the response to Standards for Variations.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the drafted findings reflected in this staff report, Staff recommend the following motion to provide a recommendation to the City Council. This motion may be amended by any Plan Commission member making the motion based upon the findings of the public hearing. Staff recommend that any motion be made in the positive form to correspond with the applicant's request to avoid confusion.

The Plan Commission recommends City Council conditional approval of a Variation Request from Section 8.3-8 of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance to increase the maximum permitted fence height from four (4) feet to five (5) feet in the front and corner side yards located at 1720 Cora Street, Crest Hill, subject to substantial conformance with the application documents referenced in the November 12, 2026, Plan Commission Staff Report for Case # V-26-9-11-1.

EXHIBIT A

Supplemental Variation Approval Facts to Consider Per Zoning Ordinance Section 12.6-2

1. *That the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical condition of the specific property involved will result in a particular hardship upon the owner, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of the regulations were carried out.*

2. *The conditions upon which the petition for a variation is based are unique to the property owner for which the variation is sought and are not applicable, generally, to the other property within the same zoning classification.*

3. *That the alleged difficulty or hardship is caused by the Ordinance and has not been created by any person presently having an interest in the property.*

4. *That the proposed variation will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property or substantially increase congestion in the public streets or increase the danger of fire, or endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish or impair property values within the adjacent neighborhood.*

5. *That the variation does not permit a use otherwise excluded from the particular zone except for uses authorized by the Plan Commission, subject to the approval of the City Council, as "similar and compatible uses."*

6. *That the variation granted is the minimum adjustment necessary for the reasonable use of the land.*

7. *That the granting of any variation is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the Zoning Ordinance, and will not be injurious to the neighborhood, be detrimental to the public welfare, alter the essential character of the locality, or be in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan for development of the City.*

8. *That, for reasons fully set forth in the recommendations of the Plan Commission, and the report of the City Council, the aforesaid circumstances or conditions are such that the strict application of the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance deprives the applicant of any reasonable use of his land. Mere loss in value shall not justify a variation; there must be a deprivation of beneficial use of land.*