

**VARIANCE APPLICATION CRITERIA
PARK PLACE MIDDLE SCHOOL MODERNIZATION
PARKING REQUIREMENTS**

Monroe School District is requesting a Variance to parking requirements for the Park Place Middle School (PPM) Modernization project. For junior high schools MMC 18.86.050 requires 1.5 parking spaces for each staff member plus parking required for public assembly areas. Public assembly areas require 1 parking space for every 4 persons based on occupancy load or fixed seats.

Based on the new design, a total of 802 parking spaces would be required per code:

School Use: 84 staff x 1.5 = 126 parking spaces required

Public Assembly (gym and commons): 2,701 occupancy load x .25 = 676 parking spaces required

Total required parking for both uses = 802

The District is proposing to provide 118 parking spaces for the middle school (one parking space for each staff member, plus 34 visitor parking spaces) and 33 parking spaces for Building F. By using the drop-off area and bus lanes there is an additional 46 parking spaces that can be used during special events occurring during non-school hours. This would bring the total number of available parking spaces to 197.

BACKGROUND

The existing school is designed for 935 middle school students (1,035 student capacity including portables) and provides 144 parking spaces. From 1974-1999 the facility was used as Monroe High School, with the current building configuration in place since 1990. During use as a high school, the 144 parking spaces accommodated both staff and student parking.

The new design utilizes a similar footprint to the existing layout, but is designed to support only 850 middle school students – a reduction of 85 students (or 185 reduction if portables are considered). There are two primary factors that support a lesser number of parking spaces than what is required by code: Middle school students do not drive to school; and Special events only occur during non-school hours.

Special events in the gym and commons only occur after school hours or on weekends. School events that draw larger crowds occur approximately 6-8 times during the year (curriculum night, band/choir concerts). There also may be some athletic events (community or school) that bring additional visitors – but, once again, only during evenings or weekends. The educational and assembly uses will never occur at the same time. Furthermore, the District has not received any neighborhood complaints about parking during these events.

BUILDING F

The existing campus configuration has several buildings that will be demolished and replaced with new construction. Building F, which currently houses the library and two classrooms, will not be demolished nor will it be used as a part of the new school. The District has elected to remove this building from educational use, in order to receive state matching funds for new school construction. Per WAC 392-347-042 and as a condition of this funding, the District must remove this square footage from its instructional spaces.

Building F will be used to temporarily house students during construction, but at the completion of the new school this building will be vacated and will be removed from Park Place Middle School's square footage. The final use of Building F has yet to be determined, but potential uses could include warehouse space, a pre-kindergarten program, community services, or a new District Office. Beyond the temporary teaching spaces, no upgrades or modernization of this building are proposed at this time.

Because of this parking variance request, the District evaluated what kinds of parking needs would be generated if Building F were used in its current configuration of 6 teaching stations. Since the facility is not allowed to be used for kindergarten through twelfth grades, the most likely scenario would be a pre-kindergarten center. Based on this use, Building F would need 9 parking spaces. We are currently proposing 33 parking spaces, which would be 24 more than needed.

Until a final use is decided for Building F, the 33 parking spaces would be made available for Park Place Middle School. The District understands that if the eventual use of this building requires more parking than is available on-site, we will have to pursue other options such as off-site parking or acquiring additional land.

VARIANCE CRITERIA

Special Privileges

No special privilege will be granted with the variance. It will allow the property to continue with the same use and (nearly identical) parking that has been in place for over 30 years.

Special Circumstance

The 19.4 acre site is relatively small for a middle school, and there is no surplus space to create more parking. The proposed design utilizes all of the available site for building, landscaping, circulation, parking, or athletic fields. No surrounding property is available for expansion, and the location of a Category 1 Wetland to the south prevents development in this area.

Public Welfare

Allowing the same level of parking will not be detrimental to the public welfare, rather it will be beneficial to the public. If 802 parking spaces are required, the existing site is not large enough and the District would not be able to construct a new middle school. Completion of the project as designed will create a better learning environment for students, as well as enhanced gathering and athletic facilities for community use.

Comprehensive Plan

Granting the variance will not adversely affect the implementation of the comprehensive plan. The property is designated as Public Facilities School and the zoning is Public Open Space. The variance will allow the site to continue its current operation as a middle school.

Property Rights

Since this is the only middle school in the area, it is difficult to compare property rights of similar surrounding uses. The District conducted an informal survey of newer middle schools in the region to find out how much parking these schools provide:

| School | District | # Students | # Parking | Spaces/Student |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Meadowdale Middle | Edmonds | 750 | 156 | .21 |
| Northshore Jr. | Northshore | 950 | 122 | .13 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|-----|------------------|-----|
| Finn Hill Middle | Lk Washington | 750 | 77 | .10 |
| Valley View Middle | Snohomish | 800 | 220 ¹ | .11 |
| Park Place Middle (existing) | Monroe | 935 | 144 | .15 |
| Park Place Middle (proposed) | Monroe | 850 | 197 ² | .23 |

¹ Valley View MS has only 84 designated parking spaces, additional parking is provided by using drop-off areas

² Park Place MS has 151 designated parking spaces and 46 additional spaces by using bus and drop-off areas

None of the schools above provide more than 220 parking spaces and it is likely that no middle school in the region has the available space or budget to provide 800 parking spaces.