

**STAFF REPORT & RECOMMENDATION  
SITE PLAN, VARIANCE AND  
PUBLIC AGENCY EXCEPTION REQUEST  
FILE #(s) SITE2016-01, VR2016-01 & CAE2016-01**

**PARK PLACE MIDDLE SCHOOL  
MODERNIZATION PROJECT**

**PUBLIC HEARING DATE:**  
April 15, 2016 at 10:00 AM  
Monroe City Hall Council Chambers  
806 West Main Street

**TO:** Mr. Carl Cox, City of Monroe Hearing Examiner  
**FROM:** Kristi Kyle, Senior Planner, City of Monroe  
**DATE:** April 6, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** Park Place Middle School Modernization Project

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**A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND REQUEST SUMMARY**

On behalf of Monroe Public School District, Rebecca Baibak with Integrus Architects (“Applicant”) has requested the following project permits for the Park Place Middle School Modernization Project:

1. Site plan review;
2. Variance from the number of required parking spaces; and,
3. Public Agency or Utility Exception (PAUE) to the existing on-site critical areas

The site plan review request addresses the demolition, rebuild and retention of various middle school buildings. Specifically, the School District intends to demolish the existing 109,912 square foot building and replace it with an approximately 128,000 square foot building two (2) stories in height. The existing gymnasium will remain and undergo renovations and will be incorporated into the new building. Building F (on the plans) is 20,622 square feet and will remain, but is being removed from educational use per state statute requirements related to State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) construction assistance for funding of the modernization project.

The variance request seeks to reduce the required number of parking spaces from 802 to 197 (a reduction of 605 parking spaces). Monroe Municipal Code (MMC) section 18.86.050 requires 1.5 parking spaces for each staff member plus one (1) additional parking space for areas of public assembly. Based on this requirement the modernized Middle School would be required to provide 802 parking spaces. The School District is proposing to provide 118 parking spaces for the middle school (one (1) parking stall for each staff member, plus 34 visitor parking spaces) and 33 parking spaces for Building F. The drop off areas and bus lanes provide an additional 46 parking spaces

that can be utilized during special events. Cumulatively, this brings the total to 197 spaces (when the drop off areas and bus lanes are not in use).

The Monroe School District's Public Agency or Utility Exception (PAUE) request (MMC 20.05.080(D)(1) Critical Areas) would, if granted, allow encroachment into a minimum 200-foot Category 1 wetland buffer. MMC 20.05.050(c)(1) allows for exceptions to the Critical Areas Ordinance by public agencies or utilities. Approximately half of the existing football/soccer fields lie within the wetland buffer. The same will occur with the proposed athletic field upgrades/improvements with approximately half of the football/soccer field and track within the wetland buffer as well as roughly half of the southern baseball field. The exception request is to allow continued buffer encroachment.

**B. GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Applicant/Contact Person:

Rebecca Baibak, Integrus Architects  
117 South Main Street, Suite 100  
Seattle, WA, 98104

2. Owner:

Monroe Public Schools  
200 East Fremont Street  
Monroe, WA 98272

3. General Location: The site is an approximately 20.1-acre assemblage of properties located at 1408 West Main Street, Monroe, Washington. The Site consists of four parcels identified as Snohomish County Assessor Tax Parcel Nos. 27060200409400, 27060100306500, 27061100100300, and 27061200201000 in a portion of Section 1, Township 27 North, Range 6 East, W.M. (Exhibit 2).

4. Address of Property: 1408 West Main Street, Monroe, WA 98272.

5. Description of Proposal: Site Plan review, variance and Public Agency or Utility Exception (PAUE) request (Exhibit 3).

6. General Site Description: The north half of the site contains the existing middle school buildings, asphalt driveways, parking areas, and bus drop-off area. There are three portables south of the main buildings, as well as a greenhouse and outbuildings along the east property boundary.

The south half of the site contains a large grass field that is used primarily for athletic activities. Athletic facilities in the southern half of the site have been maintained since the early 1970s.

The site is bordered to the north by West Main Street, to the east and west by single family homes and commercial buildings, and to the south by a large flood control berm that extends the entire length of the school property. Perimeter fencing is located along the east and west property boundaries.

The City of Monroe Critical Areas and Buffer Map depicts a large wetland south of the Park Place Middle School property. This wetland is rated as a Category I wetland. The City of Monroe Critical Areas and Buffer Map also depict an unclassified stream within the wetland south of the Park Place Middle School project site. No additional wetlands are shown within the vicinity of the project area.

7. Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations, Zoning Designation and Existing Land Uses of the Site and Surrounding Area:

AREA	LAND USE DESIGNATION	ZONING	EXISTING USE
Project Site	Institutional	Public Open Space	Middle School
North of Site (Across West Main Street)	Mixed Use	Mixed Use Commercial	Grocery & Offices
South of Site	Parks	Limited Open Space	Open Space
East of Site	Mixed Use	Mixed Use Commercial	Offices
West of Site	Mixed Use	Mixed Use Commercial	Offices

8. Public Utilities and Services Provided by:

Water:	City of Monroe	Gas:	Puget Sound Energy
Sewer:	City of Monroe	Cable TV:	Comcast
Garbage:	Republic Services	Police:	City of Monroe
Storm Water:	City of Monroe	Fire:	Monroe Fire District No. 3
Telephone:	Verizon	School:	Monroe Public Schools
Electricity:	Snohomish County PUD No. 1	Hospital:	Evergreen Health

**C. FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Application Process and Review Criteria: The City of Monroe received a Site Plan Review application from the Monroe School District in accordance with Monroe Municipal Code (MMC) Chapter 18.82. Site Plan review is an administrative process and shall be approved or denied by the Community Development Director.

However, the applicant also submitted applications for a variance and a Public Agency or Utility (PAUE) exception. A Variance is a public hearing review process per MMC 21.20.050(A). A Public Agency Exception is a public hearing review process per MMC 20.05.050(C)(1). Each requires a public hearing and decision before the Hearing Examiner. The Site Plan review application reflects the variance and the Public Agency or Utility

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Exception (PAUE) requests. At the request of the applicant, the three applications have been consolidated per MMC Section 21.50.130.

2. Application Completeness: The Park Place Middle School Modernization project applications were received by the City of Monroe on January 6, 2016 (Exhibit 3). The application was deemed complete on February 4, 2016 (Exhibit 4).
3. Public Notification and Comment: Public notice was provided in accordance with the requirements of MMC 21.40.010. A Notice of Application was published, posted, and mailed on February 16, 2016 (Exhibit 5) and a notice of Public Hearing was published, posted, and mailed on March 29, 2016 (Exhibit 6). Cards advertising the April 15, 2016 public hearing and application were mailed to all property owners within a 500-foot radius of the subject property. Emails were sent to agencies, tribes, and interested persons. Public notice was also posted on the subject property, at City Hall, and the Monroe Library on March 29, 2016. As of the date of this Staff Report's preparation, no written public comment has been received.
4. Comprehensive Plan and Zoning: The City of Monroe Comprehensive Plan 2015-2035 adopted on December 8, 2015 has designated the subject property as "Institutional" on the Future Land Use Map. The subject property is zoned Public Open Space (PS) (Exhibit 7).

The City of Monroe 2015-2035 Comprehensive Plan, Table 3.07, describes the "Institutional" land use designation (Exhibit 8) as follows:

*"Institutional. This designation shall include county, state, or federally owned and operated facilities located within city limits or the urban growth areas. These include Washington State Reformatory, Public Library, and the Evergreen State Fairgrounds, all of which are regional uses, as well as large sites dedicated to school or municipal use."*

5. Environmental Review: The Monroe Public School District acted as SEPA lead agency for the proposal and issued a Mitigated Determination of Nonsignificance (MDNS) on January 6, 2016 (Exhibit 9). The City reviewed the MDNS during the comment period and had no comments. The School District's SEPA determination was not appealed.

The School District's Lead Agency status on the proposal was appropriate. WAC Section 197-11-050 entitled "SEPA Lead Agency" provides that other agencies may act as lead agency on projects that are submitted to other agencies for additional permitting and states,

*(1) A lead agency shall be designated when an agency is developing or is presented with a proposal, following the rules beginning at WAC 197.11-922.*

*(2) The lead agency shall be the agency with main responsibility for complying with SEPA's procedural requirements and shall be the only agency responsible for:*

*(a) The threshold determination; and*

*(b) Preparation and content of environmental impact statements.*

Monroe Municipal Code (MMC) Section 20.04.050(C) entitled "Lead Agency Determination and Responsibilities" provides for other public agencies to act as lead agency and states,

*"C. When the City is not the lead agency for a proposal, all departments of the City shall use and consider, as appropriate, either the DNS or the final EIS of the lead agency in making decisions on the proposal..."*

6. Site Plan Review: Per MMC section 18.82.020 site plan review and approval shall be required prior to use and/or building permit issuance for any commercial, industrial, public building or activity or residential building. Pursuant to this section, the City Planner, City Engineer, Fire Marshal, Building Official, and Police Chief have all reviewed and commented on the proposed site plan application. Their comments are included in the body of this report and in the project permit conditions of approval (Exhibit 10, Site Plan).

The proposed project is anticipated to be completed in 3 phases. Construction is scheduled to begin in June of 2016, with final completion in August 2018. The school will be operational during construction.

- Phase 1-Demolition of Building C, E portions of D; construction of a new 2-story academic wing with auxiliary gym.
- Phase 2-Demolition of Building B, portions of A, portables; remodel of existing gym and construction of west end of academic wing.
- Phase 3-Demolition of remaining building D and Life Skills portable; completion of athletic fields and remaining site work.

7. Density and Dimensional Standards: Per MMC section 18.10.050 "Zoning Land Use Matrix" and MMC section 18.10.140 "Bulk Requirements" and "Table D", the development shall comply with the following standards for the Public Open Space (PS) zone):

- Minimum lot size (Not Applicable),
- Minimum lot width (Not Applicable),
- Minimum front yard setback (20 feet),
- Minimum side yard setback (10 feet/20 feet when abutting Residential Zones),
- Minimum rear yard setback (10 feet/20 feet when abutting Residential Zones),
- Maximum building height (45 feet) and
- Maximum lot coverage (75 percent).

The proposal complies with these requirements.

**Table D  
– Open Space and Public Use Zoning District Bulk Development Requirements**

	Open Space and Public Use		
	Open Space		Public
	LOS	LOSA	PS <sup>1</sup>
<b>Minimum Lot Size, in sq. ft.</b>	5 acres	Commercial and airport uses – None	NA
<b>Minimum Lot Width</b>	70	70	NA
<b>Maximum Lot Coverage</b>	30%	100% with Type I landscaping along exterior perimeter of LOS-Airport zone	75%
<b>Maximum Building Height</b>	35	35	45
<b>Front Yard Setback</b>	50' from arterials 25' other streets	Interior LOSA – per IBC and IFC Adjacent to non-LOSA zones: 20'	20
<b>Side Yard Setback<sup>2,3</sup></b>	25	Interior LOSA – per IBC and IFC Adjacent to non-LOSA zones: 20'	10/20
<b>Rear Yard Setback</b>	25	Interior LOSA – per IBC and IFC Adjacent to non-LOSA zones: 20'	10/20
<b>Landscape Buffer</b>	5	5	5 <sup>3</sup>

Notes:

1. Small structures, one thousand square feet or less in size and twenty-five feet in height or less, shall provide a ten-foot front setback and five-foot rear and side yard setback inclusive of a five-foot landscape buffer.
2. Side and rear setbacks to interior lot lines are ten feet, except in the case of common ownership of multiple adjacent lots. Where a parcel directly abuts a residential zone, the side and rear setbacks to exterior property lines are twenty feet.
3. The city may waive the five-foot perimeter landscape buffer for internal property lines when the adjacent properties share parking, access, or other common features that will make intensive landscaping impractical.

8. MMC Title 18 (Planning and Zoning) and Title 21 (Development Review Process) - Variances: Pursuant to Monroe Municipal Code (MMC) Section 18.98.085 and MMC subsection 21.20.050(A) variances for a parking space reduction require a hearing examiner public hearing.

MMC section 18.98.085 states,

**“18.98.085 Hearing body – Hearing examiner.**

The hearing body for variances under this chapter shall be the hearing examiner.”

MMC Section 21.20.050(A) states,

**“21.20.050 Hearing examiner.**

The hearing examiner shall have the authority and responsibility to review and act on the following subjects:

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- A. To hear and decide all variance applications per Chapter 18.98 MMC, including land clearing variances, per Chapter 20.08 MMC...”.

The hearing examiner therefore has the authority to hear and decide on the requested parking variance.

9. Parking Requirements and Reduction Request: MMC section 18.86.050 entitled “Required Off-Street Parking Table” requires 802 parking spaces for the Park Place Middle School Modernization Project. The variance request is to reduce the number of required off-street parking spaces by 605 to 197. The applicant request for a parking variance is dated as January 6, 2016 (Exhibit 11).

Based on the proposed modernization, a total of 802 parking spaces are required, calculated as follows:

*School Use: 84 Staff x 1.5 (required parking spaces) = 126 spaces*  
*Public Assembly (gym and commons): 2,701 occupancy load x .25 (required parking spaces) = 676 spaces*  
*Total required for both uses: **802 spaces***

The Park Place Middle School Modernization Project proposes the following number of parking spaces.

*School Use: 84 Staff x 1 (proposed parking spaces) = 84 spaces*  
*School Use: Visitor proposed parking = 34 spaces*  
*School Use: Building F (reserved for future use) = 33 spaces*  
*School Use: Overflow parking for after-hours events (utilizing drop off areas and bus lanes) = 46 spaces*  
*Total proposed parking: **197 spaces***

10. Variance(s): MMC section 18.98.040 identifies the criteria for the granting of a variance and states:

“18.98.040 Criteria for granting variance permit.

The hearing examiner shall consider all requests for variance; variance from the provision of such ordinances shall not be granted by the hearing examiner unless the hearing examiner finds that all of the following facts and conditions exist:

- A. The variance shall not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the uses of other properties in the vicinity and in the zone in which the property on behalf of which the application was filed is located; and
- B. The variance is necessary because of special circumstances relating to the size, shape, topography, location or surrounding of the subject

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property in order to provide it with use rights and privileges permitted to other properties in the vicinity and in the zone in which the subject property is located; and

- D. The granting of such variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity and in which the subject property is situated; and
- E. The authorization of such variance will not adversely affect the implementation of the comprehensive land use policy plan; and
- F. The granting of such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant possessed by the owners of other properties in the same zone or vicinity.”

11. Variance Criteria and Staff Analysis: A staff analysis of the Middle School modernization proposal against the variance criteria follows. The variance criteria are stated first (**in bold**), followed by a staff analysis:

**A. The variance shall not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the uses of other properties in the vicinity and in the zone in which the property on behalf of which the application filed is located:**

Staff Analysis: The applicant in Exhibit 11 states that no special privilege will be granted with this parking reduction variance. The Monroe School District’s Park Place Middle School is an existing use that has been in place for over 40 years. The school is designed for approximately 935 middle school students and is currently providing 144 parking spaces.

From 1974 -1999 the facility was used as the Monroe High School, with the current configuration in place since 1990. During its use as a high school, the existing 144 parking spaces accommodated both faculty and student parking. The facility is now used as a middle school with students that are not of driving age. In addition, the applicant as part of the application proposal will actually be adding 53 parking spaces to the site.

The granting of the variance will allow the school to continue utilizing the property with the same use and (nearly identical) parking that has been in place for over 40 years. Staff concurs with the applicant and finds that the variance does not grant a special privilege and will not negatively impact the surrounding properties.

**B. The variance is necessary because of special circumstances relating to the size, shape, topography, location or surrounding of the subject property in order to provide it with uses rights and privileges permitted to other properties in the vicinity and in the zone in which the subject property is located:**

Staff Analysis: Compared to other schools located in the City of Monroe and neighboring cities, the subject property is relatively small for a middle school. There is no surplus space to provide more parking.

The proposed design utilizes the entire available site for buildings, landscaping, circulation, parking or athletic fields. No surrounding property is available for expansion. The location of Category 1 Wetland to the south restricts development of the site. Further, this is an existing use that has been operating for over 40 years in the same capacity, but due to the age of the existing building it is now due to be upgraded.

Staff concurs with the applicants' reasoning that 802 parking spaces is not necessary given that middle school students are not of driving age. The applicant is proposing to provide 197 spaces (which is 53 more spaces that currently exists). The City's current parking requirements do not differentiate between a high school and a middle school in terms of required parking. The granting of a variance to reduce the number of required parking spaces to a total of 197 spaces is not incompatible with other public schools of similar type (e.g. middle school) and size (See also staff analysis on Criteria E below).

**C. *The granting of such variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity and in which the subject property is situated:***

Staff Analysis: Granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity or upon the subject property. The proposed variance would allow the property to continue utilizing the site for the same land use and in a similar manner as it has been for over 40 years.

Further, the proposed parking variance is being processed concurrently with the Site Plan Review application. This will ensure that applicable Monroe Municipal Code requirements are met. This permit review process will ensure that the buildings, landscaping, lighting, drainage, ball fields and parking are located consistent with code requirements for building code, fire protection, setbacks, parking dimensions, and traffic circulation.

**D. *The authorization of such variance will not adversely affect the implementation of the Comprehensive Land Use Policy Plan:***

Staff Analysis: The proposal is consistent with the Land Use Element of the City of Monroe 2015-2035 Comprehensive Plan.

For example, Comprehensive Plan Land Use Goal 7 states,

“Provide parks and civic facilities, recreational opportunities, and arts and cultural activities on pace with need, growth and long term objective.”

Land Use Policy 184 (P-184) states,

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“Encourage the shared use of community facilities such as parks, libraries and schools”.

and,

Comprehensive Plan Land Use Goal 8 states,

“Establish downtown Monroe as a thriving commercial, civic, and residential area.”

Land Use Policy 221 (P.221) states,

“Stimulate the long-term growth of Main Street between Kelsey and 179<sup>th</sup> Avenue as an important service area, and as a mixed use extension of Downtown vitality.”

The proposal would allow for continued recreational opportunities at the Middle School facilities that are often available for use by the community. Additionally, the proposal is consistent with Comprehensive Plan Land Use Goal 8 and Land Use Policy 221 in that it promotes public facilities to modernize/update their buildings on the Main Street Corridor.

**E. *The granting of such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of the applicant possessed by the landowners of other properties in the same zone or vicinity:***

Staff Analysis: The variance would allow the property to continue as a Middle School. Since this is the only public middle school in the City of Monroe, the applicant conducted an inventory of newer middle schools in the region to identify how much parking was provided.

Based on the information below granting such variance is not inconsistent with other middle schools recently constructed.

School	District	# Students	# Parking Spaces	Spaces/Student
Meadowdale Middle	Edmonds	750	156	0.21
Northshore Jr.	Northshore	950	122	0.13
Finn Hill Middle	Lake Washington	750	77	0.10
Valley View Middle	Snohomish	800	220*	0.11
Park Place Middle School (Existing Student Population)	Monroe	935	144	0.15
Park Place Middle School (Future Student population)	Monroe	850	197**	0.23

\* Valley View Middle only has 84 designated parking spaces; additional parking is provided using drop-off areas.

\*\* Park Place Middle has 151 designated spaces and 46 additional spaces by using bus and drop-off areas.

12. Critical Areas: The Park Place Middle School property contains one Category 1 wetland located off site south of the Middle School athletic fields. However, the buffer to the wetland is located on-site. Per the City of Monroe's Stream and Wetland Inventory Report dated March 2005 the wetland is inventoried as Wetland 33 (Exhibit 12). The Critical Areas and Buffer Map also depict an unclassified stream within the wetland located south of the Park Place Middle School buildings (Exhibit 12).

MMC Chapter 20.05 entitled "Critical Areas" regulates activities within and adjacent to wetlands and streams. Alterations of wetlands and their buffers are generally prohibited, except as allowed under certain conditions specified in MMC Section 20.05.080. The applicant submitted a Critical Area Report prepared by Raedeke Associates, Inc. on November 24, 2015, revised March 2, 2016 (included as Exhibit 13).

In this case, the applicant is requesting a Public Agency or Utility Exception (PAUE) (Exhibit 14). MMC subsection 20.05.080(A) prohibits activities and uses from Category I wetlands, except as provided under MMC 20.05.050(C)(1) which allows for exceptions to the Critical Areas Ordinance by public agencies or utilities.

A PAUE request requires the applicant to provide adequate information to document that all possible construction techniques that would eliminate unreasonable risk of impacts to a critical area have been evaluated. All other alignments that would meet the project purpose also need to be considered. In addition, the proposal must minimize and mitigate unavoidable impacts to critical areas and/or critical area buffers.

The Monroe School District's PAUE request identifies proposed improvements to the existing athletic field that fall within the 200-foot buffer of a Category 1 wetland buffer (located to the south of the athletic fields). These improvements include replacing the existing grass fields with artificial turf, a synthetic track, and lighting. The upgraded fields would be in the same location and will not extend beyond the existing grass fields.

13. Critical Area Exception(s): MMC subsection 20.05.050(C) identifies the criteria for granting an exception and states:

"C. Exceptions. The proponent of the activity shall submit a written request for exception from the director that describes the proposed activity and exception that applies. Depending on the exemption requested, the director (for administrative decisions) or hearing examiner (for reasonable use exceptions) shall review the exception requested to verify that it complies with this chapter and approve or deny the exception. All decisions made by either the hearing examiner or director shall be published in the official paper. If the exception is approved, it shall be placed on file with the community development department.

1. Public Agency or Utility. If the application if this chapter would prohibit a development proposal by a public agency or public utility that is essential to

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its ability to provide service, the agency or utility may apply for an exception pursuant to this section. After holding a public hearing pursuant to MMC 21.50.030, Hearing examiner review and recommendation, the hearing examiner may approve the exception if the hearing examiner finds that:

- a. There is no other feasible alternative to the proposed development with less impact on the critical areas, based on the demonstration by the applicant of the following factors:
  - i. The applicant has considered all possible construction techniques based on available technology that are feasible for the proposed project and eliminated any that would result in unreasonable risk of impact to the critical area; and
  - ii. The applicant has considered all available alignments within the range of potential alignments that meet the project purpose and for which operating rights are available.
- b. The proposal minimizes and mitigates unavoidable impacts to critical areas and/or critical areas buffers. Any decision by the hearing examiner is final unless appealed”

14. Critical Area Exception Criteria and Staff Analysis: In accordance with MMC 20.05.050(C)(1), the criteria to evaluate a Public Agency or Utility Exception (PAUE) request are identified below. The decisional criteria are stated first (**in bold**), followed by a staff analysis:

- A. There is no other feasible alternative to the proposed development with less impact on the critical areas, based on the demonstration by the applicant of the following factors:**
  - i. The applicant has considered all possible construction techniques based on available technology that are feasible for the proposed project and eliminated any that would result in unreasonable risk of impact to the critical area; and**

Staff Analysis: The applicant’s request for the PAUE is attached as Exhibit 14. The applicant states that the overall square footage of the school (or number of classrooms) could not be reduced without impacting its student capacity which is necessary to accommodate future enrollment growth. Due to the location of the existing buildings that are not proposed to be demolished the District has stated that

there is no additional room on site to move the buildings. The two existing buildings (gym and Building F) will remain on the south side of the new building area. The location of the existing buildings denotes the southern edge of structures on the site and contributes to the athletic field's critical area encroachment which is why the fields cannot be moved further north.

Additionally, existing easements on the site limit placement of new buildings. Adding a third story to the classroom wing would not move buildings further away from the wetland buffer, nor create additional useable space outside of the buffer for site and athletic field development.

The applicant also indicates that paved areas have already been minimized to the extent allowed by code. Paved area is necessitated by code requirements for emergency access, site circulation, and parking. In fact, the District has requested a variance from the City to allow less parking than is required by code. Without the variance, the site would have to provide 802 parking spaces, which would be significantly more paved area. Both the covered play area and the southern paved area are necessary.

The covered play area located between the existing gym and Building F is used by students before school, during lunch, and after school. The area is also used as part of the physical education program, as it is an outdoor area that is protected from weather.

The athletic fields have been designed to meet middle school physical education and athletic standards; they are not larger competition-sized fields like those at the Monroe High School. Reduction of the football/soccer field or track size would not be appropriate, as it would render it unusable for middle school and community sports programs. The fields, as currently sized, are essential to the educational program of the school.

In conclusion, the location of the existing buildings precludes moving the football/soccer field any more to the north away from the wetland buffer. There is no opportunity to reduce paved areas since they have already been minimized to the extent allowed by code.

- ii. The applicant has considered all available alignments within the range of potential alignments that meet the project purpose and for which operating rights are available.**

Staff Analysis: To some extent, this criterion is more applicable to linear utility projects seeking a PAUE request rather to the School District's proposal.

Still, the School District has submitted a summary which analyzes potential design scenarios and why current site layout and land use permit requests are necessary in order to complete the project (Exhibit 14).

**B. The proposal minimizes and mitigates unavoidable impacts to critical areas and/or critical areas buffers. Any decision by the hearing examiner is final unless appealed.**

Staff Analysis: The proposed Park Place Middle School Modernization is designed to avoid direct impacts to wetland. The project incorporates a number of design features that would avoid or minimize impacts to the wetland, including:

- Direct impacts to the wetland will be avoided. However, there will be impacts to the wetland buffer. Below discusses the compensatory mitigation for the impacts to the buffer.
- Permanent critical area signs will be installed along the outer perimeter of the undisturbed buffer (along edge of flood control berm) per City of Monroe Municipal Code (MMC 20.06.070(D)).
- The proposed stormwater plan would direct run-off from the track and field facilities into collection trench designed to promote infiltration.
- Invasive species, such as Himalayan blackberry will be removed from enhancement areas. Native vegetation will be retained within the buffer area to the greatest extent, and where possible will be enhanced through planting a mixture of native trees, shrubs, and groundcover.
- Compost and debris located along the flood control berm in the southeast portion of the property will be removed, and disturbed areas will be planted with a mix of native trees, shrubs, and ground cover. Disposal of debris and compost will be prohibited within the regulatory buffer under the new site development.
- Native vegetation will not be removed for creation of equipment parking and material staging areas, these areas will be located within existing paved areas adjacent to the construction.
- Temporary erosion and sediment control (TESC) measures would be implemented during construction and would utilize appropriate best management practices (BMPs) designed to prevent sediment from entering surface waters during and after construction, including placement of straw waddles and silt fencing between work activities and adjacent wetlands and designated buffer areas.
- All potentially hazardous material (e.g., fuel, lubricating fluids) would be stored within the designated staging area, and no fueling or servicing of construction vehicles would be permitted within the wetland or stream buffers.
- Upon completion, any areas disturbed during construction activities shall be regraded and/or stabilized with grass or other appropriate landscaping to prevent erosion.

**Compensatory Mitigation-Skykomish Habitat Bank (Mitigation)**

The proposed Park Place Middle School Modernization project would result in direct impacts to approximately 112,220 square feet of wetland buffer. The buffer is currently used as the Middle School's athletic field and is regularly mowed and maintained, and thus provides a low level of habitat function. In addition, the flood control berm along the southern half of the property isolates any direct hydrologic inputs from the on-site portion of the buffer boundary to the wetland.

The project proposes to compensate for impacts to the wetland buffer through purchase of mitigation credits available from the Skykomish Habitat Bank. Mitigation credits from the Skykomish Habitat Bank are directed at enhancing wetland and stream functions within the Snohomish River watershed, and will provide an equivalent or greater biological and hydrological functions and values than the current wetland buffer.

MMC subsection 20.05.080(H)(4) provides that the City may consider off-site and in-kind compensation when the applicant must demonstrate that equivalent or greater biological and hydrological functions and values will be achieved. The compensation may include restoration, creation, or enhancement of wetlands or streams so long as the project is within the same drainage sub-basin.

The Skykomish Mitigation Bank provides credits for buffer restoration at a 0.2:1 ratio. Therefore, to compensate for the impacts to the 112,220 square feet of impact to buffer proposed by the project 22,444 credits would need to be purchased. The Skykomish Mitigation Bank is located within the same sub-basin as the project. Purchasing of wetland mitigation credits from the bank requires completion of a bond process.

**Compensatory Mitigation- On-Site Buffer Enhancement**

In addition to wetland mitigation credits for buffer impacts, the project would provide buffer enhancement in selected portions of the onsite buffer totaling up to approximately 19,540 square feet. Selected buffer enhancement areas include a portion of the southeastern buffer that currently contains a large pile of compost material and debris (approximately 3,957 square feet) and a portion of the flood control berm in the southwest corner of the project area (approximately 15,583 square feet) that is dominated by invasive Himalayan blackberry.

The onsite buffer enhancement would retain existing established native vegetation as appropriate, and focus on the removal and enhancement of portions of selected enhancement areas that are dominated by Himalayan blackberry and other invasive species. Invasive species would be removed from the buffer enhancement areas and planted with a naturalistic mixture of native trees, shrubs, and ground cover.

The applicant's compensatory mitigation proposal would increase the existing level of protection provided by the buffer for wetland functions. The enhanced wetland buffer is designed to be a low maintenance, self-sustaining community resembling native forest habitat typical of the Puget Sound lowlands. The specific objectives of the buffer enhancement plan are:

- 1) Remove compost and debris from the approximately 3,957 square foot area of the southeast portion of the buffer of Wetland 1 and install native plants.
- 2) Remove Himalayan blackberry and other invasive from an approximately 15,583 square foot portion of the s flood control berm in the southwest portion of the project site, and install a naturalistic mixture of native plants.

15. Utilities: Adequate capacity exists in the City's public water and sanitary sewer system to continue to serve the proposed modernization project. The buildings will be connected to the City's water and sewer system.

The site plan includes a stormwater drainage plan. Stormwater runoff from the site will be collected and conveyed to infiltration facilities located around the site. The runoff from the paving areas will generally sheet flow into one of seven bio-retention cells, or be conveyed to one by curb or catch basin and pipe. The roof and courtyard runoff will flow to one of several infiltration trenches. The project has 19 storm water drainage basins and the system has been designed to match natural predeveloped drainage patterns (Exhibit 15, Stormwater Site Plan, HAI).

16. Streets and Traffic: Access to the development is proposed via West Main Street. No frontage improvements along Main Street are required. Based on the Traffic Impact Study dated December 2015 (Exhibit 16), the development is anticipated to reduce the number of students from 935 to 850 which would provide a credit of 13.6 PM peak-hour trips. The level of service analysis shows that all of the study intersections in the Traffic Impact Study are anticipated to operate within acceptable thresholds.

17. Variance Expiration: In accordance with MMC section 18.98.050 an approval granting a variance shall become null and void after the expiration of one year or a longer period as specified at the time of the hearing examiner action if no building permit has been issued in accordance with the plans for which such a variance was authorized.

## G. CONCLUSIONS

1. The City of Monroe 2015-2035 Comprehensive Plan adopted on December 8, 2015 designates the site as “Institutional” on the Future Land Use Plan Map. The site is zoned Public Open Space (PS).
2. The applications were submitted on January 6, 2016 and determined to be complete on February 4, 2016.
3. A Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (MDNS) was issued by the Monroe School District acting as lead agency on January 6, 2016. Per the Monroe School District no comments or appeals were received on the MDNS.
4. The proposed site plan dated January 6, 2016, as conditioned herein, will be consistent with the pertinent development goals and policies outlined in the City of Monroe 2015-2035 Comprehensive Plan.
5. The proposed site plan dated January 6, 2016, as conditioned herein, will be consistent with the applicable standards for review outlined in MMC Chapter 18 .82 *Site Plan Review*.
6. The proposed site plan dated January 6, 2016, as conditioned meets all MMC requirements for a site plan approval.
7. The proposed variance as submitted meets all the MMC criteria for a variance.
8. The proposed Public Agency or Utility Exception meets all the MMC criteria for an exception to the Critical Areas requirements.
9. The site plan, variance and Public Agency or Utility Exception should be approved subject to the conditions.

## H. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Based on the application and facts and findings of the staff report, staff recommends that the hearing examiner **APPROVE** the Monroe School District’s applications for Site Plan Review, Variance to reduce the number of required parking from 802 parking spaces to 197 parking spaces and the Public Agency or Utility Exception (PAUE) to allow encroachment into a critical areas buffer for property located at 1408 West Main Street in the Public Open Space (PS) zone subject to the following conditions:

## Staff Analysis to Hearing Examiner

1. The Native Growth Protection Area (NGPA) split-rail fencing shall be identified on the landscape and civil plans consistent with the Critical Area Study.
2. Prior to the issuance of any building permits for Phase 3 (demolition of remaining building D and Life Skills Portables; completion of athletic fields and remaining site work) the applicant shall post a performance/maintenance bond prior to issuance of a clearing and/or grading permit for the work outlined in the Wetlands Buffer Mitigation Plan per MMC 20.05.130.
3. Prior to commencing construction activities, the applicant shall obtain a General Construction Stormwater NPDES Permit from the WA Department of Ecology (DOE) per MMC subsection 15.01.045.
4. All development activities shall be constructed in substantial conformance with the approved site plan dated January 6, 2016.
5. The applicant shall obtain all the necessary permits associated with the project from the City and comply with all applicable city code and regulations.

### **Distributed to the Following Parties of Record:**

- Park Place Middle School File #(s) SITE2016-01, VR2016-01 & CAE2016-01
- Rebecca Baibak, Integrus Architects, 117 South Main Street, Suite 100 Seattle, WA, 98104
- Monroe Public Schools, 200 East Fremont Street Monroe, WA 98272