

## Olympia High School Classroom Addition / File 18-4309 Variance Request

### Variance Request Overview

Olympia School District (OSD) seeks a variance to OMC 18.04.080 Table 4.04 to increase Maximum Impervious Surface Coverage in Zoning District R4-8 from 40% total site coverage to 53.5% and to increase the Maximum Hard Surface from 50% coverage to 56.6% coverage to permit education space and athletic surfaces at Olympia High School. Presently, the Olympia High School Impervious Surfaces and Hard Surfaces coverage totals 54%, exceeding the zoning maximums for both surface types; Olympia High School was rendered noncompliant the day the Low Impact Development ordinance was passed. This Variance Request is for a minor increase in both Impervious and Hard Surfaces from the existing condition.

	2016 OMC Maximum	Existing OHS Conditions	Proposed Total
<b>Pervious Surfaces</b>	None	46% (19.01 acres)	43.4% (17.94 acres)
<b>Pervious Pavement</b>	None	3.7% (1.52 acres)	3.1% (1.28 acres)
<b>Impervious Surfaces</b>	40%	50.3% (20.81 acres)	53.5% (22.12 acres)
<b>Hard Surfaces</b>	50%	54% (22.33 acres)	56.6% (23.40 acres)

The Olympia Community Planning & Development Department is currently reviewing draft amendments to OMC 18.04.080 Table 4.04 through the City Council review process. For this project, specific draft amendments to Table 4.04 as it relates to Land Use District R 4-8 are shown in the table below. The upshot of this table is while this project's Variance Request is to increase the Maximum Impervious Surfaces Coverage, if this project was reviewed when this draft amendment becomes code, this Variance Request would be only for Maximum Impervious Surfaces Coverage for this project would be lower than, and therefore in compliance with the Maximum Hard Surface coverage. Olympia School District is financially responsible to bid and build this project in an efficient manner, so it is imperative to commence construction in the summer of 2019. As such, if OSD waited till this code amendment is codified, construction would not start until 2020, unnecessarily resulting in significant cost increases with no public benefit, hence, OSD is submitting this project's CUP and Variance Request now.

Land Use District R4-8	2016 OMC	2018 Draft Amendments
Maximum Impervious Surfaces Coverage	45% = 0.25 acre or less 40% = 0.25 acre or more 65% = 60% Townhomes	No changes proposed
Maximum Hard Surfaces Coverage	55% = 0.25 acre or less 50% = 0.25 acre or more 70% Townhouses	75% = 0.25 acre or less 70% = 0.25 acre or more 80% Townhouses

**18.66.020 Variance**

*A. Before any variance is granted, the Hearing Examiner shall find that the following circumstances exist:*

*1. That the proposed variance will not amount to a rezone or constitute a change in the district boundaries shown on the Official Zoning Map;*

**Applicant's Response**

This Variance Request will not result in change of Land-Use and the Applicant is not requesting a rezone to permit this project. This OSD property is currently home to Olympia High School and approval of this Variance Request will not expand, nor allow any further Land Uses other than those currently permitted and on-going at Olympia High School.

Olympia School District does not need, nor is seeking a change in the R4-8 Zoning District Boundaries through this Variance Request.

*2. That because of special circumstances relating to the size, shape, topography, location, or surroundings of the subject property the variance is necessary 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;*

Special circumstances relating to the infiltration capacity of the silty, fine sand soil prevents large scale pervious pavements from performing as intended. OSD is proposing limited pervious pavements for small scale pedestrian walks because the pedestrian walks will not be receiving water from other surfaces. Rain water falling directly on the pervious pavement pedestrian walk is the only water that will be stored in aggregate below the pervious pavement, and the only water that will infiltrate into the native silty, fine sand. If the native soil had a higher infiltration rate; pervious pavements would be able to perform as intended and would be implemented for all new pavements. Therefore, the need for this Impervious Surfaces Variance would not be necessary because there would be no increase in impervious surfaces. OSD considered pervious pavements, however the geotechnical data proves large scale pervious pavements would not perform and has therefore decided not to deploy pervious pavements in large scale applications such as for the parking lots.

Special circumstances relating to the size, surroundings, and location of this property prevent OSD from complying with Maximum Impervious and Hard Surfaces; the property is simply of insufficient size, is bounded by development, and is in a location where it is not possible to comply with the Maximum Coverages requirements.

The property and the project would be in R4-8 Zoning District compliance if the property size was 61.58 acres. Such an increase in site area would result in the total proposed Impervious Surfaces and Hard Surfaces to be within the maximum zoning limits. One option considered to achieve this goal is to increase the property size, however, Olympia High School boundary is defined by public right-of-ways on three sides and residential development on the remaining side; there are simply no vacant, undeveloped adjacent properties totally 16.74 acres, and the option to acquire 16.74 acres of single family homes is not a sustainable consideration, therefore this option was considered unattainable.

Developing the proposed improvements on the Tree Tract parcel is not a viable option because this parcel is encumbered as a Tree Tract and the parcel is physically disconnected from the Olympia High School Campus which poses a wide range of unresolvable life, health, educational, community, and safety issues.



Another option considered is to purchase off-campus property to accommodate the Classrooms and Synthetic Turf Field. Property acquisitions for what would essentially be a separate satellite campus to Olympia High School would represent poor planning, result in an inefficient use of public resources, unnecessarily create a wide range of unresolvable life, health, educational, community, and safety issues, and would prove to be a poor use of scarce taxpayer dollars.

Special circumstances relating to the location of Olympia High School focus on the fact that since 1961 this site has served the social, physical, educational, psychological, emotional, and economical needs of the Olympia community. Olympia taxpayers have invested millions of dollars in the planning, development, and maintenance of this school's infrastructure and facilities as well as millions of dollars in staff, supplies, educational programs, and administration. The location of Olympia High School is woven into the fabric of Olympia. The prospect of creating a new off-site satellite campus complete with new support facilities, infrastructure, staff, security, and maintenance responsibilities as compared to Grant Variance approval to develop Classrooms and a Sportsfield on-campus in a location complete with existing facilities, infrastructure, staff, security, and maintenance responsibilities and widely accepted as a location historically woven in community life is simply illogical. Variance approval does not result in granting of any special use rights or privileges to OSD as Olympia High School will still remain as a High School and community recreation resource.

3. *That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant;*

### **Applicant's Response**

Special Conditions and circumstances, specifically RCW 28A, from the State of Washington require school districts to evolve and adapt to changing educational needs, which in turn, requires the OSD to request this Variance to meet these needs. RCW 28A.150.210 below defines the mandate of school districts.

*“RCW 28A.150.210**Basic education—Goals of school districts.*

*A basic education is an evolving program of instruction that is intended to provide students with the opportunity to become responsible and respectful global citizens, to contribute to their economic well-being and that of their families and communities, to explore and understand different perspectives, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives. Additionally, the state of Washington intends to provide for a public school system that is able to evolve and adapt in order to better focus on strengthening the educational achievement of all students, which includes high expectations for all students and gives all students the opportunity to achieve personal and academic success. To these ends, the goals of each school district, with the involvement of parents and community members, shall be to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills essential to:*

- (1) Read with comprehension, write effectively, and communicate successfully in a variety of ways and settings and with a variety of audiences;*
- (2) Know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics; social, physical, and life sciences; civics and history, including different cultures and participation in representative government; geography; arts; and health and fitness;*
- (3) Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate technology literacy and fluency as well as different experiences and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and*
- (4) Understand the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.”*

In an effort to comply with RCW 28A, OSD has planned for facility and educational improvements needs and has asked Olympia School District voters to vote on a school district improvement bond. In February 2016 voters within the Olympia School District overwhelmingly approved a construction bond to provide needed enhancements for our schools. Olympia High School needs to expand the current footprint at the school in order to:

- 1) Conform to the recent state mandate that students increase the number of science LAB credits they obtain in order to graduate, from 2 to 3 credits. To meet this requirement with reasonable class sizes, OHS students need access to 4 more science labs.
- 2) Increasing our Special Needs space in order to comply with the growth in number of students who qualify for special programs.
- 3) Expand music programs. The demand for music programs in this community is significant and growing. The space devoted to music must expand to keep up with demand.
- 4) Create security vestibules within the school to have better access control into OHS. This is a primary recommendation of school design experts in order to deter an armed intruder.
- 5) Replace the existing (10) portables classrooms with permanent classrooms. This enhances the learning environment and enhances security.

6) Create a secure walkway link between the independent Applied Arts Building, and the Main School (also for security reasons).

7) Replace an existing natural grass field with a lighted synthetic turf field to addresses the school's, and our community's shortage of all-weather fields.

The increase in density on current school sites will delay the need to create additional schools within the school district. Increasing density, which is a sustainable planning tool, actually reduces the total school footprint that would need to be built over time. By being careful with design the District is seeking to improve the overall aesthetics of the school campus. While the campus will be more compact, it will be more cohesive, more efficient to secure, and will result in a more economical use of land and financial resources.

4. *That granting of the variance will not constitute a grant of special privilege inconsistent with the limitation upon uses of other properties in the vicinity and zone in which the property is located;*

#### **Applicant's Response**

OSD recognizes it is a privilege to operate Olympia High School in a residential zone for 57 years and works to be consistent with the spirit, intent, and letter of land use ordinances. Variance approval of this request is not a special privilege as Olympia High School will be managed and will operate as it always has; no new land uses are proposed. Moreover, OSD has designed all improvements to comply with the Department of Ecology and City of Olympia's Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual, just as OSD has always done and as other properties in this Land Use Zone have done.

5. *That the granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity and zone in which subject property is situated; and*

#### **Applicant's Response**

Granting of this variance benefits public welfare as it wisely continues the consolidation of resources in a property already developed and managed for educational and community uses, furthers public safety, makes efficient use of available OSD land and built infrastructure, and makes efficient use of human resources as it keeps new classrooms and athletic facilities on the Olympia High School's campus. Variance approval will benefit the Olympia High School service area, the neighborhood, and others in this R4-8 Land Use District as it will not have detrimental impacts on traffic, noise, light, and use patterns for all of the improvements are internal to the site, rather than on the site's periphery and next to neighbors.

6. *That the variance is the minimum variance necessary to provide the rights and privileges described above.*

#### **Applicant's Response**

This variance request is the minimum variance necessary to allow the OSD to fulfill this project's goals, however, the native silty, fine sand soil prevents pervious pavements from performing as intended. OSD is proposing limited pervious pavements for small scale pedestrian walks because the pedestrian walks will not be receiving water from other surfaces. Rain water falling directly on the pervious pavement

pedestrian walk is the only water that will be stored in aggregate below the pervious pavement, and the only water that will infiltrate into the native silty, fine sand. If the native soil had a higher infiltration rate; pervious pavements would be able to perform as intended and would be implemented for all new pavements. Therefore, the need for this Impervious Surfaces Variance would not be necessary because there would be no increase in impervious surfaces. OSD considered pervious pavements, however the geotechnical data proves large scale pervious pavements would not perform and has therefore decided not to deploy pervious pavements in large scale applications such as for the parking lots. Another consideration is the water falling upon, and infiltrating beneath, the pervious pavement pedestrian walks will be from non-pollution generation surfaces.

Every effort has been made during the Building and Site design of this Project to minimize site disturbance, by placing buildings in existing impervious surfaces, assuring that the building size is the minimum necessary to fulfill state mandated educational requirements, and consolidate uses into two levels.

To further demonstrate this request is the minimum variance necessary, OSD proposes to reduce impervious surfaces and meet LID goals by designing 22,812 square feet of two-story Classrooms. Designing the Music Room and the four Science Labs to be two-levels was explored and determined to be impractical by OSD. The Music Room needs to be a defined, single space for music practice assembly, therefore a single level is practical whereas a two-level building would not be. The one-level Science Lab building serves as a pedestrian link between two, one-level school buildings; a two-level Science Lab building would be impractical on an economic and security level. Economically impractical because a two-level, four room building with stairways on both ends results in undesirable and unusable space. On a security level, OSD affirms such a building would be difficult to manage and surveil.

To further reduce the need for this variance, OSD considered the LID technique of Green Roofs at the Concept Design level. The Green Roof option however, was not selected because the OSD's roof standard is to have roofs with peaks, valleys, gutters, and roof slopes at 3/12; Green Roofs can't meet these criteria. The weight of a Green Roof requires significant reinforcement of walls and foundations, thus increase costs which was not accounted for when the Capital Bond for this project was prepared. Green Roof maintenance is a highly specialized type of maintenance OSD's Maintenance Staff has no experience with, nor any budget for. Simply stated, OSD does not want to install a Green Roof they can't maintain.

This Project's stormwater design meets the Department of Ecology and City of Olympia's Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual. It is important to note that the goals of LID and the Olympia Municipal Code will be achieved, and the public health, safety and welfare of the public will be protected through variance approval even though the specific numerical standards of Maximum Impervious Surfaces and Hard Surface coverages have been slightly exceeded.