



THORP SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 400

Post Office Box 150 · 10831 N. Thorp Highway · Thorp, Washington 98946
Phone 509-964-2107 Fax 509-964-2313
www.thorpschools.org

May 14, 2014

To: Kittitas County Planning Commission

From: Linda Martin, Superintendent
Ed Foster, Maintenance and Transportation Supervisor

Subject: **Application for Zoning Variance**

Please consider granting a zoning variance for the Thorp School District. We would like to install an electronic reader-board sign as a vital communication tool with our families. We are requesting the variance based on the following:

- A. *Unusual circumstances or conditions applying to the property and/or the intended use that do not apply generally to other property in the same vicinity or district, such as topography.*

Thorp School is located at 10831 N. Thorp Highway, Thorp, Washington. It is the only school in the area, and the only establishment of its size in the surrounding neighborhood. The speed limit in the school zone is 20 miles per hour, and the presence of students makes it imperative that any signage associated with the school is easily read by drivers in both directions on the highway.

The current sign is located between the current school and a school building that is listed on the historic register. It is necessary to replace this sign due to its age and condition, and we would like to locate the new sign closer to the front entrance of the school in a location that would not be obstructed, unlike the old sign.

- B. *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 vicinity.*

Most schools use electronic signs as a way to communicate important events with parents and community members. Our desire is to do the same.

We believe that considering the safety of our students is essential, and the location of our school sign must be such that drivers do not need to turn their heads as they drive through the school zone in order to read the sign. Although the cost for applying for a variance is significant for a school of our size, we feel strongly that the current setback requirement of 25 feet from the right of way would cause drivers to have to turn their heads to read the sign. That would not be an acceptable or safe practice in a location where students and their families are frequently walking near the street. Therefore, we are applying for this variance in order to enhance both the communication with our neighbors, and more importantly, to ensure the safety of our students.

We are asking for a variance of 15 feet, so that the sign may be located 10 feet from the right of way rather than the standard 25 feet from the right of way. Please see the attached photographs.

- C. *That authorization of such variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property in the vicinity.*

Not only would the location of the sign in a spot closer to the road not be "materially detrimental to the public welfare," the opposite is true. Locating the sign far enough back from the sidewalk to avoid interfering with foot traffic, and yet close enough to the road to be easily read by drivers without having to turn their heads, actually adds to the safety of the neighborhood.

- D. *That the granting of such variance will not adversely affect the realization of the comprehensive development pattern.*

The sign will be located near the entrance to the Thorp School. The school has been located in the same place for more than 100 years, and does not intend to re-locate. Therefore this should not adversely affect any kind of comprehensive development pattern.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Linda Martin, Ed. D.
Superintendent/Principal