

21.08.280 Churches, Temples, Synagogues, and Other Places of Worship Faith-Based and Funerary.

A. **Purpose.** This section is intended to ensure that the unique impacts associated with ~~church, temple, synagogue, and mosque~~faith-based organizational uses and their accessory uses are addressed while still allowing for a wide range of possible locations for ~~faith-, religious-, belief-, and affiliation-based~~ assembly.

B. **Calculation of Seating Capacity.** For the purposes of this regulation, a seat shall be defined as either:

1. One individual fixed seat; or
2. A length of 18 inches on a pew or bench; or
3. A measurement of seven square feet per person for the area seating the general assembly with movable chairs or other portable seating fixtures. The total area includes aisle space, but excludes areas such as stage and podium areas, space for musical instruments, and lobbies.

C. **Requirements.** The following development criteria shall apply to ~~places of worship~~structures and properties associated with faith-based organizations and their related activities without regard to the zone in which it is located or the permit under which the use is processed:

1. Lighting for parking lot areas, structures, statuary and signage shall comply with the development regulations for parking, lighting and signs, and the Design Standards of RZC [21.60](#), *Citywide Design Standards*.
2. The use shall comply with the parking regulations for assembly uses, except that in no event shall parking be in excess of one space per three seats in a residential zone.
3. The storage of buses or vans over 10,000 pounds gross weight is permitted on-site under the following conditions:
 - a. The location of the parking areas for these vehicles is indicated on the site plan at the time of application;
 - b. Vehicles must be leased or owned by the owner or tenant of the site, must be in operable condition, and must have a current vehicle registration;

c. Vehicles shall not intrude into public rights-of-way or obstruct sight visibility from any driveway;

d. Structural and/or natural screening, as approved by the City, shall screen the vehicles from neighboring properties. The screening requirement or amount of screening may be eliminated or reduced in light industrial zones to the extent that the storage of vehicles is treated uniformly with other uses in the same zone.

4. ~~Places of Worship~~Faith-Based Organizations Within Shorelines. Within the Shoreline Jurisdiction, site development shall comply with the general standards of the zone in which it is located, except as otherwise provided in subsection RZC [21.08.280.D](#) below. The maximum building height, exclusive of ~~steeple, bell towers, crosses or other~~ symbolic ~~religious~~ icons mounted on the rooftop is 35 feet. An additional building height allowance of 15 feet is allowed for symbolic ~~religious~~ icons located on the building. (SMP)

5. A traffic mitigation plan shall be submitted for approval by the City. The plan shall address traffic control, parking management (including the mitigation of overflow parking into adjoining residential areas), and traffic movement to the arterial street system. In addition to on-site parking requirements, parking in excess of the maximum may be permitted on existing off-site satellite parking lots, subject to City approval of a joint use agreement. Off-site parking in residential zones shall be limited to lots shared with existing institutional uses, such as schools.

6. The maximum height for separate structures on-site, such as ~~bell towers, crosses, statuary, or other~~ symbolic ~~religious~~ icons, shall be 15 feet.

7. The proposed structure(s) shall comply with the applicable design criteria contained in RZC [21.60](#), *Citywide Design Standards*, for the zone in which the use is located.

8. Additional standards are applicable to the use. The underlying zoning and size of the ~~facility-structures~~ shall determine which additional criteria shall apply. The additional criteria for residential zones can be found below, depending on seating capacity.

D. *Development Criteria for Seating Capacities in a Residential Zone.*

1. ~~Places of worship~~Faith-based organizations with a seating capacity of less than 250 seats:

a. The ~~facility-structures~~ shall be located within 1,200 feet, as measured along the centerline of the right-of-way, of an arterial (collector, minor or principal);

- b. The ~~facility-structures~~ shall be located on a paved road having two lanes with a minimum width equal to the public works standard for a local access street;
- c. ~~Buildings-Structures~~ shall maintain a minimum setback of 20 feet from all property lines; building setbacks shall be increased by five feet for every one foot in building height over 30 feet;
- d. The maximum building height does not exceed 50 feet inclusive of ~~steeple, bell towers, crosses, or other~~ symbolic ~~religious~~ icons;
- e. The minimum lot size shall be the same as that required in the zone in which the proposed ~~facility-faith-based organization~~ is located;
- f. The maximum lot coverage of structures may not exceed 35 percent, and total impervious surfaces may not exceed 75 percent of lot area;
- g. No more than two large vehicles may be stored on-site at a given period of time; and
- h. Structures, parking lots and lighting shall be designed to avoid excessive light and glare impacts on adjacent properties. Restrictions on light pole height and type, deflectors and other such measures may be required as necessary to prevent overspill and excessive intensity of light.

2. ~~Places-of-worship~~Faith-based organizations with a seating capacity of between 250 to 750 seats:

- a. The proposed ~~facility-structures~~ must be located adjacent to at least one arterial (collector, minor or principal);
- b. ~~Buildings-Structures~~ shall maintain a minimum setback of 20 feet from all property lines;
- c. The maximum building height may not exceed 50 feet, inclusive of ~~steeple, bell towers, crosses, or other~~ symbolic ~~religious~~ icons. However, building setbacks shall be increased five feet for every one foot in building height over 30 feet;
- d. The maximum lot coverage of structures may not exceed 35 percent, and total impervious surfaces may not exceed 75 percent of the lot area; and
- e. No more than two large vehicles may be stored on-site at a given period of time.

21.78 R Definitions

Faith-Based and Funerary. Structures and properties managed by an organization for purpose of religious belief, practice, or affiliation. Structures and properties may include accessory uses such as a residence or office for the faith-based leader, administrative offices, classrooms and meeting rooms, assembly halls, records storage, and food-preparation areas. Secondary accessory uses may also include temporary indoor shelter, food banking, soup kitchen, similar essential community services, and funerary services. Other conditional and temporary uses carried out in association with common faith-based beliefs, practices, and affiliations and essential facilities may also apply.

Stakeholder comments January-February 2021:

A parsonage should be defined as the primary residence of the spiritual leader of the associated congregation. Use by someone who is only a member of the congregation is not a parsonage, it is a personal residence.

Does the definition of a parsonage include the possible use of class rooms?

My understanding is that a parsonage is a house provided by a church for a pastor to live. It does not need to be within or adjacent to a religious institution, ours is not. In our tradition, the house is only a parsonage when the pastor is living in it. If the church owns a house, like our church does, but a pastor is not living in it, then it is not a parsonage. I am unfamiliar with a house owned by a church being used by members as a place of worship.

For Reference Only: RCW [26.04.007](#)

Definition—Religious organization.

For purposes of this chapter, "religious organization" includes, but is not limited to, churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, nondenominational ministries, interdenominational and ecumenical organizations, mission organizations, faith-based social agencies, and other entities whose principal purpose is the study, practice, or advancement of religion.

[[2012 c 3 § 7](#) (Referendum Measure No. 74, approved November 6, 2012).]