



TOP 5 CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUILDING, EXPANDING, AND MAINTAINING SCHOOL PARKING LOTS

January 31, 2020

The needs of each school parking lot differ almost as much as the needs of each student. There is no “one-size fits-all” solution to parking lot management, however keeping these 5 considerations in mind will help you stretch your budget and provide safe, reliable access to your school facilities.

1. HONESTLY EVALUATE PAVEMENT CONDITIONS AND PRIORITIZE MAINTENANCE ACCORDINGLY.

If you’re managing multiple parking lots for several schools and facilities, but dealing with limited funds, it’s important to thoroughly inspect and inventory pavement conditions in order to prioritize your maintenance schedule accordingly. Obvious safety concerns will take precedent over minor issues and should be addressed accordingly. If you’re unsure how to effectively analyze the condition of your parking lots, it may be helpful to consult a professional to guide you in the right direction.

2. SAFETY FIRST!

Okay, for the sake of this list safety is second, but when it comes to prioritizing the maintenance of your parking lots, safety considerations should be top-of-mind.

School lots can be incredibly dangerous,

and maintenance issues like faded pavement markings, old/missing signage, and hazardous potholes can increase the likelihood of an unfortunate accident. To minimize high-risk behavior like private vehicles using bus zones, pedestrians walking or biking through busy parking lots, and cars pulling up to the curb from the wrong direction, it’s important to clearly mark (and limit when possible) vehicular and pedestrian conflict points.



3. ACCESSIBILITY IS A NECESSITY.

Easy access to school is important for all students and staff. New parking lots and lot restorations must adhere to strict regulations established by

the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA compliance will help you avoid litigation in the event of an unfortunate incident in your parking lot and allow safe access to your facilities for all students, families, and staff.

4. DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

Depending on the scope of your project, you may need to secure specific construction site erosion control and storm water discharge permits required by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Permits may also be required from local regulatory agencies even for simple resurfacing projects. Working with a qualified specialist as you begin the planning and construction process will help you assess environmental concerns and avoid unforeseen costs and violations.



5. PROTECT YOUR SCHOOL'S INVESTMENT WITH A PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Following a comprehensive pavement management plan is the best way to stretch your budget, remain ADA compliant, keep your parking lots safe, and avoid abrupt (and unnecessary) expenses. We know that when you're working with limited funds it's tough to pay for preventative maintenance and rehabilitation, but it's really no different than changing the oil in your fleet vehicles and school buses. If you don't do it, you're going to be paying way more later. Your school parking lots are a major asset, don't let them become a major liability.



CONTACT AN EXPERT

Questions on how to improve your school parking lots without breaking your budget? Contact R/M expert, **Colin Meisel, P.E.** at:

 262.542.5733
 cmeisel@ruekert-mielke.com

