

Molly McGuire

From: fkburst@comcast.net
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2026 4:08 PM
To: Council
Subject: September 1 City Council meeting consideration of SJCC's Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Rezone request

I am writing to request that the Mercer Island City Council vote to amend the City's Comprehensive Plan to change the designation of the Stroum Jewish Community Center property from single family to commercial.

My husband Paul and I joined the JCC in 1985, immediately after arriving in the Seattle area from Nashville. All three of our children attended the J's preschool, as well as the JCC's after-school programs and summer camp. Our children enjoyed the JCC's programs and camp, and the J's services enabled us to make friends with other young families and to become part of the Mercer Island and Greater Seattle Jewish community. Throughout our almost 41 years here, my husband worked out regularly at the fitness center, we all enjoyed holiday celebrations at the J, and we participated in special classes, lectures, musical events, and the Seattle Jewish Film Festival. Our older daughter's interfaith family, who live in Columbia City, also enjoys their membership at the JCC.

Despite the Jewish focus of the SJCC, we have been gratified to meet the many non-Jews who are SJCC members and participants in its programs. The SJCC is a major community resource, to Jews and non-Jews alike.

The major concern about the SJCC is that the facility, like our cohort, is aging. We have been pleased to note the addition of the fitness center years ago, and the more recent upgrade of the preschool facility. Nevertheless, the entire facility needs major modernization, traffic flow and parking improvements, and more, if it is to continue to fulfill its purpose as a center of community life. There is no good reason to limit the building and surrounding property to its 55 year old designation if the community needs upgraded programming, support services and a physical plant to meet contemporary needs.

Please allow the SJCC property's formal designation match what it has always been in practice--a community center rather a "single family" location. I urge you to change the designation of the SJCC property from single family to commercial.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Florence Katz Burstein
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