

Molly McGuire

From: Leslie Rubenstein <lilrubie@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 30, 2026 8:28 PM
To: Council
Subject: Support for the SJCC Rezone and Future of Our Community

Dear Mercer Island City Council,

I strongly support the proposed zoning change that will allow the renovation and expansion of this aging facility.

The impact of the SJCC extends far beyond our building. Every day, we serve Mercer Island residents from infants to adults in their 90s. Children learn lifesaving swim skills, teenagers get their first jobs, adults build friendships and stay active, and older adults find connection and community.

As a lifetime resident of Mercer Island and a staff member of the J, who started at the J when I was only a few months old, **I have seen these connections become lifelong friendships.** On an Island with limited gathering spaces and activities for adults, the **SJCC gives people of all backgrounds a place to belong.**

But our current facility limits what we can provide. **An expanded, modernized J would allow us to serve more residents, offer more programs, improve accessibility, and create much-needed spaces for people to connect.**

I urge you to approve this zoning change without further delay. Continued delays increase construction costs and take resources away from the programs and services that directly benefit our community. Approximately 30% of Mercer Island residents already utilize the SJCC in some way. This project is an investment not simply in the J, but in Mercer Island and the people who call it home.

I hope you will consider this application with the same standards applied to other community-serving organizations. Other facilities on Mercer Island have been granted zoning flexibility to meet the needs of the community. The SJCC deserves the same fair consideration. While concerns have been raised about occasional street parking near the J a handful of times each year, nearby recreational facilities regularly generate significantly more on-street parking during the summer months. We have consistently worked to mitigate our impacts and will continue to be good neighbors while expanding our ability to serve the community.

This proposal is not simply about expanding a building. It is about investing in children, families, older adults, health and wellness, education, and creating **stronger connections within our community** for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Leslie Rubenstein

"Try to be a Rainbow in Someone Else's Cloud."