

Molly McGuire

From: Marla Goldberg <MarlaG@sjcc.org>
Sent: Friday, August 28, 2026 5:16 PM
To: Council
Subject: Support Proposed Zoning Change for the SJCC

To the Members of the Mercer Island City Council:

I'm writing to urge your support for amending the Comprehensive Plan to change the designation of the SJCC property from single-family to commercial.

The J has been part of my life since its doors opened in 1969. I grew up in this building, and years later, my children grew up here too. The J gave me a safe place for my children while I worked, and it gave them friendships and a sense of belonging that remain with them today at ages 24 and 26. They still see the J as *their* place—a familiar, welcoming space where they can connect, be Jewish, and know they are part of a community.

My husband was in the very first preschool class at the J, and his family grew up here as well. For over 55 years, our two families have learned, played, celebrated, gathered, exercised, and built community here. We want future generations to have that same opportunity.

For more than 55 years, the J has operated as exactly what it is: **a community center serving Mercer Island and welcoming everyone, Jewish or not.** The Comprehensive Plan and land-use designation should reflect that reality and allow the J to continue serving this community for the next 55 years and beyond.

Just as importantly, the current zoning has made it unnecessarily difficult for the J to make basic improvements to an aging building—including something as fundamental as accessibility. It is incredibly sad that a community center dedicated to welcoming everyone still does not have an elevator. The J wants to make these improvements and make the building more accessible to people with disabilities. Please remove the zoning barriers that have made doing the right thing so difficult.

Please change the zoning to reflect what the J has been for more than half a century: a community center open to anyone who wants to be part of it. An incredible amount of good happens within these walls every day—for children, families, older adults, people with disabilities, and the broader Mercer Island community.

The J has spent 55 years **building community** on Mercer Island. Please give it the ability to keep doing that for generations to come.

Please align the comprehensive plan and land use maps to reflect that reality and ensure the J can continue to serve our community and thrive on Mercer Island for the next 55 years.

Marla Goldberg