

Molly McGuire

From: John O'Rourke <johnsorourke@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 5, 2026 9:31 PM
To: Molly McGuire
Cc: John O'Rourke; Casey O'Rourke
Subject: Written comments regarding CPA25-002

To Molly McGuire, Senior Planner for the City of Mercer Island. **Please reply to this email to confirm your receipt.**

My wife and I have lived on Mercer Island since 2007 in the Mercerwood neighborhood near the SJCC. We raised our daughter here, taught her to ride a bike on the low-traffic neighborhood roads, and appreciate the deer and other wildlife that live in the forest in the ravine bordering the SJCC and north of SE 40th Street. We've created an intentional community with our neighbors hosting National Night Out events, holiday gatherings, and supporting our kids with Girl Scout cookie sales, impromptu games of baseball in the cul-de-sac, and walk and talks with nearby families.

We are writing as a concerned neighbor regarding **CPA25-002 – the Comprehensive Plan Amendment**. We support the SJCC and recognize its value to Mercer Island. However, our concern, and reason for this note, is not with the SJCC itself but with the permanent zoning and Comprehensive Plan changes being requested.

There is already a lot of change that has happened near the SJCC since we first moved here, and more is currently underway. Traffic during the day for the SJCC combined with peak school hours for the French American School of Puget Sound has gotten to a point where it's dangerous to cars, bicycles, and pedestrians as harried parents rush to pickup or dropoff their kids and patrons come in and out of the JCC. During holidays and events at the Temple, parking along East Mercer Way and up SE 40th Street is such that cars line both sides of the street, and since there are no sidewalks, pedestrians dangerously walk into the lanes of oncoming traffic. The infrastructure in this area is simply not ready for increased traffic, tenants, etc. It is a primarily residential area, and should remain that way.

As we read through the documents available at: <https://permitbulletin.mercerisland.gov/public/CPA25-002/>, this application is being presented as a way to align the zoning with the SJCC's existing use. However, the City of Mercer Island (the "City" henceforth) is not being asked to approve the site as it exists today. The City is being asked to change the property from residential to Commercial Office zoning, creating new development rights that would remain with the property long into the future.

What concerns us most is that no specific redevelopment proposal is being reviewed at this time. The application repeatedly states that there will be little or no impact because this is a "nonproject" action. Yet without a project proposal, neither the City nor neighboring residents can fully evaluate future traffic, parking, noise, lighting, building scale, or other impacts that could result from the broader Commercial Office zoning being requested.

Mercer Island's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes protecting neighborhood character while balancing the needs of community institutions. We do not believe the record currently demonstrates that this balance has been achieved. The fact that the existing zoning may make future redevelopment difficult is not, by itself, a sufficient reason to redesignate residential land to a commercial classification.

Before making a permanent change to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning map, the City should require a clearer understanding of the future impacts that could result and demonstrate that the proposal is fully consistent with the City's long-standing commitment to protecting residential neighborhoods. These findings should be proactively distributed with ample time for review, conversation and discussion, and not scheduled near a major holiday or over the summer when so many travel.

For these reasons and so many more, we respectfully request that the City deny the application as currently proposed, and require substantially more analysis, community, and availability of specific plans for development before amending the Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

John and Kathleen O'Rourke
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