

Molly McGuire

From: Mark Clausen <mclausen@clausenlawfirm.com>
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2026 9:18 PM
To: Planning Commission
Cc: Council
Subject: JCC Plan Revision

I am writing to support the request of the Jewish Community Center to be able to update and expand its aging facilities. I live at 6107 SE 32nd St. I have lived on Mercer Island since 1995. I have raised 4 children here.

My wife and I have been members of the JCC for more than a decade. One or both of us use it essentially every day. We see the importance of the JCC for Mercer Island families: activities for kids, like summer camps and after-school child care; and exercise equipment, a pool and gym for Mercer Island residents of all ages. We also see classes and activities that give Islanders a convenient place to follow their passions. I see young people spending time there working out, playing table tennis, and talking with other athletes. We all know how many unhealthy and destructive options are available to teens these days. The JCC is a precious resource.

I am closing in on my 70th birthday. I know that the loss of muscle mass and balance are the natural outcomes of aging unless something is done. That means regularly lifting weights and performing plyometrics and balance exercises. I use the JCC facilities extensively for that. I see dozens of other seniors doing the same at the JCC. It is the most convenient and best-equipped facility on the Island for how I like to work out. Please don't make me go off-Island to stay fit as I age.

It would be a huge mistake to underestimate the extent and significance of the JCC in maintaining and improving the quality of life on Mercer Island. Similarly, it would be a huge mistake to force the JCC to continue to labor under the constraints of the old facility with inadequate parking, traffic control and layout. The Planning Commission should focus on how the JCC can perform its mission more effectively and serve Mercer Island families even better.

A rejection of the JCC's request would be a huge mistake. Do not think for a minute that, if Mercer Island slams the door on the JCC's efforts to provide a better facility, the JCC will simply continue at the present premises for the next 20+ years. The Planning Commission can be sure that other cities will be opportunistic and take advantage of Mercer Island's mistake. If Mercer Island insists on a policy of small-mindedness, you can bet that the JCC will have other attractive options from cities on both shores of Lake WA. You should not be the Commissioners who "lost" the JCC to Bellevue, Newcastle, Renton or Seattle. Keep the JCC here and allow it to serve Mercer Island even better.

Mercer Island suffers from a common condition in our part of the country: allowing a small number of vocal citizens to kill efforts that would materially improve the quality of life for thousands of Island residents. The JCC is vital to the health of this community. It should be allowed to provide the best services to Island residents that it can envision and afford. A small number of vocal opponents should not ruin and drive away one of the best organizations available to Mercer Island residents.

Sincerely, Mark A Clausen