

Molly McGuire

From: Deb Estrada
Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 1:56 PM
To: Molly McGuire
Subject: FW: Please support the SJCC

From: Robin A. Li <robinanneli@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2026 11:22 AM
To: Alison Van Gorp <alison.vangorp@mercergov.org>; Deb Estrada <Deborah.Estrada@mercercisland.gov>; Council <council@mercergov.org>
Subject: Please support the SJCC

Dear Planning Commission:

I am writing to urge your support to amend the Comprehensive Plan to change the designation of the SJCC property from single family to commercial. This seems like a nontrivial correction to put code in alignment with use. The SJCC has been a critical hub in the Mercer Island community almost as long as we have been a city, and is a foundational community space for Jewish and non-Jewish islanders alike.

My family moved to Mercer Island in 1975, and I grew up with the J being a place where community events were held, where I played sports and met friends. When I returned to the island to raise my own children here in 2009, the J provided the highest quality preschool we could find, as well as a place for our new family to grow community and put down roots on the island. My children learned to swim at the SJCC pool, learned to play basketball in the gym, and made friendships that have lasted through today. As non-Jewish islanders, the SJCC has been central to our sense of community and connection on Mercer Island.

Now in middle age, I go to the J several times a week, as it has the best gym facilities on the island. Every time I go, I see islanders of all ages finding a place to stay healthy, meet friends, and be in community. It's also been a space where I attend author readings and cultural events. The J has also been a great partner with community organizations, offering places for events and meetings at reasonable cost, and providing excellent summer camps for generations of islanders. Community spaces like the J are rare, and take decades to establish, and I have trust that any renovations the J may undertake will be done with the same spirit of care and community which have marked their operations for over fifty years.

The facility is aging, and the parking lot can be challenging. As the island has developed, the entrance and exit out of the J has become more congested. Recognizing that the SJCC is an extension of the commercial corridor that runs along the south side of Gallagher Hill, rather than as part of the residential area on the other side of the greenbelt behind it, is both a practical and logical change. As a nearby resident on East Mercer Way, I can attest that they have been considerate neighbors and I am eager for the benefits I will experience if the J is able to undertake improvements on the property.

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. My hope is that when my own children

consider returning to MI to raise their family, they can find the same vibrant and welcoming place to ground their family that we have found at the SJCC.

Sincerely,

Robin Li
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