

Molly McGuire

From: Zach Stroum <stroum@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 28, 2026 11:48 AM
To: Planning Commission; Alison Van Gorp; Deb Estrada; Council
Subject: Please Support Proposed Zoning Change for the SJCC

Members of the Planning Commission,

I am a third generation Stroum who grew up on Mercer Island and currently resides a bridge away in Lake Hills, Bellevue. Growing up at the JCC and being surrounded by Jewish culture seemed like a given as a child. Only as I grew older and became a parent myself did I realize how incredibly rare an organization and campus like the SJCC is.

The most common question I get when I suggest someone join is whether they must be Jewish to belong. My answer is simple: No, it's for everyone. When I visit, I see people of all backgrounds, faiths, orientations, and incomes sharing a safe space to relax, learn, exercise, or even take a break from parenting for just a moment. Right now my two daughters are at summer camp there (which they look forward to throughout the school year). This allows me to work full time to support my family and be present for them at the end of the day.

However, the current facility and its zoning make it difficult to maintain and expand the services it provides to the community. The preservation of Mercer Island's environment and character through zoning laws is entirely understandable. I also believe we can agree that the SJCC campus is not a single-family home. I also believe that a modernized, ADA-accessible campus (subject to the same land use regulations and public processes the rest of the island has followed) would benefit Mercer Island by attracting families and their business here. Thoughtful leadership by the Commission in this instance would result in a win for the community and the city, demonstrating to the region that Mercer Island is and will continue to be one of the best places to live and visit.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

-Zach Stroum