

Molly McGuire

From: Sarah Fletcher <fletchsa1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 7, 2025 7:38 PM
To: Molly McGuire; Anjali Grant
Subject: Re: NOTICE OF APPLICATION: Herzl-Ner Tamid Conservative Congregation Design Standard Review (DSR25-009)

Hello Molly, I am sorry, but what Anjali is telling the City in his Project Narrative is not what is on the Barnabie Point and JDS website. And why are you not correcting his response to someone's comments? He informs them that it is a school for "40 students." It is not. It is "150" and there is no mention of how many staff and office workers are going to be parking. How many total? Why did you not correct him when he said that it was 40 students, when he was off by 110 students not to mention the office workers and staff.

It was going to originally be The Barnabie Point Project which is a Bellevue K8 school, but it seems that they are going to be joining forces with the JDS School which is in Seattle. So, traffic now is going to be bad not only for students coming from Bellevue but from Seattle, as well:

"The Barnabie Point Project is the culmination of a 7-year process of finding a new home for JDS after the sale of the campus that has housed JDS for over 40 years. After careful planning, HNT and JDS **joined forces to build a new space on Barnabie Point**. JDS's new home will provide long-term sustainability on a right-sized campus in a prime geographic location central to the Jewish community." This is what it says on their website:

"The new building will span four levels: a partially subterranean daylight level and three above-ground floors. The basement will feature an art classroom, science/STEAM lab, and faculty workspace. The ground floor will house the preschool, lower elementary classrooms, administrative offices, and a versatile multipurpose space with both gym and chapel space. The second floor will include upper elementary and middle school classrooms, plus our Learning Resource Center and library. The top floor will be fully secure and separated from the JDS spaces, with dedicated rental offices for other local Jewish nonprofit organizations."

When they talk about "local" what do they mean exactly? It is just that Barnabie Point School is a Bellevue school and JDS is a Seattle school, neither **are local schools for local children**, so who exactly are they going to be renting the offices out to and only to Jewish non-profits? So, you mean, the JCC if they needed to, could rent out some office spaces? And if they are going to install a gym, are they going to install sound and noise barriers and something to stop the vibrations?

And this is what it says on the Project Narrative:

" The proposed project on the commercially zoned lot is a 3-story mixed-use building housing a Preschool-8 private school and community multipurpose space on levels 0, 1 and 2; and B-occupancy community rental space on levels 2 and 3. (B occupancy includes offices and training/skill development not in a school or academic program.) The building covers 16,417 SF of the lot; the Gross Floor Area is 40,511 SF."

Just to give you an idea of size and scale, the Community Center for the island is 35,000 sq ft. This is going to be bigger than that. What Herzl just does not seem to understand is that this is in a residential zoned area, it is not in a commercially zoned area. It is too massive for the area and just does not fit in with single family residential homes to the east of it.

And it is for 150 students, how many staff and how many office workers plan on working in the building? What is the total? So, when Transpo did their Report, how many additional vehicles did they put down?

OVER 80 MATURE TREES TO BE CUT DOWN - AGAINST

And I am sorry, they are not trying to preserve as many trees as possible. That is a joke. And it doesn't help having you tell the applicant what to put down on the application, like telling him that he can just "pay a fee-in-lieu". I am against this project because "Out of the one-hundred and thirty-four (134) trees inventoried thirteen (13) trees have met the threshold as an exceptional tree, eighty-two (82) trees are considered to be a part of a grove, and nine (9) trees are considered both exceptional and within a grove. Trees within the unmaintained natural area accounted for a majority of the trees within the grove."

[Chapter 19.10 - TREES | City Code | Mercer Island, WA | Municode Library](#)

Would you like to tell me how many trees they plan on removing out of 134?

And it is deemed a grove. You can't just allow the applicant to remove trees which are part of a grove. 82 trees are part of a grove. And I don't know if you heard about the homeowners in Issaquah who illegally removed 140 mature trees and you have the city allowing this applicant to remove over 80 mature trees. You don't see anything wrong with this picture?

And where do you see it says you can pay a fee-in-lieu which you informed Anjali that they can just put that down on the application form and not have to even plant the required amount of trees. Why? Who do you represent - the applicant/developer or the citizens who pay your salary? And who tells you to tell the applicant to just put that down? Did this come from Jessi/Jeff or did you just make it up yourself? And isn't your job to go back to the applicant and ask them to redo the design to preserve the trees as best as possible?

DROPPING OFF SCHOOL CHILDREN AND PICKING THEM UP

And this is the photo on the Barnabie Point Project website:



So would someone like to explain to me how this will work? Supposedly, you are going to have parents making a left onto the road which runs parallel to the parking lot, then a sharp right into this parking lot. Then, is this going to be a two-way parking lot? And where exactly are the parents planning on dropping off their children? Like is there a crosswalk and where exactly is it going to be? It is going to be one big mess.

So, let's say parents stop in the middle of the parking lot, as the children are kindergarteners, the parent is going to have to get out and undo each of the children's car seats. Then, they will have to walk their

children across the parking lot to the entrance of the school, so assume at least 5 minutes per child to get them from the car to the school, and you don't think cars will be backed up to the main road?

And another thing, after the parents have dropped the children off, do they continue on all the way to the boat launch area and then will they be driving back up that road that runs parallel or what exactly is the plan?

And what about car fumes? Can you imagine it? As the children are being dropped off, there will be all the car fumes from parents idling their vehicles right outside the school. How is that good for anyone? It is not for the health and safety.

TRAFFIC IN GENERAL IN THAT AREA IS ALREADY BAD

I am sorry, but traffic is already a disaster. I don't know how you are not getting it. Any additional development is just going to add to the congestion. You see, you have the south end drivers using that East Mercer Way entrance to the I-90 going eastbound and you have drivers coming onto the island from the I-90, you have the schools across the road and you have the civic center just down the road all using the same entrance and exits to the freeway. There are 6,500 vehicles a day using the ramps onto Mercer Island.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE THEY TRIED TO GET AROUND THE REQUIREMENTS?

It seems like the City refuses them a permit or CUP or whatever, so instead of just giving it a bone, they try a different tactic. The neighbors keep complaining and the City staff and council just ignore them. How much time and money has been spent on this to date? Please let me know. Not to mention, I could be wrong, but as they are a non-profit, they won't need to pay property taxes, is that your understanding?

CHOICES

You have the JCC requesting a zone change to accommodate what I deem a Jewish student campus. So, why can't Herzl ask the JCC if they could join forces with them and put their school somewhere on their property? And imagine if after all this, Herzl is given the go ahead, only to find the French American School across the road moves out and they have an empty school? It would be great if they could instead purchase or lease the French American School and not have to cut down all those mature trees, cause additional car fumes and traffic, and create a large building for the neighbors.

And what happened to the Eastgate and Wilburton Elementary Schools that closed in Bellevue? Are those schools vacant? How about they ask to rent or purchase those school properties instead of where they want to build?

And the Old Boys and Girls Club on West Mercer Way was purchased by Mr. O'Brien. He wanted to develop the property and got approval to subdivide the property, get rid of the volleyball field and build 14 houses on that lot. Why not Herzl ask if they could build a school and gymnasium on the lot? They have nothing to lose.

And what happens if after all that, the JCC then gets approval to change their zone from what it is now to CO to allow a massive campus, do you realize that that whole area would be one massive education

campus area? It was never supposed to be an education campus, but a single family residential zone for single family residences. It is too much and should they be allowed to build this school, gymnasium and office block, and let's say the JCC is allowed to change their zone, before you know it, that whole area is ruined and for what?

SPILOVER LIGHTING

Across the road, the JCC have spillover lighting for which they refuse to do anything about, and nor does the City make them do anything to make it so that there is no bright lighting. The same thing is going to happen to this property should they get the go ahead. They will just say that the lighting is for security and you tell me, what are the neighbors going to do about it? There is nothing they will be able to do.

SUMMARY

I would request that there is a community meeting at the site itself with the City staff, Anjali and the Hearing Examiner going over this project. That would be fair.

I don't know if my comments go before the Hearing Examiner, so I hope you will make sure he gets my email with all my comments.

This is the wrong project for this single family residential area. It is going to cause a whole lot of mature trees to be cut down, cause increased traffic congestion, ruin a single family residential neighborhood, and it is not clear what benefits the local residents/students would even get from this project. For whatever reason, someone thought that merging the Seattle and Bellevue schools and opening up a school on Mercer Island in that specific location would be a good idea, but it is not. It would be better if they kept the schools separate and have Seattle students attend a Seattle school and Bellevue students attend Bellevue schools or to use a school that has closed without the need to remove a grove of trees and to ruin a single family neighborhood. Put yourselves in the position of the neighbors.

Thanks.

On Mon, Jul 7, 2025 at 1:29 PM Molly McGuire <molly.mcguire@mercerisland.gov> wrote:

Hello,

You are receiving this Notice of Application because you are listed as a party of record for Herzl-Ner Tamid Conservative Congregation project located at 3700 E Mercer Way, Mercer Island, WA 98040.

Please see the attached Notice of Application for DSR25-009.

Sincerely,

Molly McGuire

Senior Planner

City of Mercer Island – Community Planning & Development

206-275-7712 | www.mercerisland.gov

Notice: Emails and attachments may be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act (chapter 42.56 RCW).

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