2025 Stroum Jewish Community Center Rezone Amendment

Rezone Project Narrative

Thank you for the consideration of our rezone. The Stroum Jewish Community Center ("SJCC") is proposing to rezone the following parcels from R-8.4 and R-9.6 to Commercial Office "CO":

- 2655500137
- 2655500136
- 2655500132
- small portion of 2655500115

The current zoning (R-8 and R-9.6) does not reflect how the property is being used today or how it is planned to be used in the future, which is as the SJCC. The SJCC has been in place on the property for over 55+ years. Changing the zoning requires a FLUM change as well, and brings both the FLUM and the zoning into alignment with the actual use of the property. The City has given guidance that the Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Rezone Amendments should be submitted separately.

As the City is aware, under the current single family zone, renovation and rebuilding is respectively inefficient and not possible. The City has determined that the variances necessary to rebuild the SJCC are not available in the single family zones. As such, a redesignation is necessary.

The SJCC has been intently pursuing the ability to renovate our aging facilities for over eight years. In this timeframe, we've taken many opportunities to share the hopes we have for a re-envisioned facility with our members, our neighbors, and the broader Mercer Island community.

Through multiple SJCC open houses, community meetings and even through public testimony provided during 2018-2019 council consideration of a broader Mercer Island initiative, we shared our priorities, and also learned what the community and our neighbors care about the most:

- Facilitating better traffic flow and providing enough safe parking to mitigate impact on our neighbors;
- Designing our use of space to ensure less noise or light impact, and minimize visibility impact;
- Supplementing foliage and trees to enhance the screening/buffer between our facilities and our neighbors; and
- Ensuring that any changes to the SJCC property through zoning don't have secondary impact on other Mercer Island community facilities or neighborhoods.

In 2023, before the Comprehensive Plan and Rezone were docketed by the City Council, the SJCC hosted an open house where the redesignation and rezone were presented and discussed, followed by questions and answers. Similar to prior initiatives, an invitation was mailed to all addresses within 1000' radius of the SJCC, emailed to SJCC members, SJCC participants and users, and other Mercer Island community facilities, and was promoted widely on SJCC assets. The SJCC hosted approximately 100 attendees at this open house, and we were pleased to see

our revised designs, which are the direct benefit of so much engagement and feedback over the last eight years, being received so well by the vast majority of the community and our neighbors.

The proposals were submitted in fall of 2023 and placed on the 2024 final docket by the City Council on December 5, 2023.

There is no current development proposal that is being submitted to the City for simultaneous review with the redesignation and rezone proposal. However, a new SJCC will meet the objectives of the CO designation while upholding the interests of the neighbors, preserving the neighborhood character, and significantly improving the community and user experience. The rezone of the property will reflect the long-standing use of the site as the SJCC, and will allow for the property to continue to serve the community into the future.