

The primary purpose of this project is to remove and replace the existing commons building and the related parking. The functions of the proposed Commons Building include all on-site dining venues, resident activities, wellness center, administration & marketing offices as well as all the facilities and maintenance-related spaces. The project also includes a structured under-building parking deck to replace the currently impacted existing parking that will be displaced because of the new building and provides the required new parking to support visitors to the Commons Building.

Architectural Design

Program Components

Resident Dining

A variety of dining venues will be located on the main level offering a wide range of choices for the residents, family members, staff, and visitors. Dining will be provided throughout the day in a variety of spaces and settings with varying menu choices; coffee, breakfast, and casual or formal dining will all be made available. A Coffee Shop, Casual Café & Bistro, as well as a Restaurant-style Fine Dining Room will all be included. Indoor & outdoor seating areas will be provided on both Commons levels for additional dining options, all connected to and serviced by a new central kitchen.

Multi-purpose room

The primary resident activity space would be a large flexible space to host a wide range of community needs such as resident gatherings, meetings, group activities, performances, and banquets. In addition to serving the needs of the residents inside the community, we will also continue to host events for the outside public/non-residents of Mercer Island. There will be a moveable partition for subdividing the space to allow additional flexibility in gathering size, as well as support multiple activities at the same time. Support spaces will include a serving pantry, chair & table storage, and audio/visual equipment.

Wellness Center

Program spaces on the terrace level will include a fitness room, aerobics studio, salon, and spa. Supporting spaces include restrooms with lockers, training desk & office, consultation room, and storage. There will also be the opportunity to utilize the adjacent outdoor terraces for additional group exercise.

Summary

Total square footage per level:

1. Terrace Level
 - Conditioned – 8,028sf
 - Exterior Covered – 3,720sf

- Under-building Parking – 9,288sf
2. First Floor Level
 - Conditioned – 14,728sf
 - Exterior Covered – 5,840sf

Totals by category:

- Conditioned – 22,756sf
- Exterior Covered – 9,560sf
- Under-building Parking – 9,288sf

Architecture

Building Massing

The Community Commons building has been conceptually designed and positioned to take advantage of the remarkable views of Lake Washington. Beyond the water views, the design of the building takes advantage of the internal views that the site has to offer and helps to define outdoor spaces which will be used to enhance the socialization opportunities for current and future residents. Though the site is sloped and the building tiered, incorporating sidewalks, terraces, and connectivity throughout the site will assure resident engagement in outdoor activities as well as support health & wellness.

Architectural Style

The architectural team strived to use a palette of elegant, natural materials and finishes, yet low maintenance to bring warmth to this “northwest contemporary” structure. Through our vernacular study of the architecture on and around Mercer Island, we were able to take the approach that the architecture would complement the surrounding area rather than attempt to match what is currently on site.

Exterior materials

The goal was to blend the new building into the site as much as possible while creating a new iconic front door to the community. We are intending to incorporate a stone base to ground the new structure to the sloped site. By incorporating expanses of glazing at many of the resident activity spaces throughout the Commons on the upper and terrace levels, we hope to visually lighten the overall building mass.

Exterior materials to include (but not be limited to):

1. Regional stone veneer
2. Stucco accents
3. Cementitious lap siding
4. Accent plank cladding in wood tones
5. Some exposed beams at feature locations
6. Storefront glazing in commons
7. Some spandrel glazing at multi-story glazing floor transitions
8. Operable punched windows at residences

9. Metal coping/cladding at parapets, roof projections & eyebrows
10. Railings primarily metal with some glass rail accents
11. Decorative lighting at all primary access points
12. Green roof/sedum tray system at specific locations

Critical Areas

A Type 1 Critical Areas Review was required for evaluation of an existing drainage feature on site that is currently mapped in the City's GIS system as a Type F watercourse. Wetland Resources Inc. investigated this drainage feature and determined it to be a watercourse regulated by the City of Mercer Island and has associated 45' buffer as referenced in the Critical Areas and No Net Loss report, dated August 21, 2025, included in this submittal package.

A Type 2 Critical Areas Review is required to evaluate potential critical areas on site, as shown by the City's GIS mapping, for Landslide, Steep Slope, Erosion, and Seismic hazard areas. The project geotechnical report, prepared by Terra Associates, Inc., dated May 18, 2023, is included with this submittal to address these issues.

Access

Site access will be maintained from North Mercer Way. Once on-site the project proposes to construct a new asphalt drive aisle with parking stalls along south and east sides of the proposed building. This access road will provide entry to the building garage and provide access for trash and recycling services. The access drive will also serve as a fire access lane and extends around the north of the building. The north section of the drive will be gated for fire department access only and will incorporate a fire apparatus turnaround.

Additional parking stalls will be provided to the west of the building along Fortuna Dr. SE. The existing parallel stalls will be modified to be angled pull-in stalls. Additionally, the single level garage will include 24 stalls. Overall, the site improvements will result in a reduction of 2 parking stalls.

Stormwater

Stormwater runoff from the proposed development will utilize new infrastructure to collect, convey, treat, and release runoff to Lake Washington via a new private outfall located just north of the proposed building and associated access drive aisle. Roof downspouts will convey runoff to a new storm line located west of the proposed building. Runoff from pollution generating hard surfaces will be collected by at-grade catch basins and conveyed by a new storm line within the proposed access road to a DOE-approved enhanced water quality treatment facility.

An existing storm drainage pipe that conveys private onsite runoff will be intercepted south of the proposed building and rerouted to avoid conflict with the proposed building. This stormwater runoff in this pipe will remain in the same drainage network as it currently flows, eventually discharging to the existing drainage ditch located west of the proposed building.

Sanitary Sewer

A new sanitary service will discharge from the north side of the proposed building and tie into the existing private sanitary main via a new manhole located just west of the fire access turnaround. A grease interceptor will be installed on the north side of the building to accommodate the kitchen and dining facilities.

Water Service

An 8-inch private fire service water main will be looped around the proposed building and connect back into the existing 12-inch public main within Fortuna Drive to the south of the proposed building. The new private fire line will serve several new private fire hydrants to meet fire code requirements. New backflow units will be installed at each of the two new connections to the public water main.

A new domestic water service will be tapped off the existing 12-inch water main in Fortuna Drive, south of the proposed building, as will a new fire service line to the building.

The project also proposes to relocate the existing Building 8 domestic water meter from inside the Building 8 parking garage to outside the building. This will allow 24/7 access to City personnel, which is a significant improvement over existing conditions. This benefit to the public is offered in exchange for replacement of the existing public water easement on site, which is necessary to facilitate construction of the new building.

Franchise Utilities

Gas and electricity will be provided by Puget Sound Energy, which currently serves the site. The existing utilities will be extended to connect to the proposed building.

Trees

The proposed development project includes removal of 39 trees and replacement with 66 trees, and a fee-in-lieu for the replacement trees required beyond the proposed planted trees. The tree replacement will be provided in accordance with City code. Existing trees to remain will be protected with fencing throughout construction and new tree locations are shown on the Landscape Plan.