

Nicole Gaudette

From: Casey O'Rourke <caseyhallowrourke@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 6, 2018 7:44 AM
To: Evan Maxim
Cc: Nicole Gaudette; Andrea Larson; Liz Thompson; sabinachang@gmail.com; Casey O'Rourke; John O'Rourke
Subject: Fwd: Concerns about JCC/FASPS Expansion

Hi Evan,

In addition to reading this, would you please forward this email to the planning commission. I've also bcc'd our neighborhood citizens group so they are aware of this communication.

The following email chain documents my initial outreach to the City of Mercer Island several years ago regarding the French American School of Puget Sound's (FASPS) plan to increase its size. I was very disheartened to learn last week that the school plans to join the Herzl-Ner Synagogue and Jewish Community Center and all would like to increase their footprint.

If needed, I will forward all emails to the City which includes you, Nicole Gaudette and Liz Thompson, regarding my repeated requests over the past years to be included in communications regarding the impact that the FASPS has on the surrounding neighborhoods and streets. I would request that all be sent to the Planning Commission for documentation that the neighbors of these organizations will feel an impact by allowing the expansion to go forth.

When I Google the distance to the JCC from my home (4043 97th Ave SE) it is a .5 miles walk and .6 mile drive.

My husband and I bought our home 10 years ago. We moved from the heart of Seattle because we wanted a safe place to raise our family, little traffic so we could walk or bike without concern and appreciated the greenbelt on 40th. In the 10 years we have lived here, the increase in traffic and congestion has increased substantially and our street has felt the impact of the JCC and FASPS.

- It is easy to see the traffic due to school drop off and pick up (as documented in my initial email in December 2016) has only worsened as the school's size has increased and the neighborhoods using East Mercer Way (the only way in and out of the JCC and FASPS) has increased.
- The buses of the FASPS drive along 97th Ave SE on their way to/from school as a thoroughfare to Mercerwood. They drive faster than 25 mph and it is dangerous.
- Parking along 40th in the summer is directly related to the counselors/staff working at the JCC over the three months of summer. These are young drivers who are often in a hurry to get to work or are motivated to be on their way at the end of the day. They are fast drivers and make walking or biking (especially with a young child), treacherous.
- During high holidays the parking for Herzl-Ner Synagogue lines East Mercer Way and 40th. People on their way to temple walk down East Mercer Way and it is often dangerous.
- The FASPS utilizes East Mercer Way for parking as well. Again, this impacts traffic, causes congestion and increases danger as people walk to work along the street.

The plans I have seen for expansion of these three businesses will directly impact the aesthetic of my neighborhood, worsen the traffic to and from my home and may impact our property value. As taxpayers, we believe we need to have our concerns heard and the plans should be put on hold until the opportunity for a full impact study is shared with and discussed with the impacted community.

My husband and I will be at the meeting this evening and will bring copies of the emails that show the communication history of our concerns.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and understanding as a representative of the taxpaying citizens of Mercer Island.

Casey O'Rourke
4043 97th Ave SE, Mercer Island WA, 98040
206.499.4630

Begin forwarded message:

From: Evan Maxim <evan.maxim@mercergov.org>
Subject: RE: Concerns about JCC/FASPS Expansion
Date: January 4, 2017 at 9:51:17 AM PST
To: "caseyhallorourke@gmail.com" <caseyhallorourke@gmail.com>
Cc: Liz Thompson <liz.thompson@mercergov.org>

Casey,

The rules we are discussing in January would regulate single family development primarily, and likely would not affect the FASPS (at least as proposed currently).

Regards,

Evan Maxim
Planning Manager
City of Mercer Island Development Services
9611 SE 36th Street, Mercer island, WA 98040
p: 206.275.7732
f: 206.275.7726

From: Liz Thompson
Sent: Tuesday, January 3, 2017 8:57 PM
To: Evan Maxim <evan.maxim@mercergov.org>
Subject: Fw: Concerns about JCC/FASPS Expansion

Liz

From: Casey O'Rourke <caseyhallorourke@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, December 31, 2016 3:19 PM
To: Liz Thompson
Subject: Re: Concerns about JCC/FASPS Expansion

Hi Liz,

Will this issue be apart of any of the January Planning Commission meetings? I just received a mailer at home regarding the City's plan to update rules for the future and I am wondering if this includes the FASPS. If so, would you please confirm as to whether this specific issue is apart of these plans?

Thanks,

Casey

On Dec 13, 2016, at 3:32 PM, Liz Thompson <liz.thompson@mercergov.org> wrote:

Thank you for your comments. I will make sure to notify you of any upcoming meeting.

Liz Thompson

Planner

liz.thompson@mercergov.org

From: Casey O'Rourke <caseyhallorourke@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, December 13, 2016 11:09:05 AM

To: Liz Thompson; Nicole Gaudette

Cc: Casey O'Rourke; Evan Maxim

Subject: Concerns about JCC/FASPS Expansion

Hello Everyone,

I spoke with Evan last week and he suggested emailing the following.

My family lives at 4043 97th Ave SE. We have lived here for 9 years and in that time the traffic through our neighborhood has increased dramatically. This is in part due to Mercer Island's growth and we accept that and recognize it. We also know an increase of traffic through the neighborhood and to/from our neighborhood (via East Mercer Way) has increased exponentially as the JCC and French American School of Puget Sound (FASPS) has grown. FASPS buses drive by our home daily, via SE 40th St, as do the families who use our street as a cut through to the school versus using Mercerwood to East Mercer Way. The school now uses 97th Ave SE as a parking lot for teachers and staff and buses. And in the summer, the JCC used SE 40th as parking for camp counselors. These are residential streets and the community was built around homes, not a school, a JCC or parking lot(s).

As the school and JCC plans to expand, I would like our neighborhood to be considered. The expansion plans don't bother me so long as it is to the north and not south into our neighborhoods. It is my understanding the greenbelt that lines 40th is to be held in perpetuity and John Hall has that documentation. Further, the traffic and back ups that are routine on East Mercer Way and onto I-90 need to be alleviated. There are times (generally between 3:25-3:50 pm) I cannot get through to my street for up to 20-30 minutes from I-90 east and it is due to the cars driving to and exiting from the FASPS

At one time, the FASPS used the City Hall driveway and street (SE 36th Street) for their entrance and exit and I would like that to be considered. That street has a turn lane, is marked for far heavier traffic than East Mercer Way, and has stoplights that help regulate the flow of traffic. The use of East Mercer Way and 40th Street is too much for the current student body let alone an expansion plan. There is a street that is gated to the City Hall parking lot that could easily be reopened as an option to help with the traffic.

Having spoken with Evan I know I have missed the cutoff for public comment and do not live within 300 feet of the school and JCC. I am asking to be notified, to the extent the city is allowed, of all planning meetings, any traffic study results, etc. I am also aware of a Planning Commission meeting in January or February. If I could please be notified of this meeting I would also appreciate it. I will make note in my calendar to follow-up as well.

Thank you for work. I ma available for further conversation at (206)335-1258.

Sincerely,

Casey O'Rourke