

3260 80th Ave SE, Apt 4
Mercer Island, WA 98040
August 22, 2016

City of Mercer Island
9611 SE 36th St
Mercer Island, WA 98040

To Whom It May Concern:

This note is in response to the city's request for comments regarding the Mercer Island Center for the Arts (MICA) state environmental plan (SEPA). Specifically I wish to address concerns regarding MICA's request for off-site parking.

I have been a resident of Mercer Island for over 10 years; for the past 2+ years I have lived near Town Center. I currently live one block away from Mercerdale Park. I am thrilled that MICA will bring a vivid, much-needed resource for residents and guests who are interested in participating in the arts. The city has a plethora of sports outlets but after Youth Theater Northwest lost their home several years ago, there is a clear lack of equity in terms of outlets for artistic endeavors compared to sports.

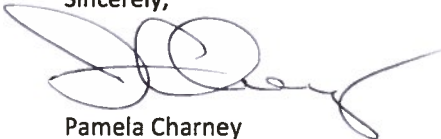
I believe that there are some residents who have vocally expressed concern over parking for MICA. These individuals would refuse to approve MICA unless there is dedicated parking available. I wonder if these individuals have been to Town Center after 6 pm or on most weekends. Once "normal" business hours are over, current parking lots (specifically Rite Aid, Farmers and the Post Office lots) are empty. On weekends, parking lots are empty. During special events such as the Sunday farmers' market, there is still ample parking. I would venture to guess that the Summer Festival might be the one event that might stress parking limits. Even during the Summer Festival, there is no real issue with parking, as on street parking on 34th and 80th Ave remains available. Not once has traffic backed up due to issues with parking.

The same individuals who complain about the remote possibility that there will be insufficient parking at MICA may want to attend events at any of our schools. Any time there is an event at the high school it is impossible to find parking within a 2 – 3 block radius. The people who complain about imagined parking issues at MICA have been rather silent about real parking issues at school events. That makes me wonder about the real reason that parking complaints are being raised.

As a resident who would potentially be most impacted if parking issues were to happen, I remain confident that parking at MICA will simply not be a problem. It is encouraging that MICA plans to collaborate with local businesses to ensure that there is adequate parking for the occasional large event. Not only does that mitigate the small possibility that there would be a parking issue, but it encourages the kind of positive relationship between entities that can only result in positive outcomes for the city.

Again, I have no concerns regarding parking at MICA and hope that the city will proceed with construction of MICA.

Sincerely,



Pamela Charney

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AUG 24 2016
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