
COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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PLANNING COMMISSION

To: City Council

From: JB Gibson, Planning Commission Vice Chair

Date: August 5, 2026

Subject: Planning Commission Recommendation on the proposed comprehensive plan amendment to redesignate parcels 2655500137, 2655500136, 2655500132, and a portion of 2655500115 from Single-Family Residential to Commercial Office (C-O).

Attachments: A. CPA25-002 Staff Report and Recommendation

On behalf of the Planning Commission, I am pleased to present this recommendation for the proposed request to redesignate parcels 2655500137, 2655500136, 2655500132, and a portion of 2655500115 from Single-Family Residential to Commercial Office (C-O) in the City's Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map.

On August 5, 2026, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and review of the proposed comprehensive plan map amendment to redesignate the four properties.

The proponent of the comprehensive plan amendment application spoke to the proposal's compliance with the criteria for approval in MICC 19.15.230(F), followed by a presentation from City staff on the Staff Report and draft findings (Attachment A).

The Planning Commission received for review 324 public comments that were included in the agenda packet in advance of the public hearing. At the meeting, 25 additional public comments were provided during the public hearing portion of the meeting.

In addition to the public comments and presentations, the Planning Commission considered the materials submitted by the applicant and the Staff Report dated August 5, 2026. In making its recommendation, the Planning Commission considered the criteria for approval of a comprehensive plan amendment contained in MICC 19.15.230(F):

Decisions to amend the comprehensive plan shall be based on the criteria specified below. An applicant for a comprehensive plan amendment proposal shall have the burden of demonstrating that the proposed amendment complies with the applicable regulations and decision criteria.

1. The amendment is consistent with the Growth Management Act, the countywide planning policies, and the other provisions of the comprehensive plan and city policies; and:
 - a. There exists obvious technical error in the information contained in the comprehensive plan; or
 - b. The amendment addresses changing circumstances of the city as a whole.
2. If the amendment is directed at a specific property, the following additional findings shall be determined:
 - a. The amendment is compatible with the adjacent land use and development pattern;
 - b. The property is suitable for development in conformance with the standards under the potential zoning; and
 - c. The amendment will benefit the community as a whole and will not adversely affect community facilities or the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Findings

The Planning Commission adopted findings by motion for each of the criteria in MICC 19.15.230(F) for approval of the comprehensive plan amendment during the August 5, 2026 meeting.

(F)(1): The amendment is consistent with the Growth Management Act, the countywide planning policies, and the other provisions of the comprehensive plan and city policies; and:

- a. There exists obvious technical error in the information contained in the comprehensive plan; or**
- b. The amendment addresses changing circumstances of the city as a whole.**

Planning Commission Finding: Pursuant to MICC 19.15.230(F) an applicant for a comprehensive plan amendment proposal has the burden of demonstrating that the proposed amendment complies with the applicable regulations and decision criteria.

The City agrees that the proposed CPA is consistent with the Growth Management Act, the countywide planning policies, and the other provisions of the comprehensive plan and city policies, as detailed in the Applicant's Response above.

The City further agrees that there is no obvious technical error in the information contained in the comprehensive plan and that the proposed CPA is not intended to resolve any obvious technical errors in the comprehensive plan.

Additionally, the City agrees that the proposed CPA addresses changing circumstances of the City as a whole. The City disagrees with the Applicant's assertions as to the 2017 development standards. The changes to the residential development standards that occurred in 2017 were policy decisions made by the then seated City Council, and are not "changing circumstances of the city as whole." Additionally, the

applicant's assertion that the changes to the residential development standards were passed "without including an exception for rebuilds, expansions, and remodels of institutional uses like the SJCC" is incorrect. The development code includes provisions for the exterior alteration or enlargement of nonconforming structures other than single-family or in Town Center in MICC 19.01.050(D)(3). Intentional exterior alteration or enlargement is allowed, provided the legal nonconforming status of the structure is not lost. Legal nonconforming status would be lost if there is an intentional exterior alteration or enlargement of the structure over any three-year period that incurs construction costs in excess of 50 percent of the structure's current King County assessed value as of the time the initial application for such work is submitted.

The changing circumstances of the city as a whole are more accurately described as an increased demand of a facility that is at the end of its useful life and which demand cannot be accommodated under the current provisions allowed for intentional exterior alteration or enlargement of a legally nonconforming structure in MICC 19.01.050(D)(3). To meet these increased demands, a remodel or enlargement that would likely exceed 50 percent of the structure's assessed value would likely be necessary, which would in turn result in the loss of legal nonconforming status, and the whole site would be required to come into compliance with the development standards in the single-family residential zoning designation. The currently applicable standards are, as the name suggests, written for single-family residential development with no provisions that address facilities that need a larger footprint or gross floor area to accommodate the demand required by the community.

The consistency demonstration for Countywide Planning Policies FW-6, DP-2, DP-4, DP-6, DP-8, EC-2, EC-14, EC-26, EC-29, and PF-19, and for the Comprehensive Plan community values and Land Use Goals 7.4 and 7.5, rests on programs and services provided by the current owner and operator. A Comprehensive Plan land use designation runs with the land and does not require the continuation of any use or program. The record contains no instrument that would secure the community benefits relied upon. The Commission therefore recommends an instrument to run with the land be required by the City Council.

(F)(2): If the amendment is directed at a specific property, the following additional findings shall be determined:

- a. The amendment is compatible with the adjacent land use and development pattern;**
- b. The property is suitable for development in conformance with the standards under the potential zoning; and**
- c. The amendment will benefit the community as a whole and will not adversely affect community facilities or the public health, safety, and general welfare.**

Planning Commission Finding: The City agrees that the proposed CPA is compatible with the adjacent land use and development patterns. Adjacent land use and development patterns include both single-family residences and commercial buildings. The proposed amendment would redesignate four Single-Family Residential parcels to Commercial Office. The adjacent land uses and development patterns include single-family residential development, commercial, and public

facilities, which all align with the existing facilities on the SJCC properties. The applicant has emphasized the SJCC's intentions to rebuild the SJCC facilities to continue providing services to Mercer Island residents, which can no longer be adequately provided with the existing, aging buildings. The commercial office land use designation represents commercial areas within Mercer Island, located outside of the Town Center, where the land use will be predominantly commercial office. Complementary land uses (e.g., healthcare uses, schools, places of worship, etc.) are also generally supported within this land use designation.

The City agrees that the subject property is suitable for development in conformance with the standards in the proposed C-O zoning designation. Allowed uses in the C-O zone include professional, scientific, and technical services, office uses, places of worship, civic and social organizations, and public and private schools. Required conditions for development within the C-O zone are contained in MICC 19.04.020 and include, but are not limited to: screening adjacent to external boundaries of the site, restrictions on lot coverage and building footprints, building height limits, yard requirements, and parking requirements.

MICC 19.04.020(E) provides yard requirements for development within the C-O zone. The minimum setback from all rights-of-way shall be 50 feet. The minimum rear yard setback shall be 50 feet. The sum of side yards shall be at least 75 feet, with no side yard less than 25 feet; provided, however, that a minimum 50-foot setback shall be required from the property line of any adjacent property that is zoned residential or multifamily and developed for such use and no parking or driveways shall be allowed within this setback. Dimensions of the subject properties are provided below:

Parcel	Width (Side Yards)	Depth (Front and Rear Yards)
2655500132 (south property line adjacent to single-family residentially zoned parcel)	75.5 feet	108 feet
2655500136	110 feet	205 feet
2655500137	Must be determined using Lot Width Circle method	Must be determined by the mean average distance measured from the front lot line to the rear lot line
2655500115	Must be determined using Lot Width Circle method	Must be determined by the mean average distance measured from the front lot line to the rear lot line

Based on this information, at least one parcel would not be suitable for development in conformance with the standards under the potential zoning as it currently exists; however, the development code includes options for nonconforming structures, sites,

and uses, as well as the option for lot line revisions to create a lot width and depth which could allow a new building in the C-O zone to conform with the development standards.

The City agrees that the proposed CPA would benefit the community as a whole and would not adversely affect community facilities or the public health, safety, and general welfare. The proposed CPA would allow for new commercial development in an area that has contained uses that align with those allowed in the Commercial-Office designation for many decades. The subject properties contain uses that already provide benefit to the community, and the proposed CPA would align the comprehensive plan designation with these uses.

The Planning Commission amends the recommendation to the City Council to exclude parcel 2655500132 from CPA25-002, and adds the following supporting findings: (i) the staff report finds that parcels 2655500137, 2655500115, and 2655500136 appear integrated in their daily operations as the Stroum Jewish Community Center site and does not so find as to parcel 2655500132; (ii) parcel 2655500132 is developed with a two-story, 1,860 square foot single-family residence constructed in 1986 and has not been used for recreational or community facility purposes; (iii) the applicant's compatibility demonstration, which rests on more than fifty years of continuous community facility use, does not apply to this parcel; (iv) no changed circumstance has been demonstrated as to this parcel; and (v) the parcel cannot be developed in conformance with Commercial Office standards. The Commission finds that the applicant has carried its burden under MICC 19.15.230(F)(2) subject to the removal of parcel 2655500132.

Recommendation

After considerable discussion and deliberation, the Planning Commission approved the recommendation by a 3-0 vote:

The Planning Commission recommends that the City Council approve the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment based on the adopted findings.

JB Gibson

JB Gibson
Planning Commission Vic Chair

8/12/26

Date