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# CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

## COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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## PLANNING COMMISSION

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**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Evan Maxim, Director  
**Date:** January 22, 2020  
**RE:** Community Facility Regulations

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### SUMMARY

On August 20, 2019, the City Council and Planning Commission held a joint study session to discuss the proposed Community Facility regulations and zoning designation. Following the joint study session, the City Council asked the Planning Commission to:

- A. Review the “problem statement” and determine if an alternative approach is warranted;
- B. Explore alternative decision-making processes; and
- C. Report back to the City Council for further direction.

On November 20, 2019, the Planning Commission completed their development of the problem statement (Attachment A) and directed staff to assist in evaluating the three alternatives. Since the Planning Commission’s meeting in late November 2019, the City understands that the Stroum Jewish Community Center (SJCC) and the French American School of Puget Sound (FASPS) are exploring other options, which may include either a proposal for a new code amendment, or the application for a Conditional Use Permit, or both. No applications have been received by the City.

In preparing the materials for Planning Commission meeting for January 22, 2020, staff has noted that the current draft of the problem statement does not appear to incorporate the significant neighborhood opposition to a change to the current development standards similar to Alternative 4. The political “viability” of each alternative should be considered in developing a recommended alternative approach to the City Council.

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### ALTERNATIVES

A summary of all alternative approaches is attached as Attachment B. The Planning Commission discussed both limited amendments to the Conditional Use Permit criteria (Alternative 2, Attachment B) and the adoption of a Master Plan in conjunction amendments to the Conditional use Permit criteria (Alternative 3, Attachment B), which has resulted in the creation of four alternatives:

- Alternative 1: No change to the current development regulations.

- Alternative 2: Amend the Conditional Use Permit criteria only.
- Alternative 3: Amend the Conditional use Permit criteria and create a Master Plan process that provides for flexibility in complying with development standards.
- Alternative 4: Continue review of the original Community Facility code amendments and rezone.

The purpose of identifying multiple alternatives is to assist the Planning Commission and community in evaluating the specific advantages or limitations of each approach in addressing the components of the problem statement.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT / ALTERNATIVE MAPPING**

Staff has prepared a matrix (Attachment C) that evaluates the “advantages” and “limitations” of each alternative against the individual components of the problem statement to assist in evaluating the alternative approaches.

The purpose of this matrix is to support the Planning Commission’s evaluation of each alternative approach and its respective advantages or limitations to address the components of the problem statement. As noted above, the matrix does not appear to adequately capture the political viability of each alternative. In particular, there has been significant community opposition to Alternative 4: Continue review of the original Community Facility code amendment and rezone. Consequently, staff recommends that the Planning Commission take into account the community concerns with Alternative 4 before making a final recommendation.

Although staff has prepared the initial document, the matrix is also intended to reflect the Planning Commission’s assessment of each alternative approach. Consequently, Planning Commissioners should review the matrix and provide correction as needed.

**RECOMMENDATION AND SCHEDULE**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission complete its recommendation to the City Council by February 18, or sooner. The City Council is tentatively scheduled to review the recommendation on March 3, before providing further direction to the Planning Commission and staff.

**NEXT STEPS**

Planning Commissioners should review this memo and past material related to this subject. Several documents provided in November 2019 have been included as attachments for reference; please review. For January 29, staff anticipates that the Planning Commission will provide the following:

1. Direction regarding corrections to the identified “advantages” and “limitations” in Attachment C; and,
2. Identify a Recommended Alternative Approach, including any necessary modifications to the approach.

Staff anticipates that the Planning Commission may need additional time to discuss the alternatives and form a recommendation. Consequently, staff anticipates that this discussion will continue to the Planning Commission meeting of February 4.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Planning Commission Draft Problem Statement
- B. Alternative Approach Summary table
- C. Problem Statement / Alternative Mapping
- D. Background: Current CUP and Design Review process, CUP Approval Criteria, Development / Design Standards Matrix