



February 18, 2026

Growth Management Policy Board  
c/o Council President Ed Prince  
Puget Sound Regional Council  
Seattle, WA 98101-3055

**RE: Conditional Redesignation of Totem Lake Regional Growth Center**

Dear President Prince and Growth Management Policy Board members:

On February 19, you will be considering redesignation of Regional Growth Centers (Agenda Item 7a), including Kirkland's Totem Lake Regional Growth Center. The staff memo and accompanying Regional Growth Centers Criteria Report recommends that the Totem Lake Center, which was established in 2003, be redesignated with conditions – primarily reviewing the boundary of the Center "to meet regional size criteria."

Based on the current success of the Totem Lake Center in its current configuration, and its longstanding role in Kirkland's growth strategy, we urge GMPB to remove this recommendation from the redesignation conditions.

While the Totem Lake Center is 842 acres, larger than the 640-acre limit, we would note that the Center meets all other designation criteria that point to a thriving, growing, and successful center, including:

- existing density – the existing density in the area is 26 people per acre, far exceeding the threshold of 18 people per acre;
- planned density – the planned density is 55 people per acre, far exceeding the threshold of 45 people per acre;
- mix of uses, with 51% of growth expected to be residential, illustrating the City's substantial progress towards making the center a major employment and housing hub; and
- transit access – While the center already has some of the best transit access in Kirkland, with frequent service to Seattle, Bothell, Kenmore, and Redmond from two major transit hubs, the Totem Lake Center is scheduled to open several new Bus Rapid Transit stations by 2030, including one along Sound Transit's STRIDE line and three along King County Metro's new K Line.

Any logical area excluded from the current boundaries would also meet these criteria. Furthermore, creating two smaller centers from the existing larger one would not lead to better planning or growth outcomes.



As noted in the “Jurisdiction Comments” section of the Criteria Report, the Totem Lake Center in its current configuration has been a central part of Kirkland’s growth strategy for over 20 years, as evidenced by the facts on the ground – among them, approximately 1,400 residential units in the planning pipeline (including 650 affordable units), on both sides of I-405; a recently-constructed pedestrian bridge connecting the Village at Totem Lake to areas of the center to the east of I-405; and flourishing institutions such as Evergreen Hospital and Lake Washington Tech. Virtually the entire Totem Lake Center comprises mixed-use, institutional, and transit-oriented development land use designations, all bound together by 20 years of intensive planning, design, and infrastructure work, meaning that excluding portions of the center simply to meet the regional size criteria would be contrary to the City’s long-standing efforts to cluster growth in its two centers.

As noted in our comments included in the report, taking into account a number of State mandates for cities to accommodate more growth and increase housing affordability, we are at a loss to explain what reducing the size of the thriving and connected Totem Lake Center would achieve. In the absence of removing the size condition outright from the redesignation conditions, we would very much appreciate having our Mayor and Council leadership discuss with PSRC board members the potential to grandfather this long-designated Center from the more recently adopted size limitations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kurt Triplett".

Kurt Triplett  
City Manager

cc: Paul Inghram, Executive Director, Director of Growth Management  
Liz Underwood-Bultmann, Principal Planner