



March 17, 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 in Kirkland

Dear President Prince and Growth Management Policy Board members:

On March 19, you will be considering redesignation of Regional Growth Centers (Agenda Item 7a), including Kirkland's Totem Lake Regional Growth Center. On February 19, the GMPB discussed the redesignation of the various centers and raised questions about the criteria for redesignation, the process encompassed within redesignation, and potential exemptions from meeting all the redesignation criteria. We greatly appreciate this discussion, along with PSRC staff's work in identifying "Option B," which would amend the redesignation of the Totem Lake Center to remove a condition to review the boundary and potentially reduce the size of our long-established center.

We urge the GMPB to recommend adoption of Option B, which we believe reflects the fact that the Totem Lake Center meets all other designation criteria that point to a thriving, growing, and successful center, including: existing density, planned density, mix of uses, and transit access. As we noted in our February 18 letter to GMPB, 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, including a new pedestrian and bike connection that connects the Village at Totem Lake to points to the east of I-405, approximately 1,400 residential units in the planning pipeline (including 650 affordable units), thriving and growing institutions like Evergreen Hospital and Lake Washington Tech, and in-motion plans to establish new Bus Rapid Transit service in the area.

As noted in our previous comments, 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. As part of the City's planning efforts, which have been focused on the success of the Totem Lake Center since its designation in 2003, we will be continuing to address the considerations and constraints identified by PSRC staff in the March 12 memo, including creating new connections across I-405, ensuring planning and capital



improvement plans for Totem Lake reflect future needs, and integrating transit into the center. None of these efforts will be compromised by the fact that the center is 842 acres instead of 640 acres.

Furthermore, we believe that Option B is in line with GMPB's earlier direction that new centers and existing centers should be treated consistently, but with room for flexibility in evaluating existing centers. We urge adoption of Option B in recognition that the Totem Lake Center in its current configuration is helping meet the goals of our regional planning strategy, as evidenced by the fact that the center meets all redesignation criteria other than the size criterion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelli Curtis".

Mayor Kelli Curtis

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

