



KENT CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE



March 9, 2017

The Honorable Jim Honeyford, Capital Budget Chair, Senate Ways & Means Committee
The Honorable David Frock, Capital Budget Ranking Member, Senate Ways & Means Committee
The Honorable Steve Tharinger, House Capital Budget Chair
The Honorable Richard DeBolt, House Capital Budget Ranking Member

RE: East Hill YMCA parks infrastructure request (\$3M) in Kent

Dear Chairs Honeyford and Tharinger, and Ranking Members Frock and DeBolt:

We are writing as a group of Kent community leaders in strong and enthusiastic support for a project on the East Hill of our city that has been a long time coming. The East Hill YMCA project is much more than a “city” project or a “Y” project – it belongs to all of us.

Amazingly, Kent, a city with a population of 125,000, has no YMCA of any kind – let alone a YWCA or Boys & Girls Club. It is the tenth most diverse community in the United States with over 130 languages spoken by families within the Kent School District. And it is not an affluent community with nearly half the families in the school district on free or reduced school lunch programs.

Sen. Joe Fain and Rep. Pat Sullivan of the 47th Legislative District, supported by Rep. Mark Hargrove (47th LD) and the rest of the Kent-area legislative delegation, are requesting \$3 million in the 2017-19 Capital Budget for the City of Kent’s portion of this project, which will go towards parks infrastructure investments that will complement the planned East Hill YMCA. This project will assist in establishing a rich indoor/outdoor recreation experience on the East Hill, where 80 percent of Kent’s residents live. We see this as a high priority, long-overdue project that will provide:

- A nearby place to recreate that is adjacent to a bus line;
- A vibrant place to play and a place to learn for the kids of our community, and for Kent residents to gather for social events, recreational activities and meetings about community issues, increasing social interaction and connectivity;
- A flagship YMCA facility that will be a positive draw for inducing commercial and retail activity and jobs on the East Hill;

- Kent residents safe, affordable and healthy ways to experience and appreciate nature and to engage in physical activity to assist in combating chronic disease, an increased prevalence of sedentary lifestyles and poor nutrition habits; and
- Environmental and outdoor educational opportunities for kids and adults through the YMCA's programs as well as the wetlands, nature trails, and dog park within the combined park area.

We recognize you face difficult decisions and challenges as you build your 2017-19 Capital Budget. We hope you will give this extraordinarily worthy project support and funding. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Suzette Cooke, Mayor
City of Kent, WA



Ken Thomas, Police Chief
City of Kent, WA



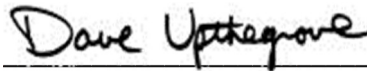
Mike Heinisch, Executive Director
Kent Youth and Family Services



Andrea Keikkala, CEO
Kent Chamber of Commerce



Reagan Dunn, County Councilmember
King County, WA



Dave Upthegrove, County Councilmember
King County, WA



Carol Morford, Fundraising Co-Chair
YMCA of Great Seattle



Nathan Phillips, Regional Vice-President
YMCA of Greater Seattle