

August 2, 2017

St. Helens City Council
265 Strand Street
St. Helens, OR 97051

Dear Councilors,

The purpose of this letter is to request your assistance with our effort to provide affordable housing to low income families in our community. Columbia County Habitat for Humanity operates with existing mortgage income, our ReStore income, and donations of time, materials and monies from individuals, groups, businesses and governments to build affordable housing in Columbia County. Families that qualify for these homes must earn below 60 percent of the median income, demonstrate financial responsibility and a willingness to help build their own home. We placed a priority on building affordable homes that fit into the existing neighborhoods. To date the City of St. Helens has supported our efforts by generously forgiving the System Development Charges for our homes. In addition, we have been invited to return for the same consideration when we were ready to build again. We are now poised to begin building another affordable home on North 12th Street.

The homes we have built in the last three years have been appraised at \$162,000 to \$232,000. As the price of homes has skyrocketed in St. Helens, we have been able to continue offering mortgage payments to our partner families of \$600 to \$700 per month. This is due in large part to the support we have received from the local government and businesses.

Columbia County Habitat for Humanity would be grateful for any help in reducing our costs of providing these affordable homes for responsible families in need of a hand up, not a handout. Any reduction or waiver of these fees will enhance our ability to complete other homes thereby offering more affordable home ownership opportunities. Please let us know at your earliest convenience if it will be possible to extend the waiver of SDCs to our 12th street project.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Anderson
Executive Director
Columbia County Habitat for Humanity