

April 9, 2019

Olivia Glantz, Planner III  
Community Development Department  
City of Salem  
555 Liberty St. SE Suite 305  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: Wren Heights – Response to Neighborhood Comments**

Olivia,

This letter is provided in response to comments that have received from neighbors expressing concerns regarding our proposed Wren Heights Subdivision and submitted for the record.

We appreciate the input we have received and are very aware of the neighbor's concerns. In response, we would like to offer the following responses to highlight how the Applicant is addressing these concerns while being in conformance with the city's development code and ordinance requirements:

**1) Transportations and Safety Concerns:**

The majority of comments expressed have to do with the current condition of Salem Heights Avenue and safety concerns regarding the additional traffic generated by our proposed development. As stated by, Steve Powers, City Manager in his email to Sally Cook dated April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, this development will be evaluated against current conditions and the existing Salem Revised Code. To address these concerns, we offer the following response:

The overall size of the project has been reduced from 9.1 acres to 7.7 acres. Two tax lots included in the previously approved preliminary subdivision application (reference Case Number SUB-ADJ17-11 and the Notice of Decision dated December 28, 2017) have been removed from the project. The total number of lots has been reduced from 38 to 33 lots which results in a 13% reduction in anticipated traffic entering onto Salem Heights Avenue.

In conformance with city code, City of Salem public works standards and the TSP, the Applicant has dedicated additional right-of-way and will improve the frontage of the proposed development with curb, gutter, sidewalks and a bike lane. Our proposal will provide for the extension of existing dead-end streets through the development and provide better connectivity for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. As the overall traffic count is below 1000 vehicle trips per day, a Traffic Impact Statement is not required as confirmed by the City Traffic Engineer. In addition, the Public Works Department has evaluated Salem Heights Avenue and confirmed that this collector has adequate width for two-way traffic. It should also be noted that the SDC's generated by this development will contribute to funding future roadway improvements. The city has launched a multi-year planning process to update the current Comprehensive Plan. The first phase called "Our Salem" will examine existing conditions in the city. Participation of the neighborhood and concerned citizens in this planning process will provide the opportunity to voice concerns and facilitate improvements in this area.

## **2) Tree Removal:**

Comments were received expressing concern over removal of trees on the property – especially the White Oaks located in the Salem Heights right-of-way. As required under SRC Chapter 808, the applicant has submitted a revised Tree Preservation Plan. It should be noted that the trees within the Salem Heights right-of-way are not subject to the provisions of this chapter and will be removed to comply with the city's requirement to provide additional right-of-way for the required street improvements including curb, gutter, sidewalk and a bicycle (reference SRC Chapter 86). These improvements will also help to address the neighborhood's safety concerns in the immediate area of the proposed subdivision.

The Applicant has made every effort to preserve as many trees as possible. The revised Tree Preservation Plan currently shows a total of 130 trees over 10-inches (dbh) on the property. Of the 130 total trees, 54 or 41.5 % are slated to be preserved which is well over the required 25% minimum.

## **3) Loss of Wildlife Habitat and Open Space:**

While the Applicant understands the neighborhood's concern over the loss of wildlife habitat and open space, the property is zoned for residential development and not for parks. The property has not been identified as a significant wildlife habitat or open space by any city, state or federal agency. The Salem Comprehensive Plan identifies the property as "Single-Family Residential" and the property is located within a currently developed residential area. With regard to the property being developed as a park, the Salem Parks Master Plan shows this area is already being served by parks in the immediate area – reference Candeleria Reservoir and Salem Heights Elementary School – located within ½ mile of the proposed development. Loss of wildlife habitat and open space is not an evaluation or approval criterion applicable to this proposed development.

**4) Impact on Neighborhood Character and Adjacent Properties:**

Concern has also been expressed over the impact of the proposed development on the character of the neighborhood and adjacent properties due to the density and lot size. In our revised plan submittal, the Applicant has reduced the number of lots from 38 to 33 and increased the average lot size. Proposed lots range in size from 5,251 s.f to 12, 603 s.f. and the smallest lot size is 1,251 s.f. over the required 4000 s.f. minimum.

The proposed lot size is consistent with the anticipated development pattern of properties described in both the Comprehensive Plan and (RS) Residential zone. There is no approval criteria or development standard that requires that the proposed development resemble the character of adjacent homes or development. Goal E(b) of the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan states that “residential development shall provide housing opportunities for Salem’s diverse population.” The Applicant’s proposed subdivision provides a variation in lots sizes and provides a greater diversity of housing opportunities within the detached single-family housing market. Concerns regarding housing character and/or impact on property values is not an evaluation or approval criterion applicable to this proposed development.

**5) Impact of Storm Water Runoff on Downhill Properties:**

Concern has been expressed about the impact of storm water runoff on adjacent properties. It should be pointed out, however, that the Applicant’s engineer has conducted extensive research, computer modelling and design to mitigate any adverse effects. Public works design standards require that the subdivision limit storm water runoff from all lots and impervious surfaces to a rate that does not exceed pre-development conditions. Lot # 34 has been designed as both a treatment and detention facility which will adequately address both city requirements and neighbor concerns.

Olivia, please feel free to forward this letter to anyone with concerns over our application. As always, I am available to answer any questions or provide additional information.

Sincerely,  
Project Delivery Group, LLC

Mark B. Ferris, RLA  
Director of Planning & Development