

February 14, 2014

Redmond Planning Commission  
c/o Jeff Churchill and Kimberly Dietz  
City of Redmond  
15670 NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street  
Redmond, WA 98073-9710

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you some exciting developments for Hopelink within the City of Redmond. As you may know, Hopelink is a non-profit agency that has been headquartered here in Redmond since 1990. Hopelink's mission is to promote self-sufficiency for all members of our community; we help people make lasting change. Since our founding in 1971, we have grown to an agency that lives this mission for more than 57,000 people annually throughout King and Snohomish Counties. Our services include Transportation, Emergency Financial Assistance, Food Banks, Energy / Heating Assistance, Housing for homeless families, Case Management, Employment Services, Adult Education and Financial Literacy.

For 20 years, we provided many of these services at the Together Center here in Redmond. As the needs of the community and our response grew, we moved to our current location on Cleveland Street. Our hope was to develop this location into a permanent home for Hopelink's services; a place for the community to give and get help. Due to lot size and design challenges such as underground parking, the Cleveland site has become too cost prohibitive to develop. Over the past year we have sought the **right location** for the new Hopelink Redmond Integrated Service Center and have been challenged; both by the rising costs of property due to the very exciting building boom in Redmond and by restrictions on where our use is allowed.

As you review proposed guidelines for the SE Redmond Neighborhood Plan Update, we would ask that you consider Human Services as an allowable use, particularly in the Marymoor Park section of the neighborhood, near the very busy intersection of NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street and E. Lake Sammamish Parkway NE. Locating human services along this traffic corridor and future transit rich area will be a benefit to the City of Redmond and the SE area neighborhood, providing a solid foundation for mixed-income housing.

After the exhaustive search described above, we have identified a property that would allow Hopelink to create our **permanent home in Redmond** and would **enhance the City of Redmond's long-range plan for the SE Area Neighborhood**.

**Hopelink Redmond:**

- An Integrated Service Center meeting the needs of low-income individuals and families in Redmond
- Services will include
  - a grocery-style Food Bank
  - Emergency Financial Assistance (eviction prevention)
  - Heating / Energy Assistance
  - Case Management
  - GED classes

- English for Work
- Employment Services
- Financial Literacy education
- The co-location of services will allow participants to achieve stability as they gain the tools they need to exit poverty.

### Benefits to Redmond and the SE Redmond Neighborhood

- Hopelink will purchase, renovate and beautify the existing warehouse, making the exterior blend attractively into a neighborhood transitioning from commercial services into residential areas. Areas of focus will include:
  - Pedestrian link and transition from high density, traffic areas: provide a buffer between the multi-family housing and the higher density corridor along NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street and E. Lake Sammamish Parkway NE and provide human scale elements to transition to the multi-family zone. Make a concerted effort to integrate elements into the existing building that reinforce a positive pedestrian experience.
  - Beautification of exterior: Add pedestrian elements to the exterior of the building that would include; additional storefront glazing, canopies and outdoor gathering areas. These elements will provide transition from the service center to the adjacent multi-family housing.
  - Landscaping: provide natural elements such as trees, planters and the potential for on-site urban gardening that will contribute to the neighborhood. Encouraging involvement from the neighborhood and program participants.
  - Services and support for future low-income housing: Co-locating Hopelink near the new residential development will be an asset, drawing in future affordable housing developers. Providing uses consistent with the goals of the SE Redmond Neighborhood plan of income diversity will provide a solid foundation for future low income housing providers to build economically viable developments that will contribute to the vibrancy of the neighborhood.
  - Renovation of existing structure: Hopelink will fully renovate the structure, implementing sustainable design elements for all building systems.
- The State of Washington has committed \$1 million in economic development funds to support this project. These funds need to be utilized by December 31, 2014. In addition, Hopelink has raised significant financial supports through local philanthropy and has secured the financing for the completion of this project.
- Hopelink will work collaboratively with the neighborhood to limit significant traffic impacts and to maintain a vibrant community presence, giving opportunities for the neighborhood and beyond to both give and get help.

Attached to this letter are the conceptual designs showing the programming that we had intended for the redevelopment of the Cleveland site. The layout will not be identical, but the elements will be very similar for the Oak Ridge Building that Hopelink is interested in redeveloping.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Hopelink's Board of Directors and Leadership team are committed to continuing to meet the growing and changing needs of the low income community in Redmond. We are available to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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encl: Hopelink Integrated Service Center Programmatic Diagrams