

November 30, 2023

Sara Ullman
City of Bellingham
Planning and Community Development Department
210 Lottie Street Bellingham, WA 98225

RE: Garden St. Investments LLC, CUP2014-00006

Dear Ms. Ullman,

I am the current owner of the properties addressed as 1125 and 1127 Garden Street. These properties are developed with two residential structures. Prior to 2015 the properties were developed with a single structure which operated as a "halfway house" under contract with the State of Washington Department of Corrections (DOC) for 30+ years. In 2015 I engaged in the process to expand development on the properties (CUP2014-00006), and ultimately with City approval constructed the 2nd of the two structures, with the intent of expanding the DOC lease to increase their operational footprint on the site. After completion of the construction of the 2nd building, the DOC did expand their lease to include both structures, and over the past 7 years they have operated out of both structures. The DOC recently signed a new 5-year lease to continue operations of their programs out of both structures. The current lease started on June 1, 2022, and runs through May 31, 2027.

One of the conditions of the approved CUP for the expansion (Condition 2) required a hearing to review the proposal within five years of the expansion receiving a certificate of occupancy. I am writing this letter in support of the continuation of the permitted use of the properties, and to make clear the DOC intentions through their signed lease renewal, to continue to operate the halfway house at the properties. The DOC has indicated to me that they consider the Bellingham facility one of their high priority facilities as it is the only halfway house they operate north of Seattle, and it is their intent to continue to operate the facility for the foreseeable future. During the term of their prior lease, I have had no issues with DOC as an operator, they have been communicative with me as an owner, have facilitated compliance with all relevant conditions of the CUP that was issued for their use, and they were excited to re-sign a new lease when the opportunity arose. I also would like to note that since the CUP was approved, I am not aware of any community concerns that have been raised about the operations of the halfway house, either from my immediate neighbors or the broader community. I look forward to continuing to provide the opportunity for DOC to operate this critical community transition facility on my properties now and into the future.

Sincerely,



Brian McFarlane
Garden St. Investment LLC (Manager)