



DANIEL COOK ARCHITECT

November 25, 2018

To whom it may concern,

Daniel Cook Architect is pleased to support Habitat for Humanity Weber Davis in their application for the JP Morgan & Chase Grant. Since its founding in 1972, DCA has been involved in a variety of development work, including working with over 1,000 non-profit organizations in the last 20 years.

However, in that time, we have hesitated to work in our own backyard. For the last 15 years, we have been headquartered in the heart of the Jefferson Park neighborhood. Rather than offering a helping hand, we have complained about the truancy, graffiti, and people who are homeless.

About 5 years ago, I began to work with a local church to revitalize a few blocks within this neighborhood. We were able to demolish about 8 drug houses and establish a successful event center and home for the ministry. The surrounding neighborhood was incredibly grateful, but left suffering.

In the last two years, it was placed heavily on my heart that I needed to stop waiting for someone else to make a difference and step up myself. I began meeting with churches, non-profits, and business owners, and was shocked to hear how many people were passionate about impacting this area but were too overwhelmed to do anything on their own.

When I presented this project to Habitat, everything changed. Their experience, leadership, and progress is unmatched and their potential is inextinguishable. I earnestly believe we would have never gotten it off the ground if it weren't for them. We excelled at talking with folks about the needs in the area, but Habitat was able to create a strategic, actionable plan. Please note that this project is a great passion of mine; while DCA will do some free consulting work to aid Habitat, we will not accept any fees of any kind.

The needs are great — in Utah and around the country — and you are surely reading many compelling stories. It is difficult for us in Utah to ask for help; we have a very proud culture and prefer to seem like we have everything together. But the opportunity to partner with you could change everything for our community.

Our hope is that we would act as an example to many communities across the country, who may find themselves hesitating to take the first step toward their good, healthy, and safe future. Let us show you and them that when we can come together across difference, anything is possible. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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November 27, 2018



To the Granting Entity:

As the Ogden City Community Development Manager, it is a distinct honor to advocate for Habitat for Humanity Weber/Davis' receipt of this grant. Our mission is to stabilize and revitalize Ogden's neighborhoods so that they become "neighborhoods of choice." However, our impact is limited without invested partners like Habitat WD.

Our city is facing a significant housing crisis. Not only is the Housing Cost Burden relative to Household Income rising throughout the community, over 4,000 of our families contribute more than half their income to housing. What's more, there are more children in every single census tract in Ogden living in poverty than their counterparts across the state.

We maintain the lowest homeownership rate in the county and one-third of our housing stock has one of four problems: severe overcrowding, a high cost burden relative to income, and lack of complete plumbing or kitchen facilities. Our residents deserve a decent place to live, but many of their current living conditions lack even the most basic standards of a developed country.

We are also watching the homeless population steadily rise; from 2017 to 2018, homelessness increased 30 percent. While we try to hold our heads high, it is without a doubt that Habitat's mission to provide strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter is incredibly crucial to our community's future.

As a city, we and our partners are researching how to break intergenerational cycles of poverty. Research shows children of homeowners are more likely to finish high school and twice as likely to graduate from college. They are also 59% more likely to become homeowners themselves, starting an upward spiral.

Habitat WD is determined to affect change in a part of our city to which many others have turned a blind eye. In order to create a strong city, we need to lift up folks like those at Habitat who have an in-depth understanding of the needs in our community and are committed to making a difference.

Rather than trying to do this on their own, they are bringing together organizations from every industry. While most people try to run in their own lane, Habitat WD recognizes the distinct strengths, passions, and connections others have, and is taking an innovative approach to community building that is previously unmatched in our area.

The last step is funding, and while Habitat WD is looking to many diverse and sustainable sources, this grant would help them take a big leap forward. I trust their example will ripple throughout our state and nation, which desperately needs to be encouraged to persevere in the face of structural injustice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ward Ogden".

Ward Ogden
Community Development Manager

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J.P. Morgan Chase 7 Co. Advancing Cities Challenge Committee:

It is my great joy as Weber County Commissioner to write this letter of support for Habitat for Humanity Weber/Davis. I am deeply passionate about effecting change in Utah, which, as a whole, struggles silently. While we are known for world-class skiing and have become an adventure mecca, we also have one of the highest rates of teen suicide and lowest success in education.

Weber County is severely economically divided, and it is children who suffer disproportionately to adults. Indeed, not some but all of the census tracts in Ogden report poverty rates for children that are higher than the state levels. 35% of children under 5 in our city live under poverty, which is significantly higher than the state and national average.

In addition to these challenges, Ogden is one of very few parts of our great state that has to mourn high rates of juvenile arrests, prevalent drug and alcohol abuse among youth, and rampant gang violence.

Though major crime-reduction and revitalization efforts have been successful in Ogden's commercial areas, nearby neighborhoods continue to cry out for help. Our local government, police, organizations, and schools have worked hard to address these issues, but are, to be blatant, looking for a quick fix.

Therefore, it is my honor to write this letter of support for Habitat for Humanity Weber/Davis and their work which picks up where we have left of. Their dedication to local families is unparalleled, their passion for creating a better future is unwavering, and their commitment to the Jefferson Park neighborhood is unprecedented.

The Habitat team has turned their attention to a part of our community that is incredibly rich in ethnic diversity, but extremely poor in safety, opportunity, and hope. Despite the prevalence of substandard housing, prices are sky-rocketing and this area is at great risk to being gentrified.

Together with individuals, businesses, and other non-profit organizations, Habitat is effecting holistic, transformational change...But with your partnership, they will be able to impact even more community members in their time of need.

I expect Habitat's example of diligence, innovation, and teamwork in this area to have a ripple affect across the city. Not only do I believe this will help us promote the trades to our young people, but it will help all residents take hold of our shared responsibility to edify our community.

By bringing a greater focus to this area, I also expect efforts which engage children and youth through education, health and activity, skill development, and leadership to increase. About 5,000 people live in this area, and one-third of them are under 18. We are at a crossroads, and if we can come together now under Habitat's leadership, we can take families in despair and help them become generations of community leaders.

It takes a village to create a lasting impact, and I hope you will be a part of ours.

In gratitude,