

SUBJECT: Support for Density Bonus Agreement Application No. 2022-01

Dear Planning Commission,

On behalf of **The Wooden Floor**, I am writing to express enthusiastic support for WISEPlace and its efforts to develop supportive housing for women experiencing homelessness, some of Orange County's most vulnerable citizens for whom there has been a longstanding housing shortage.

Founded in 1983, The Wooden Floor is one of the foremost creative youth development nonprofit organizations in the country. We transform the lives of young people in low-income communities through the power of dance and access to higher education. In Orange County and through national licensed partners, we use a long-term approach grounded in exploratory dance education to foster the confidence and gifts within each child to innovate, communicate, and collaborate – skills necessary for success in school and in life. 100 percent of students who graduate from The Wooden Floor immediately enroll in higher education. Our students become change agents and beacons of hope within their own families, their neighborhoods, our community, and our world.

As active members of the Santa Ana community, we are pleased to support this solution to ending homelessness through this development and wrap around services provided by WISEPlace. Creating housing for vulnerable women will create an important solution that has never been specifically addressed in Orange County. A place where women can live paying no more than 30% of their income in rent along with support services to address their disabling conditions will create a stable environment where they can thrive.

The 2019 Point in Time showed there were over 6800 homeless residents in Orange County. Affordable Housing options for women are a growing community concern. One in three women make up this part of the homeless population with over 40% survivors of domestic violence. This population of women endure high rates of first-time homelessness, longer spells of homelessness, and higher barriers in accessing stable housing. Unaccompanied women also report extremely high incidence of trauma-whether physical, sexual, or psychological in nature-that is compounded by their ongoing houselessness. The opportunity to create options for women on this site with so many community amenities will provide a safe home for women for future generations.

Affordable housing is a resource to our communities that provides stability, community, and economic opportunity to our neighbors. We only have this resource if we build it. With so many rent-burdened and struggling to make ends meet because of rising rents across the state, this housing would provide a tool to help our community and provide stability, and protection for our vulnerable residents.

from here you can step anywhere
the wooden floor[®]

This opportunity to provide affordable housing at this existing location can create a welcome solution to a growing community need. I am pleased to provide support.

Respectfully,

Dawn S. Reese

Dawn Reese
Chief Executive Officer
The Wooden Floor