

CONCERN AMERICA

— SINCE 1972 —

May 3, 2022

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

Dear Planning Commission,

On behalf of Concern America, 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.

Concern America, based in Santa Ana since 1976, is a globally-focused community development organization building local capacity in economically impoverished regions so that communities are able to lift themselves out of poverty through grassroot programs in health, sanitation, and income-generation. Our focus on walking with vulnerable communities as they lead their own transformation is shared by WISEPlace, and why we are writing this letter of support.

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.

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.

In gratitude and peace,



John Straw
Executive Director