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TO: Planning Commission

FM: David A. Snow, Ph.D. 
Distinguished Professor Emeritus

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

I am writing to express enthusiastic support for WISEPlace and its efforts to develop permanent supportive housing for homeless women, some of Orange County's most vulnerable citizens for whom there has been a longstanding housing shortage.

You may recall that I was the lead researcher for a 2017 comprehensive study of the cost of homelessness in Orange County, conducted in cooperation with OC United Way and Jamboree Housing Corporation. Among the major findings was that homelessness in the county is caused first and foremost by the intersection of the county's high-cost housing market, particularly its rental market, and insufficient income, due in large part to the low wages and job losses, to access the housing market. When avowed causes for homelessness are assessed in terms of gender, we found in a subsequent cluster analysis (see figure below) that the cluster with the largest predicted percent of women was the lack of affordable housing/job loss cluster, which accounted for 74 percent of the women.

When it is considered that women make up slightly more than a third of the county's homeless population per the 2019 county PIT count, and that 58 percent of the women interviewed for the cost study reported experiencing physical and/or sexual abuse during childhood and/or domestic violence as a reason for their homelessness, the importance of providing safe, permanent supportive housing for homeless women becomes even more palpably compelling.

It is my understanding that the current WISEPlace initiative will provide up to 48 housing units for homeless women who can live paying no more than 30 percent of their income in rent along with support services to address their challenging life situations and conditions, thus creating a permanent stable environment where they can thrive. I am pleased to see that the groundwork for the initiative is moving forward while maintaining the historic integrity of the location.

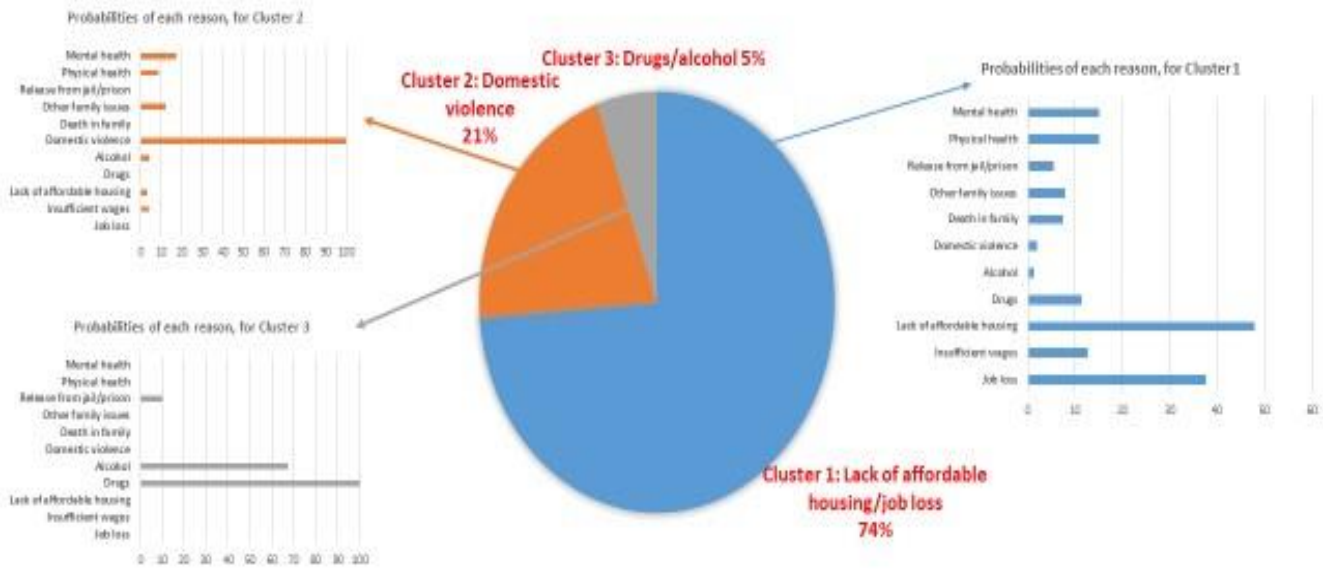
It is with these considerations in mind that I register my wholehearted support for the WISEPlace initiative.



Reasons For Homelessness: Women

(Results from latent class cluster analysis – 3 cluster solution)

PERCENT OF HOMELESS WOMEN PREDICTED TO BE IN EACH CLUSTER



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