



Planning Commission
22 Civic Center Plaza
Santa Ana, CA 92701

May 4, 2022

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

Dear Planning Commission,

On behalf of Orange County School of the Arts (OCSA), I am writing to express enthusiastic support for WISEPlace and its efforts to develop permanent supportive housing for women experiencing homelessness, some of Orange County's most vulnerable citizens for whom there has been a longstanding housing shortage.

As active members of the Santa Ana community, OCSA is pleased to support this solution to ending homelessness through this development and wrap around services provided by WISEPlace. OCSA is committed to pre-professional arts training and developing students who are passionate about the arts and academics. The past 3 years, we have been very hands on, engaged as active members of our Santa Ana community and proud WISEPlace supporters and volunteers who work directly with the population served and have seen firsthand the power of housing solutions and wrap around services onsite. Teachers and students of OCSA have worked collaboratively with WISEPlace, with WISEPlace staff doing speaking presentations educating students at OCSA about what it offers in the community, and have presented multiple community service opportunities for our students over the years.

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.

We are pleased to see the groundwork that has gone into exploring the existing WISEPlace location. Creating permanent 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 permanent stable environment where they can thrive.



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,

Michael Ciecek
Principal
Orange County School of the Arts