

May 25, 2021

www.kennedycommission.org

Mayor Sarmiento, Council Members, and Planning Commissioners
City of Santa Ana
20 Civic Center Plaza
P.O. Bo 1988, M31
Santa Ana, CA 92701

17701 Cowan Ave., Suite 200

Irvine, CA 92614

949 250 0909

RE: Item #4: Zoning Ordinance Amendment No. 2021-02 – Ali Pezeshkpour, Case Planner.

Dear Mayor Sarmiento, Council Members, and Planning Commissioners

The Kennedy Commission (the Commission) is a broad-based coalition of residents and community organizations that advocates for the production of homes affordable for families earning less than \$27,000 annually in Orange County. Formed in 2001, the Commission has been successful in partnering and working with Orange County jurisdictions to create effective housing and land-use policies that has led to the new construction of homes affordable to lower income working families.

We proudly work in partnership with residents and advocate alongside them for solutions that will address their housing needs. We stand with our partners in opposition of Zoning Ordinance Amendment No. 2021-02. While the City may be trying to address certain issues, this approach will have devastating impacts on residents that continue to be impacted by economic and housing insecurity.

The proposed plan to ban all boarding houses in the city with more than five leases, likely meaning more than five different families, would negatively affect Santa Ana residents. The current pandemic has increased the economic and housing pressures on low-income families in Santa Ana. This is especially true for the majority of Santa Ana's low-income households that are suffering with the impacts of housing cost and economic uncertainty. This is the majority of Santa Ana residents, according to the City's local data, 80 percent of Santa Ana renters are moderate, low and very low-income renters. 80% of renters in Santa Ana fall into the moderate, low and very low-income category and 84 percent of residents hold low-income occupations that pay less than \$53,500 per year¹. Santa Ana's households are predominantly families comprising 81% of households.² These households are also rent burdened and live-in overcrowded conditions³.

The City's high rents and shortage of affordable housing in the city have contributed to the high rate at which residents are forced to live in overcrowded housing conditions in order to afford staying in their home and in this city. Banning families from living together to afford rent will only contribute to the displacement of long-time residents, but also would criminalize poverty.

¹ City of Santa Ana General Plan Housing Element 2014-2021, p. 14, January 2014.

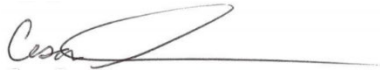
² City of Santa Ana General Plan Housing Element 2014 – 2021 page 11

³ City of Santa Ana General Plan Housing Element 2014 – 2021 page 20

As a City with 80% of renters that fall into moderate, low and very-low income, many of whom have also been heavily impacted by COVID-19, the city's priorities should be on addressing the current disparate effects of the pandemic. In addition, creating housing stability should be part of the City's short-and long-term economic recovery strategy that will directly benefit the city's residents. The creation of new land use opportunities, policies and programs that will increase new affordable housing for the lower income residents in Santa Ana should be a priority instead of policies that restrict housing options.

We urge you to take these points into consideration and vote against the proposed project as is.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cesar", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cesar Covarrubias
Executive Director

¹ City of Santa Ana General Plan Housing Element 2014-2021, p. 14, January 2014.

² City of Santa Ana General Plan Housing Element 2014 – 2021 page 11

³ City of Santa Ana General Plan Housing Element 2014 – 2021 page 20