



February 25, 2022

**SUBJECT: Support for Historic Exterior Modification Application No. 2022-02**

Dear Historic Resources Commission,

On behalf of Second Baptist Church, I am writing to express our 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.

As active members of the Santa Ana community, Second Baptist Church is pleased to support this solution to ending homelessness through this development and wrap around services provided by WISEPlace. Second Baptist Church exists to glorify God by sharing Christ, Building Believers and Caring for all, which leads us to our ultimate vision to demonstrate the love of God to every nation, generation, and situation thereby fulfilling the Great Commission. The past 10 years, we have been very hands on, engaged as active members of our 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.

We are pleased to see the groundwork that has gone into exploring the existing WISEPlace location. Maintaining the historic integrity of the location, and restoring it, while 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 permanent stable environment where they can thrive.

The 2019 Point in Time showed there were over 6,800 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 homelessness. 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.

Respectfully,

*Kelita Gardner*

Kelita Gardner  
Executive Director of Operations  
Second Baptist Church