

February 2, 2021

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



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Re: 22: SUPPORT Appeal Application No. 2020-04

Dear Mayor Sarmiento and Councilmembers:

The Kennedy 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 jurisdictions in Orange County to create effective policies that have led to the new construction of homes affordable to meet the needs of lower income working families.

Santa Ana's Housing Need

The City of Santa Ana is a renter majority city and despite the City's progress towards meeting its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation for very low and low income housing there continues to be a great need for housing that is affordable to its majority of residents. The current pandemic has increased the economic and housing pressures on low-income families in Santa Ana. As incomes are decreasing and jobs are being lost, many low income families are struggling to remain housed. This is especially true for the majority of Santa Ana's low-income households that are suffering with the impacts of housing cost, economic uncertainty and the lack of affordable housing options.

While the city has seen increased production of affordable housing it has not been enough to address the past deficits and growing needs for affordable housing based on the population's housing needs and incomes of residents in Santa Ana. The City's current Housing Element cites that about 80 percent of Santa Ana renters are moderate, low and very low-income renters¹. In addition, it also analyzes that 84 percent of residents hold low-income occupations that pay less than \$53,500 per year.² Santa Ana's households are predominantly large families comprising 81% of households.

Yet the most significant increase of housing has been in the above moderate housing category. The City's above moderate allocation is 90 units for the current RHNA planning period. To date, the City has approved 2,409 above moderate income units. As a result the City has exceeded its above moderate income RHNA allocation by 2,677 percent, per the City's RHNA Annual

¹ City of Santa Ana Housing Element, 2014

² City of Santa Ana Housing Element, 2014

Progress Report submitted to the CA Department of Housing and Community Development.³ **With above moderate average rents of \$2000 - \$4000 in these developments, none of these above market rent units are affordable to most of Santa Ana's working families.** In comparison to the incomes and demographics in Santa Ana, it is clear that the majority of these new rental housing units are not available to address the housing needs of most working families in Santa Ana. As a result of the lack of affordable housing options, the City's working families are rent burdened and live in overcrowded conditions.

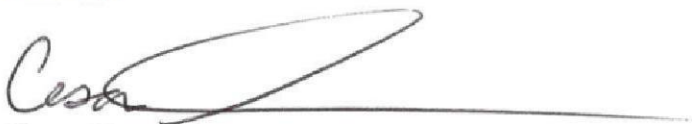
Proposed Project

The Commission supports Appeal No. 2020-04 filed by the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters (SWRCC) to overturn the Planning Commission's decision based on the failure to address affordable housing needs in Santa Ana. The City has worked to increase development opportunities for all income segments by creating enhanced zoning in areas such as the Metro East Mixed Use Overlay (Center Pointe is proposed here). Metro East Mixed Use Overlay is a part of the City's Housing Element Housing Opportunities sites, that aim to incentivize a range of housing, including affordable housing for Santa Ana's lower income residents. The Central Pointe proposed project made a commitment to provide on-site or off site affordable housing as part of the proposed development in an effort to help Santa Ana address housing needs for **ALL** its residents. Yet the most recent amended proposal did not include affordable housing units or affordable housing alternatives when it received approval by the Planning Commission. **The developer's original commitment to help create affordable housing along with the proposed above moderate housing proposal must be fulfilled to assist the City in meeting the housing needs of the majority Santa Ana residents that continue to be burdened by the lack of affordable housing alternatives. This is even more important now because despite the tremendous growth in new housing opportunities in the above moderate housing category in the City, the majority of Santa Ana residents simply cannot afford to buy or rent these units.**

The Kennedy Commission is in strong opposition to this project as proposed and we urge you to reject this project until affordable housing is included. The proposed project needs to articulate how the developer and its partners will help address the critical affordable housing needs of residents in the City of Santa Ana.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (949) 250- 0909 or cesarc@kennedycommission.org.

Sincerely,



Cesar Covarrubias
Executive Director

³ City of Santa Ana Housing Element Annual Progress Report, April 2020