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TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

September 24, 2018

Honorable President Joe Simitian and Members of the Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Clara
70 West Hedding Street, 10th Floor
San Jose, CA 95110

Dear President Simitian, Vice President Chavez, and Supervisors Cortese, Wasserman, and Yeager:

Re: Item 15 Civic Center Master Plan

On behalf of our members, we write today to **strongly support the inclusion of housing— particularly affordable housing— as a significant component of the 55- acre Civic Center Master Plan site.** Many other large specific planning areas are in process throughout the County-- including the former Vallco Mall in Cupertino, North Bayshore and East Whisman in Mountain View, and Moffett Park in Sunnyvale. In all of these locations elected leaders are proposing that housing be a prominent use and that a significant number of the new homes are affordable to lower- and moderate-income families and individuals.

Given its prime location adjacent to the Civic Center Light Rail Station, with good access to both the Downtown San Jose and North San Jose employment centers, the Civic Center Master Plan site is an ideal location for housing. And, because the site is located within the North First Street Urban Village, 100% affordable developments can proceed ahead of Urban Village Plan approval per San Jose GP 2040 policies.

We understand that the Board will be considering a proposal to convert the City Hall Annex, located on Parcel D in the Civic Center Plan area, to interim housing for the homeless. The proposed development would provide housing for those who now live on the City's streets while housing can be located or built. This plan would be entirely self-funded, though the applicant is requesting free use of the land.

We believe that interim housing as a concept should be embraced. We strongly support the Housing First concept, but we also know that it will take many years to build the number of homes needed to address the needs of the chronically homeless, homeless families and children, and people at risk of homelessness. Interim housing provides a solution—different from emergency housing—that can be more quickly brought on line and which offers shelter from the streets by providing space that the resident can count on each night, store his/her belongings, and address any issues (credit, documentation, etc.) that make it challenging to move into permanent housing. As we know, many people throughout the County have the golden ticket—a Section 8 voucher—but find that it can take months to locate acceptable housing.

County staff traveled with staff from the City of San Jose and other stakeholders three years ago to visit a project in San Diego known as San Diego Connections, which has as a key component the idea of interim housing. We thought it was a good idea then, and we still do.

Today we ask the Board of Supervisors to:

1. Make housing a priority on the Civic Center Master Plan site.
2. Ensure that a significant amount of the housing—at least 25%-- is affordable.
3. Move forward now with 100% affordable housing development on the site as allowed by San Jose's General Plan.
4. Consider ways to provide interim housing while new development is under construction or in the planning stages, including the potential reuse of the Annex location.

We have a housing crisis. We have a crisis of homelessness. The Civic Center site offers a real opportunity to respond. We urge the County to work with the City to move forward as quickly as possible.

We appreciate your consideration and all you do to respond to the housing needs of those in our community who are the most vulnerable.

Sincerely,



Leslye Corsiglia
Executive Director

