



# WILLOW GLEN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## POSITION PAPER

### THURSDAY 14 JUNE 2018

#### **City of San José Planning Division**

Robert Rivera, Project Manager

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#### **Charities Housing (Applicant)**

Sandra Heredia Project Manager,

Phone: 408-550-8308; Email: [sheredia@charitieshousing.org](mailto:sheredia@charitieshousing.org)

**Subject:** Supporting position for the proposed affordable residential housing development by Charities Housing; City of San Jose File No. SP17-037.

#### **Ref. The Page Street Housing development**

**Location:** 329-353 Page Street, in the West San Carlos Urban Village Planning Area nearby Willow Glen.

The Willow Glen Neighborhood Association (WGNA) supports the proposed Page Street development by Charities Housing, a project for affordable housing.

After two meetings and presentations in May and June of 2018, **the overwhelming majority of the WGNA Board of Directors are fully satisfied** with the answerability displayed by Sandra Heredia, Executive Director, and Kathy Robinson, Director of Housing Development, both of them representing the applicant, Charities Housing Development Corp. We urge the city to approve the Charities Housing project, file no. SP17-037.

This project **meets the urgent need for affordable housing in our area**, and it represents one of several vital developments that fit into the larger scope of fundamental needs, and what's become a **growing, diverse population** that seeks to be on a stageable journey towards personal sustainability. The Page Street development symbolizes an important *page* in a life story. It gives the needed security and boost to displaced individuals, families, children, veterans, sufferers of domestic violence, people in specific and unfortunate transitions, etc.

Page Street builds on **the initiative for stronger, more complete neighborhoods**, while meeting the **county-wide responsibility for new affordable housing** for households with incomes below 50% Area Median Income (AMI). These studio apartments will serve residents at 30%, 40% and 50% of Area Median Income (AMI), with the average affordability in the development at 40% AMI.

We understand the **"housing first"** approach that calls for the creation of **supportive housing, rapid-rehousing, and homeless prevention**. This breaks the vicious and unsustainable cycle in the cost of homelessness, such as the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on health care, the justice system, and social service.

The Page Street housing will sustain a **continuous upward journey** towards mental health, community engagement, family reunification, meaningful daily life, addiction recovery, physical health & wellness, and employment. When we give people housing first, it significantly reduces the dependence on safety net services and makes them untroubled, productive citizens. One-third of Page Street's apartments will provide permanent supportive



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housing for individuals with disabilities who have also experienced long or multiple episodes of homelessness.

The WGNA Board of Directors believes that Charities Housing is a **responsible community partner** that has a proven record in contributing to the highest standards of human dignity and participation in our community. This is their overriding, proactive commitment.

We are confident that Charities Housing will maintain the proposed 82 unit affordable housing development, located on a total .70-acre site in San Jose, just north of downtown, with the same **appropriate, good standards** of their other properties. They will be a reputable, participatory, and caring neighborhood partner.

The board is satisfied that Charities Housing intends to construct a **quality, complete, serviceable, and livable community**. A new structure of wood frame over a concrete podium will house one unrestricted staff apartment with a parking ratio of 0.76 spaces to each residential unit for a total of 62 spaces that are provided through a combination of parking lifts and typical surface parking. Studios will be complete with kitchens and **ADA accessible** bathrooms. The amenities adhere to **urban village standards** with ample locked **bicycle storage**, offices for property management, and **eco-passes to residents to encourage the use of public transportation**. Residents will be accommodated by service providers and space for front desk staff; laundry facilities; a large community room with an attached kitchen for staff and resident use; landscaped open space at the ground level that will provide a walking/recreational connection between Meridian Ave. and Willard Ave. There will also be outdoor terraces, distributed on various floors, for residents.

Again, we believe Charities Housing is as much committed to building a quality structure, as they are a caring, dedicated partner in the community, encouraging people in an earnest life journey. We support their project, and we encourage the city and community to do the same.

Best,

Elizabeth Estensen, Board President, WGNA