



Email: clerk.plumcommittee@lacity.org

August 21, 2017

Council President Herb Wesson and
Members of the City Council
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street, Room 360
Los Angeles, CA 90012
c/o City Clerk

RE: C.F. 16-0503 – Lorena Plaza project

Dear Council President Wesson and Members of the City Council:

I am writing in support of the Lorena Plaza project, and in opposition to the Planning and Land Use Management Committee report to grant the CEQA appeal filed by El Mercado. Please deny the CEQA appeal.

Every year for nearly 1400 homeless youth in Los Angeles, My Friend's Place is a safe haven from the streets where staff are committed to ending youth homelessness. Our programs focus on the specific strengths of each individual young person and encompass a continuum of services, from basic needs services such as food and clothing, to intensive case management, mental health services, housing support, employment readiness, and creative arts. Our low-barrier service model and individualized approach have contributed to our success in helping homeless youth in Los Angeles journey toward, and achieve, a permanent exit from homelessness.

With more than 5000 young adults living without housing every night, My Friend's Place, our community of support and the young people we serve are acutely aware that all of Los Angeles must be committed to solving the issue of homelessness. Our City's leaders must ensure that our commitment to end homelessness is prioritized over fear and/or private gain that further marginalizes our most vulnerable community members and to disallow attempts to derail the critical efforts to develop affordable and permanent supportive housing.

Lorena Plaza consists of 49 apartments and 10,000 s.f. of commercial space. To require a full environment impact report on a project of this size is setting a precedent for future similar projects. Lorena Plaza will help Los Angeles address the homeless crisis the City is experiencing. Half of the apartments will also be dedicated for veterans and their families; this is particularly important as veterans homelessness increased 56% in the City in the past year.

Lorena Plaza is a good project that has community support. The Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council voted 15-1 in support the project in 2015. There must be something the City Council can do to help the project become a reality. Please deny the appeal and support the Mitigated Negative Declaration recommended by Planning Department staff.

Sincerely,

Heather Carmichael, LCSW
Executive Director

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