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DIVISION OF HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

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May 3, 2021

Niki Wetzel, Deputy Director
Planning and Services Division
Planning and Building Department
City of Anaheim
200 S. Anaheim Boulevard, Suite 162
Anaheim, CA 92805

RE: City of Anaheim Approach to Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Homes – Letter of Technical Assistance

Dear Niki Wetzel:

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has reviewed the City of Anaheim's (City's) land-use regulations set out in Municipal Code sections 18.16.058 (Community Care Facilities-Unlicensed (Small) and Sober Living Homes (Small)) and 18.38.123 (Community Care Facilities-Unlicensed and Sober Living Homes) (Municipal Code) as well as the City's proposed Zoning Code Amendment 2021-00176 (DEV2021-00027) (Zoning Code Amendment) pursuant to Government Code sections 65585 and 65008, the latter of which prohibits discrimination in land use.

In support of its review, HCD held a call with City staff on March 23, 2021, to discuss HCD's concerns that the City's Municipal Code and its proposed Zoning Code Amendment potentially conflict with statutory prohibitions on discrimination in land use (Gov. Code, § 65580) by imposing separate, more onerous requirements on housing for a protected class, limiting the use and enjoyment of their homes, and jeopardizing the financial feasibility of group homes, which the City refers to as "community care facilities-unlicensed" and "sober living homes." During the call, City staff requested a letter of technical assistance to assist and inform its City Council regarding the potential impacts their decisions have surrounding these issues. HCD provides the following technical assistance pursuant to that request.

Background Information: California's Planning and Zoning Law Prohibits Discrimination.

California's Planning and Zoning Law (Gov. Code, § 65000 et al.) prohibits jurisdictions from engaging in discriminatory land use and planning activities. Specifically, Government Code section 65008, subdivision (a), deems any action taken by a city or

county to be null and void if such action denies to an individual or group of individuals the enjoyment of residence, landownership, tenancy, or any other land use in the state due to illegal discrimination. Under the law, it is illegal to discriminate based on protected class such as race, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, familial status, source of income, disability (including individuals in recovery for drug or alcohol abuse, whether or not they are actively seeking recovery assistance), veteran or military status, or genetic information.

The law further recites multiple categories of actions that are determined to be discriminatory, including:

- Enactment or administration of ordinances pursuant to any law that prohibits or discriminates against a protected class (Gov. Code, § 65008, subd. (b)(1)(B));
- Enactment or administration of ordinances pursuant to any law that prohibits or discriminates against residential developments because they are “intended for occupancy by persons and families of very low, low, or moderate income, ... or persons and families of middle income” (Gov. Code, § 65008, subds. (a)(3) and (b)(1)(C)); and
- Imposition of different requirements on a residential use by a protected class or by persons of very low, low, moderate, or middle income, other than those generally imposed upon other residential uses. (Gov. Code, § 65008, subd. (d)(2)(A).)

Proposed Zoning Code Amendment 2021-00176 (DEV2021-00027) Potentially Discriminates

Recitals in the draft Ordinance for Zoning Code Amendment 2021-00176 include statements that are potentially concerning. The recital notes “continuous resident complaints regarding quasi-residential facilities expressing concerns such as overcrowding, parking, noise, and loitering”; the need to “preserve the character of single-family residential neighborhoods”; and the desire to “provide an accommodation for disabled persons that is reasonable and actually bears some resemblance to the opportunities afforded non-disabled individuals”. The proposed solution to these recited concerns is to regulate Community Care Facilities-Unlicensed and Sober Living Homes, and to require additional distancing requirements between Community Care Facilities-Unlicensed and Sober Living Homes as well as impose additional distancing requirements from residential uses that are deemed “quasi-residential”. The City considers the following residential uses to be quasi-residential:

- Community Care Facilities, regardless of size, both licensed and unlicensed
- Sober Living Homes, regardless of size
- Senior Living Facilities, regardless of size
- Transitional Housing (Large)

- Supportive Housing (Large)
- Short-Term Rental Units (although these are not the subject of these regulations, their impacts are cited as part of the justification for these regulations).

The proposed Zoning Code Amendment is problematic for the following reasons:

- 1) These restrictions lump together various living arrangements for regulation, such as large, licensed community care facilities, with residential homes occupied by individuals or groups of individuals, based only on protected characteristic without explanation, analysis, or data to justify doing so. In fact, the only characteristic that they appear to have in common is that they are occupied by persons with disabilities, a fact that is concerning.
- 2) There are no similar restrictions on non-disabled persons. (Gov. Code, § 65008, subd. (d)(2)(A).)
- 3) Regulation of cars, traffic, noise, loitering, and overcrowding can be administered directly through the City's existing laws. This approach applies universally and does not discriminate against persons with disabilities or persons or families with very low, low, moderate, or middle household incomes.
 - a. Population density can be regulated by reference to floor space and facilities.
 - b. Noise and morality can be regulated by enforcement of police power ordinances and criminal statutes.
 - c. Traffic and parking can be regulated by limitations on the number of cars (and applied evenly to all households) and by off-street parking requirements.¹
- 4) Citywide implementation of distancing requirements threatens the capacity to facilitate a sufficient number of facilities to meet the special needs of the City's residents who require residing in Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Homes.

Existing requirements for Sober Living and Community Care Facilities severely restrict the sites in which they can be located. However, Community Care Facilities may not be located within 300 feet of another Community Care Facility or 800 feet of a Sober Living Home. Sober Living Homes may not be located within 800 feet of another Sober Living Home. (Municipal Code § 18.38.123.020.0205.) Proposed amendments would further, substantially restrict the locations for such residences. In particular, it would extend these kinds of restrictions to preclude Sober Living and Community Care Facilities near senior living facilities, transitional housing, supportive housing, and short-term rentals.

¹ As the Supreme Court explained in *City of Santa Barbara v. Adamson* (1980) 27 Cal.3d 123, 133: "In general, zoning ordinances are much less suspect when they focus on the use than when they command inquiry into who are the users."

The draft Zoning Code Amendment cites records from the California Department of Social Services dated May 28, 2020, that “show more than 100 state-licensed community care facilities for adults and the elderly are located in the City and that the City is home to 15 licensed and/or certified alcoholism and drug abuse recovery or treatment facilities providing 205 beds.” Since Anaheim’s population is roughly 350,000 persons, and the City’s housing element cites 26,240 persons with disabilities currently residing in the City (2011 ACS, S1810), existing facilities appear to fall short of meeting the need. The Zoning Code Amendment creates additional barriers for persons with disabilities to obtain housing.

The City should treat Group Homes as comparable to any other residence to satisfy the goal to accommodate and integrate persons with disabilities in all communities. The proposed Zoning Code Amendment is an excessive regulation that fails to achieve the expressed intent of “restrict[ing] residential zones to specified types of uses deemed compatible” or “preserv[ing] the character of single-family residential neighborhoods”.

- 5) Transitional and supportive housing regardless of size are by law “residential uses,” not quasi-residential, and may only be subject to the restrictions that apply to other residential dwellings of the same type in the same zone. (Gov. Code, § 65583, subd. (c)(3).) Under state law, for instance, if the transitional or supportive housing is located in a single-family home, the city cannot require a use permit for the transitional or supportive housing unless it also generally requires a use permit for all other single-family homes. Likewise, unless all single-family homes are subject to an operator’s permit, such a permit cannot be required for transitional and supportive housing.²
- 6) Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Homes with current distancing less than the proposed requirement are “grandfathered in” only under limited circumstances.
- 7) Under certain circumstances, the grandfathered distancing exemption can be revoked, thus reducing the City’s ability to provide much needed housing and undermining the purpose of grandfathering.
- 8) Persons residing in Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Homes are disabled and generally lower income. Implementing constraints to providing these types of housing opportunities could have the effect of increasing the City’s homeless population and thwarting efforts to house the homeless.

² Note that some Community Care Facilities, Sober Living Homes, and Senior Living Facilities may also qualify as Transitional or Supportive Housing. The City’s ordinance should recognize this and acknowledge that when they do so, the rules for transitional and supportive housing would control under Government Code section 65583.

- 9) The City’s obligation is to provide equal opportunities in housing to persons with disabilities as are provided to those without disabilities, not to merely provide opportunities that “bear some resemblance” to the opportunities offered to non-disabled persons. (Gov. Code, § 65008, subd. (d)(2)(A).)

Existing Municipal Code Sections 18.16.058 and 18.38.123 Potentially Discriminate

HCD is concerned about Municipal Code sections 18.16.058 and 18.38.123. Although the requirements seek to address the “adverse impacts” of various group homes arrangements, these kinds of ordinances—calling out protected classes for specific regulatory action based on concerns of this nature—can result in significant barriers to housing for persons with disabilities in a way that a more generalized regulatory response, targeting actions or impacts rather than persons, would not.³

Existing Municipal Code is problematic for the following reasons:

- 1) *Municipal Code requires a discriminatory permitting process for Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Homes. (Municipal Code section 18.16.058)*

The Municipal Code requires an onerous permit and registration process for Community Care Homes and Sober Living Homes—including registration with the Orange County Sheriff’s Department and compliance with “certification” guidelines crafted for those who are being monitored through the criminal justice system. This onerous and intrusive permit process is not applied in a non-discriminatory manner to all residential uses, and, as such, is a violation of Government Code section 65008, subdivision (d)(2). The City should treat Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Homes as comparable to any other residence to satisfy the goal to accommodate and integrate persons with disabilities in all communities. The Fair Housing Act (FHA) also prohibits the enforcement of zoning ordinances and local housing policies in a manner that denies people with disabilities access to housing on par with that of those who are not disabled.⁴ Government Code section 65008, subdivision (d)(2)(A), prohibits imposition of different requirements on a residence intended for occupancy by a protected class or by persons of very low, low, moderate, or middle income, other than those generally imposed upon other residences.

³ See, e.g., Brian J. Connolly and Dwight H. Merriam, Planning and Zoning for Group Homes: Local Government Obligations.

⁴ See, e.g., United States Department of Justice and United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Joint Statement: Local Land Use Laws and Practices and the Application of the Fair Housing Act (November 10, 2016) (“Joint Statement”), p. 4 (“A land use or zoning practice may be discriminatory on its face. For example, a law that requires persons with disabilities to request permits to live in single-family zones while not requiring persons without disabilities to request such permits violates the Fair Housing Act because it treats persons with disabilities differently based on their disability”); see also *Oconomowoc Residential Programs, Inc. v. City of Milwaukee* (7th Cir. 2002) 300 F.3d 775, 783.

- 2) *The Municipal Code applies to both existing and future Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Homes. (Municipal Code section 18.16.058.040.090)*

The Municipal Code requires facilities existing prior to the effective date of regulations to apply for the Operator's Registration or Operator's Permit within 180 days of the effective date of the regulations. It is questionable whether the retroactive application of the ordinance in this manner is constitutional. The courts have instructed, "If the law effects an unreasonable, oppressive, or unwarranted interference with an existing use, or a planned use for which a substantial investment in development costs has been made, the ordinance may be invalid as applied to that property unless compensation is paid"⁵ and "The rights of users of property as those rights existed at the time of adoption of a zoning ordinance are well recognized and have always been protected."⁶ For this reason, zoning ordinances typically exempt existing uses from new zoning regulations.

- 3) *The Municipal Code requires a 24-hour house manager. (Municipal Code section 18.38.123.020.0203)*

The Municipal Code requires Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Homes to have a house manager reside on site or any number of persons acting as a house manager who are present at the facility on a 24-hour basis or who will be available 24-hours per day, seven days per week to physically respond within 45 minutes. Residents are frequently persons of very low- or low-income and are disabled. The house manager requirement creates a financial hardship on the residents as the additional costs create an additional expense for the residents.

The requirement to have a house manager effectively mandates an "institutional" arrangement that is not "on par with" housing policies for those who are not disabled in conflict with the FHA.⁷ It is hugely intrusive in that it interferes with the residents' freedom to live with persons of their choice, and adds significant additional expense, both problematic under notions of fair housing. (Gov. Code, § 65008.)

- 4) *The Municipal Code limits occupancy to residents who are handicapped. (Municipal Code section 18.16.058.040.0401.02)*

Under the Municipal Code, an Operator's Registration and an Operator's Permit application shall be denied or revoked for multiple reasons, including accepting residents, other than a housing manager or staff, who are not handicapped as defined in the FHA and FEHA.

⁵ *Hansen Brothers Enterprises, Inc. v. Board of Supervisors* (1996) 12 Cal.4th 533, 551-552.

⁶ *Edmonds v. Los Angeles County* (1953) 40 Cal.2d 642, 651.

⁷ *Oconomowoc Residential Programs, supra*, 300 F.3d at p. 783.

In limiting residence in this way, the Municipal Code impermissibly discriminates on the bases of familial status. (See Gov. Code, § 12955, subd. (l).) The Municipal Code prohibits any residents that are not “handicapped,” which means that Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Homes designed for families are effectively prohibited in the City because these requirements would prevent families, including non-disabled spouses and small children, from residing in the residence. In the context of a Sober Living Home, this prohibition would also effectively preclude sober living arrangements for nursing mothers, mothers of infants or small children, and parents endeavoring to reunify with children after recovery. This restriction effectively mandates an “institutional” arrangement that is not “on par with” housing policies for those who are not disabled in conflict with the FHA.⁸

- 5) *Sober Living Homes require residents to be actively participating in legitimate recovery program. (Municipal Code sections 18.16.058.040.0401.04 and 18.38.123.020.0210.01)*

The Municipal Code contains a requirement for active participation of all residents in a legitimate recovery program located off-site and cites an Operator’s Registration and an Operator’s Permit application shall be denied or revoked for failing to take measures to remove any resident of a Sober Living Home who is not actively participating in a legitimate recovery program from contact with all other sober residents.

Disability rights laws apply not only to individuals with histories of drug addiction or alcoholism who are currently participating in recovery programs, but also those who have completed those programs or who are “erroneously regarded as using drugs when in fact they are not.”⁹ Additionally, state or local zoning and land use ordinances may not, consistent with the FHA, require individuals with disabilities to receive medical, support, or other services or supervision that they do not need or want as a condition for allowing a group home to operate.¹⁰

By precluding persons who are not currently participating in established recovery programs, the Municipal Code discriminates based upon disability. Further, the enforcement of such a provision may unconstitutionally intrude into the privacy interests of disabled persons if it forces residents to provide records to the City as part of its land-use enforcement efforts.¹¹

⁸ *Oconomowoc Residential Programs, supra*, 300 F.3d at p. 783.

⁹ *Hernandez v. Hughes Missile System Co.* (9th Cir. 2004) 362 F.3d 564, 568.

¹⁰ Joint Statement, *supra* note 4, p. 13.

¹¹ See, e.g., Cal. Const. art. 1, § 1.

6) *Other regulations imposing different requirements on Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Homes than are imposed on other residential uses.*

- All facilities shall have a good neighbor policy, which directs residents to be considerate of neighbors, including refraining from engaging in excessively loud, profane, or obnoxious behavior that would unduly interfere with a neighbor's use and enjoyment of their dwelling unit. (Municipal Code § 18.38.123.020.0209.03)
- All garages, driveways, and/or assigned parking spaces associated with the facility shall be available for the parking of vehicles at all times. (Municipal Code § 18.38.123.020.0204.01)
- The facility shall not be located in an Accessory Dwelling Unit unless the primary dwelling unit is used for the same purpose. Residents of all units on a parcel will be combined to determine the total number of residents. (Municipal Code § 18.38.123.0201 and 0202)
- Existing, as well as proposed separation requirements. Existing requirements state Sober Living Homes shall not be located within 800 feet of other Sober Living Homes or Alcoholism or Drug Abuse Recovery or Treatment Facilities. Proposed amendments are address earlier in this correspondence. (Municipal Code § 18.38.123.020.0205)

None of the requirements outlined above apply universally to all residential uses in the City. The requirements were crafted explicitly to target a specific population— persons with disabilities and most likely persons with low-incomes. These populations are legally protected from such actions.

7) *Other regulations imposing different requirements on Sober Living Homes than are imposed on other residential uses.*

- A Sober Living Home shall have a visitation policy that precludes any visitors who are under the influence of any drug or alcohol. (Municipal Code § 18.38.123.020.0210.02)
- A Sober Living Home shall have a controlled substance policy, which, at a minimum, states the prohibition of the use of any alcohol or any non-prescription drugs at the facility or by any resident either on- or off-site. (Municipal Code § 18.38.123.020.0210.03)

None of the requirements outlined above apply universally to all residential uses in the City. The requirements were crafted explicitly to target a specific population – persons with disabilities and most likely persons with low-incomes. These populations are legally protected from such actions.

Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Home requirements may conflict with housing element policies and programs

HCD reminds the City that its decisions and actions must align with, and not contradict, the policies, principles, and strategies included in its current 5th cycle housing element. Community Care Facilities and Sober Living Home requirements may conflict with or fail to implement multiple provisions of the City's general plan housing element, including:

- Policy Consideration 5.0: Affordable Housing Opportunities for Anaheim Residents
- Policy Consideration 7.0: Housing Availability and Affordability
- Guiding Principle B: The availability of a range of housing choices for a variety of incomes in Anaheim contributes to a balanced community and community investment.
- Guiding Principle C: Persons with special housing needs should have access to a variety of housing choices that are integrated within the community.
- Housing Production Strategy 1D: Encourage the Development of Housing for Extremely-Low-Income Households
- Housing Production Strategy 1E: Encourage the Development of Housing for Special Needs Households
- Housing Quality and Design Strategy 3B: Monitoring of Adopted Reasonable Accommodation Procedures
- Affordable Housing Opportunity Strategy 5A: Local Support of Regional Fair Housing Efforts

Additionally, HCD reminds the City that its housing element update for the 6th cycle planning period is due October 15, 2021. While multiple laws require the element to analyze and include programs to mitigate potential governmental constraints, including constraints for persons with disabilities (Gov. Code § 65583, subds. (c)(3), (c)(5), (a)(5), and (a)(7)), new requirements surrounding the City's obligation to affirmatively further fair housing (Gov. Code § 65583, subd. (c)(10)) also apply. Implementation of discriminatory regulations not only violates Housing Element Law, it fails to allow the City to meet its obligation to affirmatively further fair housing pursuant to Government Code section 8899.50.

Conclusion

HCD reminds the City that California is experiencing a severe housing crisis and the availability of housing affordable to all income levels is of vital statewide importance. (Gov. Code § 65580.)

HCD has reviewed the City's municipal code and proposed amendments under Government Code section 65585. HCD's authority pursuant to Government Code

section 65585 extends to statutory prohibitions on discrimination in land use (Gov. Code, § 65008). HCD has found that the City's municipal code potentially discriminates against persons in protected classes and that adoption of Zoning Code Amendment No. 2021-00176 (DEV2021-0027) would amplify HCD's concerns. HCD recommends the City reject the Zoning Code Amendment and amend its current municipal code to ensure it adheres to the nondiscrimination requirements in Government Code section 65008.

Thank you for reaching out to HCD for this guidance. For technical assistance regarding the City's 6th cycle housing element update, please contact Marisa Prasse at Marisa.Prasse@hcd.ca.gov. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the content of this letter, please contact Robin Huntley at Robin.Huntley@hcd.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannan West". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shannan West
Land Use & Planning Unit Chief