



CHILD CARE LAW CENTER

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VIA U.S. MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MAIL

Los Angeles City Planning Department – Valley Office
6262 Van Nuys Boulevard, Room 351
Van Nuys, CA 91401
Attention: Nelson Rodriguez
Via email: nelson.rodriquez@lacity.org

June 29, 2018

Dear Mr. Rodriguez,

Re: Conditional Use Permit Application for Child Care Facility serving up to 34 children (CASE NO. ZA-2017-3914-CUP)

Project Address: 6037 N. Fallbrook Avenue, Woodland Hills, CA 91364

The Child Care Law Center (“CCLC”) writes in support of approving OMDO Partners’ application for a Conditional Use Permit to authorize the expanded use of an existing child care facility serving a maximum of 14 children, to increase to serving 34 children.

We ask that the City of Los Angeles (“the City”) accept the recommendation of the Woodland Hills Warner Center Neighborhood Council (“WHWCNC”) Board and Planning, Land Use and Mobility Committee (“PLUM”) and approve the application for the ATID-Early Childhood Education Center (“the Center”) expeditiously. The WHWCNC PLUM voted unanimously in favor (8-0) of approving this application on March 1, 2018. The WHWCNC Board also voted unanimously in favor (16-0) of approving this application on March 14, 2018.

The Center has a long waiting list of families in need of good child care. The shortage of child care is at a crisis level and is impeding economic development for families statewide. In Los Angeles County, there is only enough licensed child care to serve 22 percent of the young children of working parents, and child care center availability has decreased by over 10 percent since 2014.¹ As more parents with young children enter the workforce, demand for child care continues to grow. The housing crisis makes it even more difficult for parents to find reliable

¹ The California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, California Child Care Portfolio (2017), available at http://www.rnetwork.org/california_child_care_portfolio. The California Child Care Portfolio data is also provided to the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children’s Health, Kidsdata.org (2017), available at <http://www.kidsdata.org>.

child care and for child care providers to open and stay in business. Approval of the Center's application would help remedy the dire need for child care for our youngest children. Los Angeles child care programs only have the capacity to serve 13% of infants and toddlers. This means that there are over 188,000 infants and toddlers who are missing out on the nurturing care they need to grow and reach their full potential.²

Additionally, we ask that the City simplify the permitting process, decrease the cost of the Conditional Use Permit, and shorten the timeline for family child care providers and centers who apply to increase their capacity. The Center started this process in September 2017 and to date has spent over \$20,000 to pay fees, meet the requirements for the Conditional Use Permit, and hire outside expertise to navigate the permitting process. This burdensome, cost-prohibitive process further exacerbates the child care crisis by imposing high costs and unreasonable demands on child care providers. Navigating through the red-tape and paying exorbitant fees dissuades them from expanding their capacity and results in costs being passed onto working parents in need of child care. The City and WHCWCNC should have someone on staff to walk child care providers through the process so there is no need for hiring outside expertise. This is a huge expense for large family child care providers who make on average \$26,000 per year and work 60-80 hours per week.³ The money the Center spent on the process could have been used to care for children, purchase supplies and healthy food, and create an enriching learning environment.

CCLC has legal expertise in family child care zoning law. We use the law to help families secure quality, affordable child care, particularly in low-income and underserved communities. We have worked successfully with many cities throughout California, including Redwood City, Pittsburg, Concord, and San Rafael, in eliminating unlawful and burdensome zoning requirements. These cities amended or eliminated their zoning requirements for family child care homes because they wanted to comply with state law and also realized the necessity of increasing child care availability in their communities.

We anticipate that the City will approve the Center's application and make a good faith effort to amend its zoning ordinance and practices as applied to child care providers in order to address the child care shortage and the needs of working families. Child care for our youngest, most vulnerable residents helps all of us immediately and well into the future. When children thrive and parents can continue working and contributing to the economy, our communities grow stronger and more prosperous.

² Los Angeles County Child Care Planning Committee, the Los Angeles County Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education & First 5 LA, *The State of Early Care and Education in Los Angeles County: Los Angeles County Child Care Planning Committee 2017 Needs Assessment*, available at, http://ceo.lacounty.gov/ccp/pdf/ECE%20Needs%20Assessment_Executive%20Brief%2003-30-2017.pdf.

³ Statewide annual median income for child care providers is \$26,050. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2015, <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes399011.htm>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurie Furstenfeld". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laurie Furstenfeld
Senior Staff Attorney
Child Care Law Center
445 Church Street, 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94114

Cc: Andrew Pennington, Planning Deputy, Office of LA City Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, CD3, andrew.pennington@lacity.org
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