



2/20/20

Dear Village Board of Trustees,

The League of Women Voters of Wilmette has had a long-held position on affordable housing stating the LWV supports programs and policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family. And, in 1980, the LWV-W adopted the position of support for increased opportunities for housing for senior citizens and low-and moderate-income families. The LWV-W also supports the planned unit development section of the Wilmette zoning code.

In our most recent study by the League of Women Voters of Cook County¹ alongside urban planning experts, the need and shortage of affordable housing continues to warrant attention, with fewer than 5% of Wilmette's housing units deemed affordable as determined by the Illinois Housing Development Authority. With a Wilmette median income of \$145k+ it is notable and concerning that 25% of our Wilmette households earn <\$75k, reinforcing the need for affordable housing to meet the needs of many of our current residents.²

As such, we are very encouraged that affordable housing was considered and proposed as part of this application. This is a standard we should expect from all new development in Wilmette and we thank you and the Village Staff.

We are pleased that the developer Optima is partnering with a strong and reputable organization, Community Partners for Affordable Housing (CPAH) and that the proposal includes a Community Land Trust - a model that ensures long-term sustainability and can be used as a tool for future affordable housing strategies in Wilmette. The Village's 2004 plan set a goal, in conformance with the AHPAA, that 15 percent of all new residential development and redevelopment would be

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¹https://www.lwvcookcounty.org/uploads/6/7/9/9/67994881/findings_and_recommendations.final.with_exhibits_ab_c_glossary_and_endnotes.pdf

²: <https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/102881/Wilmette.pdf>

affordable. To comply with this commitment and demonstrate Wilmette's intent to meet the objectives in the Affordable Housing Plan, we ask that the Village Board recognize its own commitment to affordable housing and direct Optima to increase their contribution to a level needed to reach that 15% goal, which in this case is 16 units, not the 14 units illustrated in the current proposal. Additionally, 1210 Central is a location well-suited for onsite affordable housing units given the close proximity to employment, transportation and retail. We support the plan for scattered site housing that integrates affordable housing units throughout the Village, but we also believe in inclusionary housing in new developments and would like to see some of the requested 16 affordable units onsite at 1210 Central.

We recommend the Village Board focus more about the specifics of the proposed grant to CPAH and obtain commitments with specific solutions including benchmarks, plans and timelines to deliver on the Affordable Housing plan being put forward. We ask the Village to consider appropriate mechanisms to ensure the affordable housing units created with Optima and CPAH exist in perpetuity and with guarantees, so it continues on in the Village of Wilmette.

Our LWV-Wilmette membership of 200 local community members continues to show strong support for the need of affordable housing units and plans and thanks the Village Board for its consideration of the affordable housing plan as part of this application.

Sincerely,
Nancy Hoying and Cindy Levine
Co-Presidents, LWV-Wilmette