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January 18, 2023

Representative Mohamud Noor
Chair, Human Services Finance
Minnesota House of Representatives

Dear Representative Noor,

I am writing to express our strong support for Hennepin County's inclusion of Agate Housing and Services (Formerly St. Stephen's Human Services/House of Charity) Shelter in their request.

There is an urgent need for emergency shelter with 24/7 services designed to give people the safety, stability, and services they need. Agate's emergency shelters have operated at capacity for many years, and we need shelters with more personal space, storage, and other amenities to encourage people who have had bad experiences at shelters in the past.

We have worked in cooperation with the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, and our partner agencies to provide the shelter and services needed for people living in encampments. This has been a difficult and dangerous time for people who cannot find space in shelters or are afraid to enter them.

We are excited to have the opportunity to remedy this situation in a neighborhood that is still recovering from civil unrest. The shelter and housing project will be built on three vacant lots at the corner 28th Street and 27th Avenue South, near Cub Foods and the 3rd Precinct.

\$10 million will enable Agate to build a shelter that will be ready for future challenges that put people experiencing homelessness at risk. A \$1.5 million gift allowed us to close on the purchase of the property to be used for this shelter project on January 5th. Additionally, the Minneapolis City Council recently approved an award of 9% tax credits, which represents most of the remaining funding needed for the housing portion of this supportive housing and emergency shelter project.

The shelter's design was guided by the direct input of shelter guests who worked directly with architects and staff to learn from them about their needs for emergency shelter. Our emergency shelter will provide:

- Capacity for 54 individuals with overflow.
- A shelter sleeping layout with six person rooms versus a large, congregate, traditional shelter structure.
- Safe space that does not feel like incarceration.
- A facility built with durable materials designed to stay in good condition.

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- Accessible rooms and service spaces.
- Good storage for guests' belongings.
- 24-hour staffing at a high enough level to support guests' needs for services.
- The shelter will be co-located with supportive housing on a property conveniently located near transit in South Minneapolis.

Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota have been valuable partners in our efforts to end homelessness. This is an opportunity to create an enduring resource that will meet the need for effective and safe emergency shelter. We are grateful for Hennepin County's advocacy for the resources we need to build a new shelter and the continuation of 24/7 shelter services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle Hanson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kyle Hanson,
CEO/Executive Director
Agate Housing and Services

We are grateful for your
advocacy for our neighbors
and look forward to strengthening
our communities together!