



CITY OF GARDEN GROVE

August 8, 2023

The Honorable Maria Hernandez
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
County of Orange
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

RE: Response to the 2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury Report, "Welcome to the Neighborhood" Are cities responsibly managing the integration of group homes?

Dear Judge Hernandez,

In accordance with Penal Code 933 and 933.05(a) and (b), the City of Garden Grove submits the following response to the report, findings, and recommendations of the 2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury Report entitled, "Welcome to the Neighborhood" Are cities responsibly managing the integration of group homes?"

FINDINGS

F1. Group homes too close to one another contribute to the problems associated with overconcentration.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F2. Common nuisances are more likely and disruptive when sober living homes are concentrated in a small geographic area of a neighborhood.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F3. Some cities have successfully addressed and informed community members about the challenges faced in regulating group homes.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F4. Community satisfaction was minimal when cities took the traditional public comment approach towards addressing community complaints.

Response: The City of Garden Grove disagrees partially with the above finding. The City of Garden Grove has been successful in explaining the law to individuals when inquires or

complaints are received and has addressed community complaints in a manner that is satisfactory.

F5. Cities are not utilizing police, fire, and code enforcement complaints as a means of locating and tracking Group Homes.

Response: The City of Garden Grove disagrees partially with the above finding. The City utilizes complaints received through police and code enforcement to locate and track Group Homes until the complaint is resolved.

F6. Cities are inhibited from enacting and enforcing ordinances due to fears over the potential cost of litigation.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F7. Several cities have created an ordinance that requires a ministerial permit or registration to operate a group home, however many of these cities do not enforce their ordinances.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F8. City and County officials are deterred from regulating group homes by California Housing and Community Development's housing element approval process.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F9. Cities have historically strategized and acted independently in addressing group home challenges and solutions.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F10. Well-operated group homes can integrate smoothly into neighborhoods.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F11. There is a lack of regulatory oversight for the health and safety of residents of unlicensed group homes.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. Orange County cities and the County of Orange should address citizen concerns regarding group homes by providing an opportunity for an open dialog where an interdisciplinary panel of subject matter experts can share with attendees the challenges cities are facing in the management of group homes. To be implemented by July 1, 2024. (F3, F4)

Response: The City of Garden Grove will not be implementing the recommendation because the City has been successful in explaining the challenges cities are facing with group homes to residents when complaints are received.

R2. By December 31, 2024, Orange County cities and the County of Orange should collaborate in their efforts to create ordinances for the regulation of group homes, including the development of model ordinances. (F6, F7, F9)

Response: The City of Garden Grove will not be implementing the recommendation because the City's zoning regulations are in compliance with State Law and current Housing Element mandates.

R3. Orange County cities and the County of Orange should pool resources for defense of lawsuits challenging group home ordinances. To be implemented by July 1, 2024. (F6, F8, F9)

Response: The City of Garden Grove will not be implementing the recommendation because the City's zoning regulations are in compliance with State Law and current Housing Element mandates.

R4. The County of Orange and Orange County cities should create a Task Force that includes representatives from OC cities, unincorporated areas, and other entities as appropriate and charge it with the responsibility of developing a plan to generate awareness among State legislators and regulators of the need for improved regulations and management standards to ensure health and safety for Group Home residents. To be implemented by July 1, 2024. (F2, F10, F11)

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future when the County of Orange spearheads the effort. The City is fully committed to collaborating with the County and its fellow municipalities to support such an effort.

R5. Orange County cities and the County of Orange should modify code enforcement report data collection forms to include a searchable field that enables the identification of a residence operating as a group home. To be implemented by July 1, 2024. (F5, F7, F11)

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented before July 1, 2024. The City is fully committed to implementing this recommendation, and will update the code enforcement system to create a searchable field to identify residences operating as a group home.

Respectfully Submitted,

Steven R. Jones
Mayor of Garden Grove