

April 26, 2021

Chairman David E. Price
House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Price,

We are pleased to support the City's request for Community Project Funding for Wadaag Commons. Expansion of affordable rental housing is a critical need, and this project is particularly unique and valuable.

Wadaag Commons proposes to serve a largely unmet community need for affordable housing units that can accommodate large families. This project was designed by Noor Companies, a social enterprise focused on providing opportunities for New Americans, to focus on the needs of large immigrant families. One half of 32 units will have 3 or 4 bedrooms. In addition, eight units in the building are designated for individuals or families who are experiencing homelessness. There is tremendous local demand for housing for the unsheltered homeless, but especially housing that allows families to stay together. Supportive services will be delivered by Simpson Housing, a leading local nonprofit homeless services provider.

When complete, this project will fulfill the final phase of a broader community plan for the Seward Commons redevelopment area which has been led by Seward Redesign, a neighborhood nonprofit community development corporation. The community's vision is for a healthy, diverse, and sustainable community where all people have the opportunity to thrive. By specifically addressing housing disparities identified by the community, it supports equitable development of our city's housing stock. Further, the City is partnering with Noor Companies on the project – an emerging BIPOC, woman-owned, and immigrant developer. This would be the City's first partnership with them on an affordable housing project.

Thank you for your consideration,



Community Planning and Economic Development
Executive Director



April 26, 2021

Chairman David E. Price
House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Price;

It is with great anticipation that Seward Redesign submits this letter in support of the Wadaag Commons affordable housing development in the Seward neighborhood of South Minneapolis. As the neighborhood-based Community Development Corporation (CDC) that has served this community for over 50 years, and also a partner in this development – I can share unequivocally that Wadaag Commons will fill a vital and important need for our neighborhood. Initially envisioned as a long-term strategy in support of the many immigrant families that call the Seward and adjacent Cedar Riverside communities home, 50% of the units at Wadaag Commons are three and four-bedroom units ensuring the project will serve the needs of local residents.

Additionally, Wadaag Commons is the final piece of a larger ambitious development called Seward Commons. The community re-visioning, master planning and construction of this previously blighted and polluted site has resulted in the development of over 250 housing units serving a broad range of residents including very low income senior citizens, individuals faced with severe and persistent mental illness, low and moderate income families and professionals/empty nesters. Seward Commons also includes the reclamation of two small business incubator sites that are today home to multiple small businesses and nonprofit organization, 90% of which are BIPOC, immigrant and/or woman-led.

Finally, Wadaag Commons is being co-developed by Nawal Noor and Noor Companies. Noor Companies is a social enterprise with deep expertise in the areas of construction, development and consulting. The firm is immigrant and woman-led and brings a deep connection to the very communities that Wadaag Commons intends to serve. Providing more opportunities for firms like Noor Companies is very important to Seward Redesign and will result in a more inclusive and equitable community for us all.

Thank you for your consideration of Wadaag Commons,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Romano'.

Christopher Romano

Executive Director, Seward Redesign

Seward REDESIGN – 2619 East Franklin Avenue – Minneapolis, MN 55406 – 612-338-8729

Community Developers



April 24, 2021

Chairman David E. Price
House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Price,

As President of the Seward Towers Corporation, I am writing to you in support of Wadaag Commons, a 32-unit affordable housing development that is being co-led by Seward Redesign and Noor Companies. Seward Redesign is the Community Development Corporation that has provided community and economic development leadership to the Seward Community since 1969. Noor Companies is a Somali-American, woman-owned social enterprise, real estate developer and general contractor. The Seward Towers Corporation is a partnership of Seward Neighborhood Group, Seward Redesign, and CommonBond Communities that is dedicated to maintaining quality affordable housing with strong ties to the Seward neighborhood. Today, the Seward Towers Corporation provides important support to, and oversight of the Seward Towers East and Seward Towers West. These two properties collectively provide 640 housing units to low and moderate-income individuals and families, most of whom are immigrants.

The initial vision for Wadaag Commons was to provide additional local housing that is both affordable and welcoming to the many immigrant families that live in the Seward and adjoining neighborhoods. Many of Wadaag's units have three and four bedroom, making them very attractive to the larger families that live in the Seward Towers in much smaller two bedroom units.

Wadaag Commons has been a priority for the Seward Community for many years, and most of the necessary funding has been secured. Any final investment would make this project a reality and construction could begin rapidly.

Sincerely,

Diann Anders

Diann M Anders,

President, Seward Towers Corporation