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April 21, 2023

Pasadena City Council  
City of Pasadena  
100 North Garfield Avenue  
Pasadena, California 91101

**Re: Agreement of Purchase and Sale for 450 N. Lake Ave.**

Dear Mayor Gordo and Members of the City Council,

Pasadena Heritage is pleased that the City of Pasadena has partnered with the County in selecting this site to address two critical needs in our community, health outpatient services and housing. We applaud the Mayor, City Council, Board of Supervisors and City Staff for moving quickly to obtain this site. While it is still early in the process, our experience in working with other projects in the City and with the North Lake Specific Plan in mind, we would like to offer the following recommendations as you consider next steps:

1. **Work with Experienced Local Firms** – There are architects, developers, and contractors located in Pasadena that can design and build this project. They have the right experience and a good track record in Pasadena, and understand Pasadena and our neighborhoods better than outside firms. We would like to see a local preference built into this project. We would be happy to share our recommendations on suitable architects with City Staff.
2. **Engage in the Specific Plan Process** – This project will be governed by the soon-to-be-adopted North Lake Specific Plan. It is imperative that the City give every consideration to this Plan, to both understand the vision for the area, but more importantly, to ensure that the uses envisioned for this project are allowed by the Specific Plan. Many residential care or medical uses are not permitted in this zone in draft versions of the North Lake Specific Plan. If this project is to move forward, it is important for the Specific Plan to provide some flexibility to those uses as the project is further defined.
3. **Focus on Pedestrian Experience and Tree Canopy** – The future clients and residents of this proposed building will likely be transit reliant, and it is important that they can access services in a safe and comfortable manner. North Lake Avenue can be dangerous and inhospitable to pedestrians. The draft North Lake Specific Plan stresses the importance of trees and providing shade and improving the pedestrian experience, but trees and green space have also been demonstrated to improve medical and mental health outcomes. In addition to the street trees, on-site green space and landscaping is equally important.

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4. **Utilize Parking Reductions** – Due to its focus on transit-reliant communities, this building should utilize the meaningful parking reductions available through various local ordinances and state laws. Some parking will be needed, of course, but funding should be directed primarily towards facilities, and quality of the new building. We do recommend creating an easily accessible drop-off area or auto court for dial-a-ride vehicles, ambulances, or passenger drop-off. Such an auto-court should be well-integrated with the main entry.
5. **Provide Security to the Neighborhood** – Reactivating a long-vacant plot of land has the opportunity to enhance security for surrounding residents and businesses. A mixed-use building should provide more “eyes on the street” compared to a medical-only building, but there are some design solutions that can be employed as well. Controlled access to the residential portion is important to ensure residents are safe. Providing ample street lighting around the medical building will be essential after-hours. Staffed security is also important to ensure the safety of clients and the community.
6. **Citywide Survey** – There are a few century-old homes, businesses and institutions scattered around this neighborhood. We expect some may be identified in the upcoming survey. Adjacent or nearby older buildings should be identified and evaluated as part of project planning. It is our estimation that none of the buildings on the project site, itself, are historic, but the project should still be designed to relate to and complement its surrounding context.

We applaud all involved for moving this project forward, and hope we can be engaged in the process.

Sincerely,

Susan N. Mossman  
Executive Director

Andrew Salimian  
Preservation Director

CC: Miguel Márquez, City Manager  
David Reyes, Assistant City Manager  
Bill Huang, Housing Director  
Jennifer Paige, Director of Planning & Community Development