

# STEPHEN WISE TEMPLE

May 11, 2023

City of Los Angeles Planning Commission  
200 North Spring Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: CPC-2023-135-CU-DRB-SPP-MSP**

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of Stephen Wise Temple (Wise), I am writing regarding Education First (EF)'s proposed International Language Campus at 15600 W. Mulholland Drive, currently home to the American Jewish University (AJU).

Wise has served the Los Angeles Jewish community from its location in the Mulholland corridor for almost 60 years, across the street from the AJU Bel Air campus since both institutions broke ground. Serving 1600 member families along with the greater LA Jewish community, our programs include Wise School (a 300-child K-6 independent school), Aaron Milken Center (our 350-child preschool and parenting center), Camp Wise (our 400-child summer day camp), Wise Readers to Leaders (our day camp fighting summer learning loss for hundreds of area Title I children), and year-round educational, spiritual, cultural, and social justice programming for all ages.

Wise has long supported the existence of a strong educational presence in the Mulholland Corridor, as we believe it best serves the neighboring community and creates excellent opportunities for partnership and collaboration. We have enjoyed a long and productive collaboration with AJU over the years, including the shared use of each other's spaces. Since the announcement of the proposed sale to EF, we have been extremely pleased with the approach and responsiveness of our new prospective neighbors.

We have been in productive dialogue with EF since October, to get to know one another and hopefully continue some of the long-standing arrangements between Wise and the AJU, especially regarding parking and recreation. EF has demonstrated their strong desire to collaborate with us and the other institutions on the Mulholland Corridor with respect to security and fire safety. They have also shown an interest in the potential for cooperative programming once their program is underway, helping to expose each of our respective students to other cultures in order to increase international connections and understanding. Additionally, EF has offered Wise ongoing special event parking for our High Holy Days and congregational events, in even greater capacity than AJU did. This will both be a great benefit to our congregation and will substantially reduce the overflow parking burden on the neighboring residential streets. EF has also agreed to accommodate our daily staff parking needs until we complete the construction of our new Early Childhood Center, currently underway.

Finally, EF has generously offered to build Wise a new practice field for our elementary students' field sports teams, which we cannot accommodate on our own (mostly paved) campus, adjacent to the AJU's existing basketball court. While smaller than the field we were previously able to rent from AJU, this field is better located and our use will not be subordinated to others' (EF has offered Wise exclusive access to this new field Mondays through Thursdays from 2:00 to 5:00 pm).

And EF has offered Wise all of this free of charge, which is very impactful for our nonprofit institution.

All change brings with it concerns and challenges. We understand that some of the residents in the neighborhood have raised objections to EF's plans, particularly due to understandable concerns about traffic, and we hope that these are worked out to the mutual satisfaction of all parties. We believe that EF has demonstrated its intent to be a good neighbor through its outreach and concessions to reduce the impact of its use. We further believe that, of all the potential uses of this property, an educational use such as this – with relatively low negative impact on the surrounding area – is the best alternative; so many other outcomes, including failure to maintain the property, would have a significantly greater negative impact.

Because they will continue the educational use of the property consistent with the prior AJU use and the educational nature of the Mulholland corridor institutions, and because they have demonstrated their commitment to be a good neighbor to us, to the residents of the Casiano neighborhood, and to the other institutions and residents throughout the Mulholland Corridor, Wise supports EF's proposed acquisition of, and plans for, the AJU campus.

Sincerely,



**Sharon Spira-Cushnir, Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer**

15500 Stephen S. Wise Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90077 • 310.889.2390 • [SSpira@WiseLA.org](mailto:SSpira@WiseLA.org) • [WiseLA.org](http://WiseLA.org)



Catherine Palmer <council@babnc.org>

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## FW: CPC-2023-135-CU-DRB-SPP-MSP

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**Shawna Marino** <shawna.sullivan@ef.com>

Mon, May 15, 2023 at 11:22 PM

To: Catherine Palmer <council@babnc.org>, Travis Longcore <tlongcore@babnc.org>, BABCNC Planning & Land Use Committee <PLU@babnc.org>

Cc: Sharon Spira-Cushnir <SSpira@wisela.org>

Dear, all:

Please add the attached letter from Stephen S. Wise / Wise School to your Letters of Support for the EF project.

Thank you very much.

Best,

Shawna

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**From:** Sharon Spira-Cushnir <SSpira@wisela.org>

**Sent:** Monday, May 15, 2023 10:33 PM

**To:** [cpc@lacity.org](mailto:cpc@lacity.org)

**Cc:** [Katie.Knudson@lacity.org](mailto:Katie.Knudson@lacity.org); Shawna Marino <shawna.marino@ef.com>

**Subject:** CPC-2023-135-CU-DRB-SPP-MSP

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To the Planning Commission:

Please see Letter of Support attached; don't hesitate to reach out if I can answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Sharon

**Sharon Spira-Cushnir**

Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer

Stephen Wise Temple and Schools

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[www.WiseLA.org](http://www.WiseLA.org) [www.Wise-School.org](http://www.Wise-School.org)



**EF AJU Purchase LOS 05-23.pdf**  
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