To Whom It May Concern:

The Bay Area Housing Advocacy Coalition (BayHAC) is pleased to endorse OSM Development and Trachtenberg Architects’ proposed project at 2650 Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley. After a detailed presentation from project architect David Trachtenberg, the Committee determined the project meets our high standards in addressing the regional affordability and displacement crisis.

The project would replace a Bacheesos restaurant with 45 new homes along Telegraph Avenue, a major transit corridor located near Ashby BART station and UC Berkeley campus, with access to downtown Oakland. A rapid bus line station is across the street from the project site, so the project is well-served by transit. Additionally, the project includes 50 bike parking spaces, ensuring residents have a multitude of environmentally friendly transit options. Given the development’s proximity to transit, our Committee would prefer a lower proposed parking ratio than the current .44:1, but we acknowledge this preference is aspirational given the realities of financing.

Beyond the environmental benefits that derive solely from the project’s location, the building itself has multiple environmentally friendly features. All stormwater will be captured and treated on-site, and 100% of the building will be electric. With a targeted green point rating of 112 points, we are confident the building meets Berkeley’s high environmental standards.

By providing 20% affordability, the project meets Berkeley’s high bar for BMR, and qualifies for the State Density Bonus. The project design minimizes impact on neighbors via an “L” shaped plan to mitigate shading and privacy concerns. Although BayHAC would have preferred for the project to maximize the density bonus, we applaud the design team’s consideration of neighbors.

Overall, we appreciate the project team’s commitment to alleviating the impact on the nearby community. These types of mid-sized projects are vital in combating the regional housing crisis and undertaking strategies that lessen the effect on neighbors helps move the process along. The project will provide additional community benefits through a contribution to Berkeley’s Public Art Fund valued at 1% of the total construction cost. Through both proactive design elements and amended plans (like lowering the height by 4 feet without reducing the number of units), the team demonstrated thoughtful attention for the surrounding community.

Ultimately, BayHAC is proud to endorse this project proposal, which will provide well-designed, transit-friendly homes, which help alleviate our housing shortage.

Sincerely,

Todd David, Executive Director
Bay Area Housing Advocacy Coalition