



November 18th , 2020

City of San Mateo  
330 West 10th Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403

Chair Commissioner Ellen Mallory  
Vice-Chair Commissioner Ramiro Maldonado  
Commissioner John Ebnetter  
Commissioner Mike Etheridge  
Commissioner Margaret Williams

Members of the San Mateo Planning Commission,

The Bay Area Housing Advocacy Coalition (BayHAC) is officially in support of the proposed project at 2988, 2800, 2755, and 2655 Campus Drive, San Mateo, CA 94133, Peninsula Heights. After an extensive presentation from the project sponsor, Harvest Properties Inc, BayHAC considers the proposed project a strong addition of well-designed, well-located, necessary new homes at all levels of affordability.

Across the Bay Area, long-time residents and newcomers alike face an acute housing shortage, which has driven up prices and dragged down affordability. While no single project can solve this shortage, 290 new housing units go a long way toward creating enough quality homes for San Mateo and Bay Area residents. In addition, the project proposes a more family-friendly mix of homes with 66 2-bedroom units, 122 3-bedroom units, and 102 4-bedroom units. This project will also offer 29 onsite BMRs in the 290 total.

Given that emissions from personal automobiles account for approximately 25% of carbon emissions in California, encouraging transit ridership is paramount in achieving our regional sustainability goals. This property is well-located to help achieve this goal, as there is a Caltrain shuttle that connects Downtown San Mateo and the existing offices, which gets residents out of their cars, and decreases vehicle miles traveled. In addition, the project sponsors have spoken to the Executive Director at Commute.org, who communicated that the shuttle currently operates below capacity and that by adding residential density along the route, it would better optimize the shuttle. Thus, new residential developments like Peninsula Heights would actually benefit the Caltrain shuttle system in this regard. While we would have liked to have seen more homes and less parking, more innovative alternatives to driving, and a more well- integrated streetscape and open space plan, the BayHAC recognizes the unique



challenges of developing this kind of density in a suburban context, and commends the project team for this innovative conversion of an underutilized office park to the kind of housing that California sorely needs.

Beyond design, the project implements several strong community benefits, headlined by a contribution of an estimated \$9M to help fund better community programming for the city of San Mateo. Specifically, \$1.7M will be used for schools and ~\$5M will be dedicated to parks and public arts. Additionally, future residences at the proposed project could generate upwards of \$8.5M to be spent at local businesses and will increase property revenue for San Mateo as well as provide significant open space and trails for the community.

The project team engaged in a good faith community outreach program to local stakeholders as the property owners had mailed invitations to all property owners and occupants within a 1,000 ft radius of the project to an initial community outreach meeting, where guests reviewed and provided feedback on design concerns. Input from the community, notably - the president of the Verona Heights Homeowner Association resulted in traffic calming measures in the drive aisles for residents. Besides the community meeting, the project team has been in contact with the Superintendents of the local K-8 and 9-12 schools and the Chancellor of the College of San Mateo (the project is close in proximity to the school) regarding funding for local schools and housing opportunities for the college's faculty and staff, respectively. Lastly, the project team during their community outreach has been in contact with various housing advocacy groups such as Greenbelt Alliance, Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County, SAMCEDA, and Silicon Valley Leadership Group, which BayHAC applauds. Ultimately, BayHAC's staff is proud to support this project proposal because it creates needed homes for Bay Area residents, contributes to our shared Green goals, and contributes a significant number of community benefits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Todd David".

Todd David, Executive Director Bay Area Housing Advocacy Coalition (BayHAC)