

Potrero Hill is the best site for Kaiser

Randy Wittorp

Published 7:27 pm, Thursday, February 7, 2013

Kaiser Permanente's mission is to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve.

As part of our commitment to San Francisco, we are working with the city to create a more decentralized approach to providing health care services. Today, the vast majority of our doctors and nurses are at our campus on Divisadero Street and Geary Boulevard. This new initiative will better serve residents throughout the city by making it easier for them to get their care closer to where they live and work.

To carry this out, we have explored several locations on the city's east side for a medical office to provide outpatient health care. We analyzed sites in Mission Bay, Bayview and other areas for more than three years before selecting the best possible location for our membership - a site at 16th and Mississippi streets in the lower Potrero Hill neighborhood.

The location is ideally situated for tens of thousands of our San Francisco members, which include downtown and SoMa professionals as well as residents of Potrero Hill, Mission, Bernal Heights, Bayview-Hunters Point and several other nearby neighborhoods.

Kaiser Permanente members in these areas will have improved access to their medical care, including pediatrics, internal medicine and women's health physicians, as well as laboratory, radiology, optical and pharmacy services. We also have a long history of community-benefit work in these areas, and our partnerships with community organizations will be enhanced with a stronger local presence.

There are several other compelling arguments why the 16th Street location is optimal for a medical office building. In the coming years, 16th Street is designated to be a major transit route for the city, with residential and commercial developments already in progress along the corridor. San Francisco officials and planners envision a greener, more transit-friendly city for future residents, and 16th Street is part of that forward-looking plan, with mid-block pedestrian promenades, shared shuttle services and accessible bicycle lanes.

Kaiser Permanente's plan has all of these elements, as well as a street-facing pharmacy, cafe and health education store, all open to the public. The building itself will be a LEED-gold certified "green" construction project, one of the highest sustainable designations for buildings.

We believe the site we have chosen is the best location for our medical office building because it will help us best serve the maximum number of members from many different areas of San Francisco.

Kaiser Permanente has been transparent throughout this process and has been actively engaged with the Potrero Hill community and the city. We have been responsive to suggestions about our plan, including building design and size. We have heard from some people in the community who have concerns about the plan. We have been engaged in conversations with them, and we are committed to continuing those discussions to try to reach a solution that meets the needs of our members and the community.

In the coming weeks, we will present updates on the project. We look forward to sharing these updates with the neighborhood. Overall we are very encouraged by the positive feedback we have received.

Randy Wittorp is the public affairs director for Kaiser Permanente in San Francisco, which has more than 190,000 members citywide. Anyone who is interested in the project can visit kaiserpermanentepotrero.com to sign up for updates.

Ads by Yahoo!

© 2013 Hearst Communications Inc.

HEARST newspapers