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Potrero Hill tries to kill Kaiser's San Francisco office plan

Premium content from **San Francisco Business Times** by **Chris Rauber, Reporter**

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See correction at end of article.

Hundreds of unhappy residents of San Francisco's Potrero Hill neighborhood have signed petitions asking giant **Kaiser Permanente** not to build a nearly 190,000-square-foot medical office building there.

The resistance is part of a broader revolt against what some residents see as an onslaught of commercial development in the area southwest of the highly developed Mission Bay complex, where **UCSF Medical Center** is building a \$1.5 billion campus and a host of biotech and biomedical companies have put down roots.

"Potrero Hill does not want Mission Bay in its neighborhood," said [Rod Minott](#), a resident who is one of the leaders of the Save the Hill coalition opposing the Kaiser project. "The 280 freeway has always acted as a barrier to Mission Bay and this is the first real breach."

The Kaiser MOB — the Oakland-based health care giant's term for its medical office buildings with clinics and physicians' offices — is part of a planned 700,000-square-foot mixed-use development including a residential project being developed by Walden Development. Kaiser is in contract to acquire land along 16th and 17th streets, just southwest of Mission Bay.

The site is currently occupied by the Cor-O-Van Moving and Storage Co. and a warehouse leased to UCSF for storage, according to the San Francisco Planning Department. Kaiser's 189,600-square-foot, five-story building would include 150,600 square feet of medical office space and 39,000

square feet devoted to retail, plus a three-level underground garage with 579 parking spaces.

The proposed housing project would include 189 units and a single-level underground garage with 143 spaces.

Minott, a documentary filmmaker and journalist, and Keba Askenasy, a neighborhood resident and architect, say that more than 300 of their neighbors have signed print and online petitions opposing Kaiser's current plans.

A petition with 220 signatures was sent last week to: Kaiser Permanente chairman and CEO [George Halvorson](#); president, COO and incoming chief executive [Bernard Tyson](#); Permanente Medical Group CEO [Robert Pearl](#), M.D.; Kaiser board members and Northern California regional president [Gregory Adams](#), according to Minott.

"The project as proposed will drastically and negatively affect our quality of life," the Oct. 20 letter stated, calling the MOB "ill-suited for the proposed location."

Minott's group says the entire proposed development is out of scale for the setting, and better suited for a site such as Mission Bay or in the Bayview district.

Kaiser has nearly 190,000 enrollees in San Francisco and is decentralizing facilities within city limits to meet the needs of its members, officials said.

[Randy Wittrop](#), Kaiser's public affairs director in San Francisco, said the Potrero Hill building will offer convenient care to local enrollees. The city's health care master plan specifically calls for decentralized care, he said.

Kaiser is working on a revised plan, to be ready by early next year, that incorporates community input.

Correction

An earlier version of this story incorrectly referred to the neighborhood in question as the nearby Dogpatch area, but the correct name is Potrero Hill.

Chris Rauber's beats include health care, insurance and the wine industry for the San Francisco Business Times.