

AUGUST 29, 2016 – Suit filed in SF for Controversial Potrero Hill Development

Two community groups, Save The Hill and Grow Potrero Responsibly, are challenging the environmental review conducted for one of the largest construction projects ever to be proposed in Potrero Hill. The project proposed by Potrero Partners, LLC of San Mateo and Prado Group Inc. of San Francisco is located at a “gateway” location for the neighborhood and includes the construction of 395, primarily market rate, residential units on approximately 3.5 acres at 901 16th and 1200 17th Streets.

The neighborhood groups contend:

The City improperly relied on an outdated 2008 environmental study for the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan that substantially underestimated the level of residential growth the City has experienced since the recession. “The Plan projected approximately 3,100 new residential units on Potrero Hill and Showplace Square by 2025, yet we already are on track to build 4,500 units. Meanwhile, the City has failed in its promise to provide us with community benefits we need to support this kind of growth” stated Alison Heath of Grow Potrero Responsibly. The legal action seeks to overturn approvals for the Potrero Hill Project and cease reliance on the outdated environmental study.

The project will result in unaddressed impacts to traffic and circulation, iconic public views of the SF skyline, shadowing of open space, transportation and transit, and cumulative impacts. The environmental review for the project admits the development will cause significant impacts to traffic and circulation and loss of Production, Distribution and Repair (PDR) uses but brushed aside all efforts that proposed the adoption of feasible alternatives and mitigation measures that would reduce these impacts.

Rodney Minott, co-founder of Save The Hill, stated: “The City of San Francisco has broken its pledge to protect the Potrero Hill neighborhood from the impacts of overdevelopment and failed to deliver badly needed public infrastructure to accommodate existing needs, let alone supersized growth.”

The massive development would permanently displace the existing 109,500 square feet of industrial PDR space that has traditionally provided good-paying blue-collar jobs. An economically feasible “adaptive reuse” alternative proposed by Save The Hill would repurpose the existing industrial buildings, creating a more balanced mix of commercial and residential uses while retaining much of the PDR space. Attorney, Rachel Mansfield-Howlett stated, “My clients are not against the development of Potrero Hill but the community should not have to shoulder the impacts of a for-profit development when there are feasible alternatives that reduce the project’s impacts and satisfy most of the project’s objectives.”

Heath stated, “The Eastern Neighborhoods Plan has failed us; the plan was supposed to encourage new affordable housing for low to moderate income people while preserving PDR uses that support a diverse economy and provide good jobs for residents. It looks like we have yet another market rate residential development that permanently displaces PDR uses.”