



DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

100 LARKIN STREET · SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102

May 5, 1975

PAMPHLET FILE

NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES PAPER

POTRERO BRANCH
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A BACKGROUND REPORT FOR
THE RESIDENTIAL ZONING STUDY
PREPARED BY THE SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT
OF CITY PLANNING, MAY 1975

POTRERO PLANNING DISTRICT #9

The following is a summary of issues in the Potrero Planning District that neighborhood organizations and interested citizens have indicated to the Department of City Planning should be addressed in the Residential Zoning Study.

These views were obtained during the last seven months from neighborhood meetings held with the Department to discuss residential zoning, questionnaires completed by neighborhood residents, and other written comments from residents to the Department. Additionally, planners in the Department who have served as liaisons to neighborhoods have helped interpret concerns expressed by neighborhood residents.

This summary is believed to be a reasonably complete representation of neighborhood-wide issues. However, the Department expects that there are residents who hold different opinions and perceive different issues than the various groups and individuals who have thus far been involved. Additionally, there may be issues of a more specific nature related to individual properties that have not been addressed because of the neighborhood-wide orientation of this paper. Comments on, and additions to, the issues included in this paper will be welcome throughout the remainder of the study.

The Potrero Hill area is physically isolated from other residential areas of the City. The area is bounded on the north by the South-of-Market industrial area, the south by the Bayshore industrial area, the west by the James Lick Freeway. Its eastern border is the industrial area and docks along the bay.

It should be noted that while these planning district boundaries are reflected in the census tracts, many residents

claim Potrero Avenue as the traditional western extreme of Potrero. Furthermore the "core" residential area is restricted by the 280 freeway on the east and 17th street on the north. The only residential area outside this core is the small community known as Dog Patch. It is constituted by several houses in an area bounded by Mariposa, Iowa, 25th street, and Illinois, but primarily between 20th street and 23rd street on Tennessee.

Neighborhood organizations from the Potrero District who have expressed interest in the Residential Zoning Study are:

Potrero Boosters & Merchants Association
Potrero Beautification Group, Inc.
Potrero Hill Community Government
Potrero Hill League of Active Neighbors
Potrero Hill Neighborhood House
Potrero Hill Residents & Home Owners Council

I. Population

The 1970 population statistics show that Potrero Hill had a greater proportion of single, middle-aged residents without children than the City as a whole. Residents have noted a population change in this direction over the last five years, and that there are now fewer couples with children and more couples without children, more singles and fewer elderly.

The various neighborhood groups on the Hill are widely split with respect to opinions concerning the future of Potrero Hill. While there is agreement on some basic issues, these groups express opposite opinions regarding the future population makeup and types of new development.

	Potrero		Total City	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population				
-1960	11,810	100.0	740,316	100.0
-1970	9,957	100.0	715,674	100.0
Percent Change (1960-1970)		-15.7%		-3.3%
Population Age 0-18	1,428	14.3	170,215	23.8
Population Age 65+	801	8.0	99,738	13.9
Total Number of				
Households	9,880	100.0	295,174	100.0
Number of Families	2,390	24.2	164,436	55.7
Families with				
children under 18	1,288	13.0	68,670	23.6

II. Neighborhood Character and Quality

Most residents of Potrero like the area and prefer to live there. They believe that it is a unique area of the City. Many describe it as a village within a city and believe it to have the best weather of any district of the city.

Residents talk of "mix" in describing the virtues of Potrero. They expect the new zoning laws to maintain and promote the diversity of architecture, uses, ethnic and racial groups, economic classes, ages and family types. The low and medium density nature of development and the scale and character of existing development are considered major attributes of Potrero Hill as are its views.

There is wide-spread dislike of the housing project. Many do not like any public housing or the people in it, others feel the project in Potrero is dehumanizing and offensive. Many "cribe racial tension, crime, and a lack of interest by potential purchasers and developers to the presence of the project. The flight of middle-class families, not yet complete in Potrero, disturbs many and is a trend they feel must be arrested.

III. Housing

An examination of existing housing statistics reveals clearly the character of Potrero Hill. Sixty-three percent of the living units are in single and two-unit buildings and 88% of residentially used land is used for single and two-family dwellings.

Residents of the Hill seem to agree that much of the housing stock is sound and should be rehabilitated rather than replaced; and, if replacement is to occur, it should be of low density.

There is much concern over the condition of housing on Potrero Hill and in Dogpatch. Some fear that a situation in which housing would continue to deteriorate could result in substantial redevelopment not in character with the Hill. In the case of the Dogpatch area, deteriorating housing could foresee the end of residential use in that area since little private investment has occurred recently in that community.

Residents of both Potrero Hill and Dogpatch claim that they have experienced difficulty in obtaining bank loans for rehabilitation of housing and believe there may be a formal policy against loans in this area. If this is the case, maintenance of the existing housing stock may be difficult.

Approximately 650 units of public housing are on the south and east sides of Potrero Hill. This housing exists as an enclave separate from the rest of the Hill and is the most distant area from available commercial and community services. Some of these units are in deteriorating condition.

The presence of a very large water tank at the south base of Potrero Hill makes many of the public housing units undesirable. In some instances the tank blocks all views from these units.

Existing Housing

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Total Number of Housing Units	3,839	100.0	110.84
In Structures with:			
1 unit	1,465	38.16	68.30
2 unit	969	25.24	29.23
3-4 units	468	12.19	9.49
5-49 units	929	24.20	3.82
50+ units	8	.21	0

Potrero Zoning Districts by Land Acreage

Total Acres 1,132.01

Net Acres
(excluding streets) 803.85

<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Net Acres</u>	<u>Acres Vacant</u>
R-1-0	0	0
R-1	0	0
R-2	0	0
R-3	175.83	14.73
R-3.5	0	0
R-4	0	0
R-5	0	0
R-C	0	0
C	3.28	.08
M	613.88	17.06
P	13.95	-

III. New Construction

Potrero Hill neighborhood organizations appear to agree that if new development is to occur on the Hill it should reflect existing scale and character. There is, however, considerable disagreement over whether new development should occur, and which population groups it should be for. Some claim that Potrero Hill is losing its middle class and that this spells disaster for the area; therefore, new development should strive to bring back families and the well-to-do. Others claim that

new development for such groups would raise property values and rents, forcing lower income residents out of the area; and, therefore, new development should provide an appropriate amount of lower rent housing.

Neighborhood organizations have pointed out that the R-3 zoning classification covering the Hill allows a much higher intensity development than that which currently predominates. In general, they have expressed the desire that new zoning should be more reflective of existing development.

IV. Non-Residential Uses

Many residents would like zoning to encourage community service facilities of all kinds. Those would range from child care centers to laundromats. The effort to obtain these must be broad, but zoning should in no way discourage the creation of facilities which could be of help to areas like the housing project.

Potrero people seem to enjoy the mixing of residences and small shops. They like the family businesses and the present dimensions of the commercial districts. It is therefore likely they would not be opposed to some more mixed use.

Mom and Pop stores, groceries and others which provide any immediate servicing, are well-liked and well-used on Potrero. Their retention is the issue on which there is the most unanimous feeling. They are a formal community service facility and many people believe there should be more.

The relationship of Potrero to the industrial zone is very important. Many people express a feeling that the residential area should be protected from industrial noise, smell and parking. Many people are offended by the sight of rundown factories, and housing project people are abused by the view of the Freeway and the huge tanks. It should be clear that - most people are not offended by the industrial area per se. They in fact like the mix of activity. But some concern for urban beauty and incompatible activities in industrial areas ought to be reflected in zoning.

There does not seem to be opposition to housing in industrial areas if enough precautions can be taken. Many people from all parts of Potrero see Dogpatch as a viable, interesting community whose deterioration should be arrested and whose existence within the industrial area should be protected.

Several people have suggested that the many vacant warehouses and structures in the industrial area be turned into housing, community facilities, small studios, or shops.

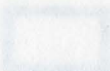
Many people express concern about travel to and within Potrero. It is necessary to go elsewhere for many things. Bus service, attractive exits to the area, and access to them should be provided. There should be access to the shoreline. Noise of the vehicles on the hills is a problem for some.

Parking is more a potential than a current problem. Most people say they have enough space for themselves but outsiders occasionally make the situation difficult. Virtually all would be against a community parking facility or special assessment district.

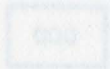
V. Zoning Procedures

Some concern is expressed for the present zoning process. More community involvement and community control has been demanded by some. Suggestions have included: a community zoning board, that each building be voted upon by the neighbors, that each lot be handled as a variance, or that the Commission hold a hearing in an area on each item from that area. At the very least there must be more contact between DCP and the community on zoning matters.

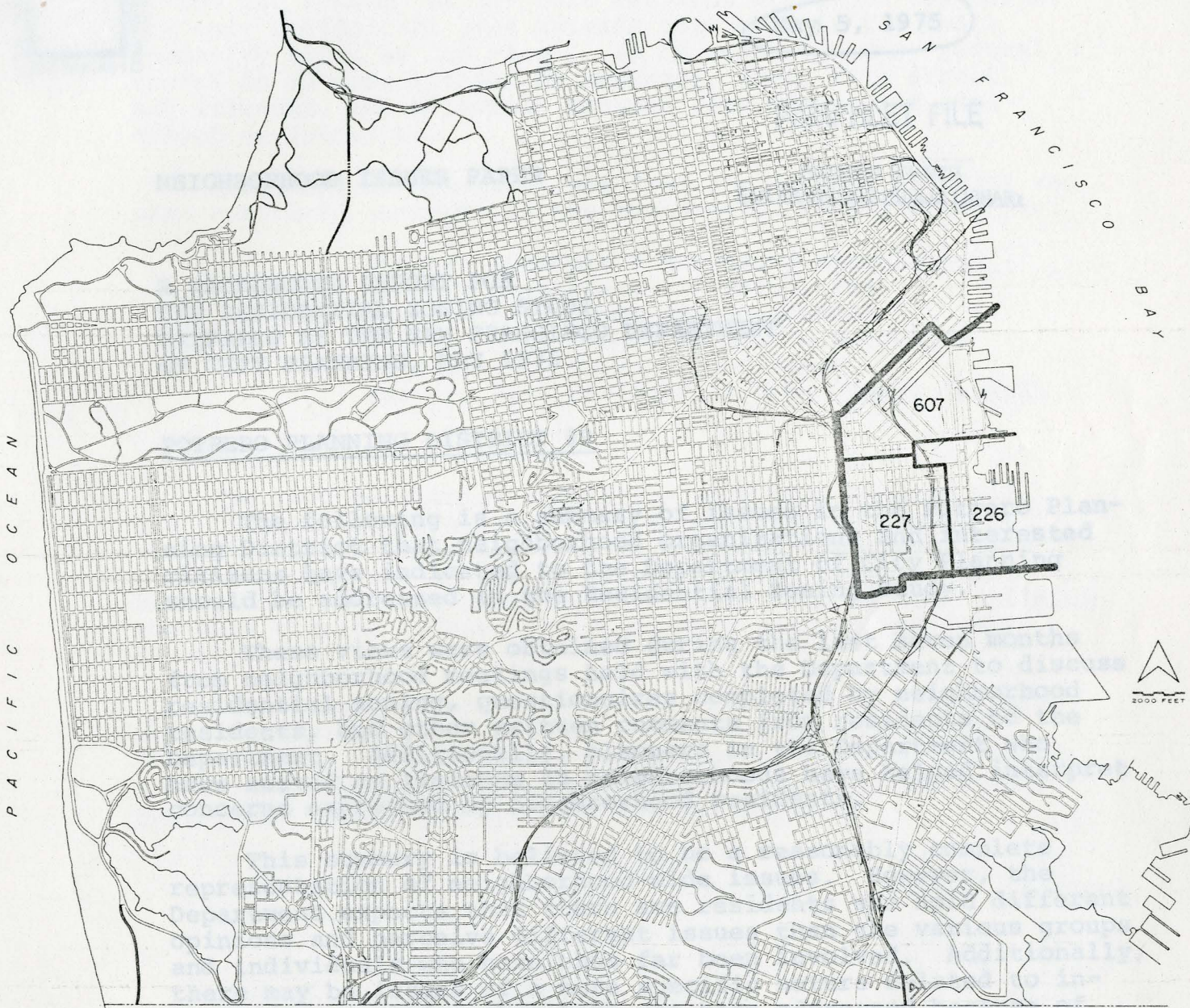
COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA 9
POTRERO



COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA



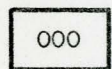
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COMMUNITY PLANNING AREA 9 POTRERO



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