

POINT SAN QUENTIN VILLAGE LAND USE POLICY REPORT

August 1985

POINT SAN QUENTIN VILLAGE LAND USE POLICY REPORT

Approved by the Planning Commission:

July 8, 1985

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors:

August 6, 1985

Rezoning Implementing the Land Use  
Recommendations  
(Ordinance No. 2882)

August 6, 1985

Marin County Planning Department  
Civic Center, Room 308  
San Rafael, California 94903



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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San Quentin Village Association



## Introduction

Land use in the community of Point San Quentin is currently governed by a mixture of standard zoning districts including various R-1 and R-3 districts and A-2 and BFC-RSP districts. With the exception of the BFC-RSP district, the current districts neither require Design Review nor provide specific design standards for new construction. The absence of formally adopted development guidelines for Point San Quentin has been a community concern for a number of years. Additional review procedures are desired to assure that the community identity and character are preserved.

The community, represented by the San Quentin Village Association, expressed that concern to the Board of Supervisors and requested a planning and zoning study be conducted which would provide review procedures and design guidelines for new construction in Point San Quentin. In response, the Board of Supervisors authorized the study to proceed and allocated appropriate funding in the 1984-85 budget.

The following study outlines a description and history of the community of Point San Quentin and presents a detailed review of the current land use and zoning regulations. Based on this review and on concerns expressed by the community, the key planning issues are identified and responded to through a proposed rezoning plan accompanied by the implementation of recommended specific Guidelines for Design Review.

## Description of Community

Point San Quentin, Marin's smallest peninsula, forms a dividing ridge 1-1/2 miles long and 3/4 mile wide between San Rafael Cove to the north and Corte Madera Cove to the south. The community of Point San Quentin is nestled on the southern shore of this peninsula, east of San Quentin State Penitentiary and over the ridge from State Highway 17 and San Rafael corporate limits to the north. Lands owned by the State of California, in conjunction with the Penitentiary, surround all areas of the community not fronting on the San Francisco Bay.

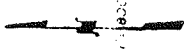
Despite the obvious presence of San Quentin Penitentiary, the village maintains its own character of a tiny, isolated bayside community. The area is characterized by moderately steep, grassy slopes with stands of eucalyptus trees near the shoreline. With the exception of a new townhouse complex on the waterfront, most of the houses were built prior to the turn of the century. The village's only business, a grocery store called the "Hitching Post" was closed down in the early 1960's. Main Street, formerly called San Quentin Street, serves as the main access route to both the village and the main gate of the State Penitentiary. McKenzie street, Penny Terrace and Heron Court branch off Main Street; San Quentin Terrace, a paper street, is located within the state-owned lands bordering the north perimeter of the community.

For purposes of this policy report, the study area for San Quentin Village shall include all areas east and north of the State Penitentiary grounds as indicated on Assessor's Map Book 18, pages 15, 16 and 21. The study area is shown in Figures 1a - 1c on the following pages.

POR RANCHO PUNTA DE QUENTIN  
POR RANCHO SAN PEDRO, SANTA MARGARITA, Y LAS GALLINAS

18-15

Tax Rate Area  
89-006  
89-027  
89-057



SEE FIGURES  
1b & 1c

FRANCISCO

Bk 9

CORPORATE

SAN RAFAEL

(152)

(17)

CORTE

(Bk 23)

MADEIRA

LIMITS

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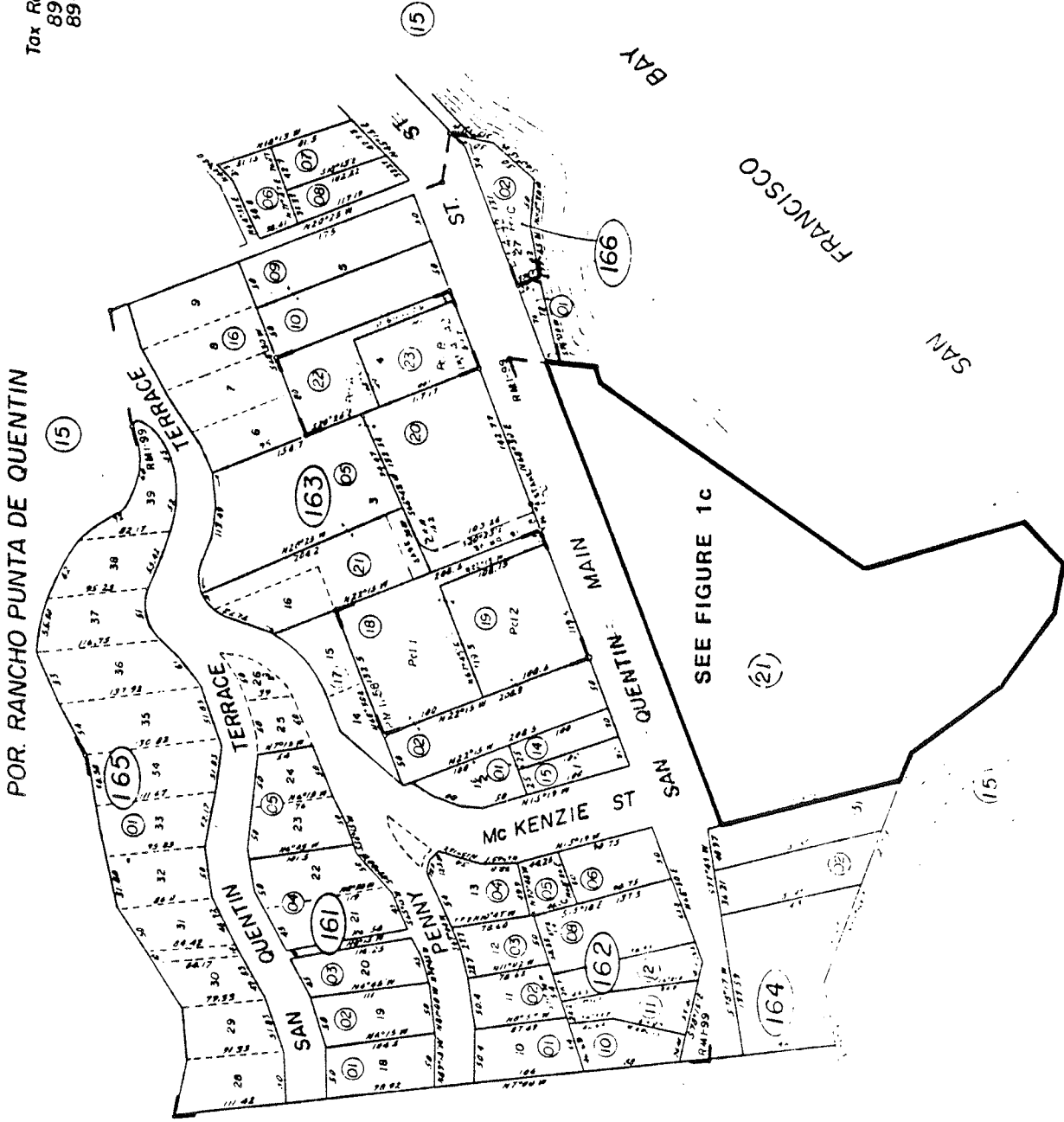
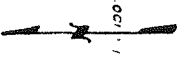
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Tax Rate Area  
89-044  
89-057

18-16



Assessor's Map Bk. 18 - Pg. 16  
County of Marin

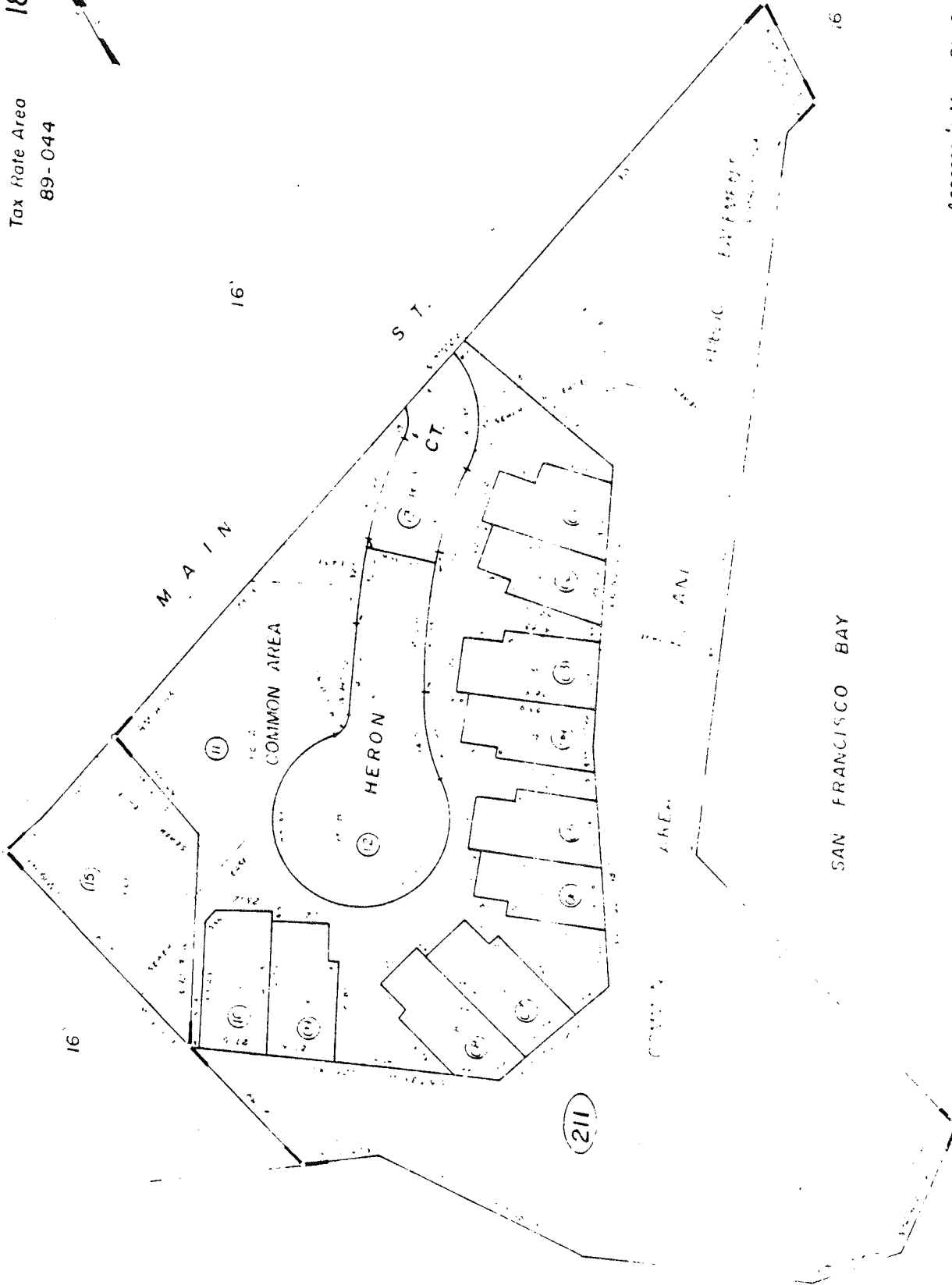
Point San Quentin Tract R.M. Bk. 1 Pg. 99

# POINT SAN QUENTIN STUDY AREA

## Figure 1b

Tax Rate Area  
89-044

18-21



Assessor's Map Bk 18 - Pg. 21  
City and County of San Francisco

# POINT SAN QUENTIN STUDY AREA Figure 1c

## History of Community Development

Point San Quentin was named after Quintin, a Miwok Indian warrior and sub-chief to Chief Marin. In 1824, Mexican troops pursued a band of Indians led by Quintin to the small peninsula where they were defeated in what was to be their final stand against the Mexicans. The Mexicans later canonized Quintin, changed the spelling of his name, and the peninsula became known as Punta de (San) Quentin. The Mexican land grant of Punta de Quentin was eventually sold to Benjamin Buckelew who in 1852 sold 20 acres to the State for a penal colony. The first permanent State prison was erected in 1854; prior to that, prisoners were held in a prison ship moored off the Point. In the early 1860's, Mrs. Martha Buckelew constructed a deep-water wharf at Agnes Island connected by a causeway to the Mainland; the causeway still stands today. Her wharf became the chief ferry landing for San Francisco to San Rafael travelers. Commuting to Marin County became even more popular with the construction in 1870 of the County's first railroad which ran between the San Quentin ferry landing and San Rafael.

The town sprang up after the opening of the Penitentiary with most of the community composed of families of people who worked in the prison. The first surveyed map of Point San Quentin Tract was recorded in 1897 and reflected many homesites of varying sizes that were already existing. Other lots resulting from this process were created quite small, possibly in anticipation of higher density levels. Lots, therefore, varied in size from approximately 1,500 to 18,800 square feet. Since that time, many of the smaller lots have merged into larger building sites and/or have one Assessor's Parcel number for more than one lot.

To date, 27 lots within the study area remain undeveloped. One of these undeveloped lots, identified as Assessor's Parcel #18-154-18 (see Figure 1a), comprises well over half of the study area (over 26 acres). Of the 27 undeveloped lots, 23 are State-owned and comprise the northern portion of the study area. Little development has occurred since the turn of the century until recently. In 1981 a 2.24 acre waterfront parcel was subdivided and ten new condominium units were constructed. The project included a permanent open space easement for a bayside area, commonly referred to as "the point."

## Current Zoning

Most of San Quentin Village is conventionally zoned which, by definition, incorporates specific development standards for lot size, height, yard requirements and floor area ratios. Of the village's conventionally-zoned areas, most are zoned for single-family residential uses (i.e., R-1; R-1:B-2; and R-1:B-3). One lot on the north side of Main Street and near the village center is zoned R-3:G-2-H which permits multiple residential development at a density of one (1) unit for 2,000 square feet of site area. The State-owned lands north of San Quentin Terrace are zoned A-2:B-4 which allows limited agricultural uses and single-family residential development. Table 1 lists the specific development standards for the existing conventionally-zoned districts within the study area.

Lots south of Main Street are zoned as Bayfront Conservation, Single-Family Residential, Planned districts (i.e., BFC-RSP 5.8; and BFC-RSP 6.0). The Bayfront Conservation district (BFC) includes lands generally located between the bayside of a roadway and all areas subject to tidal action. Prior to processing any land use proposals for undeveloped land within a BFC district, an environmental assessment is required to provide the highest degree of environmental protection while permitting reasonable development. Development within a BFC district may also be subject to securing a permit from the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).

Table I

EXISTING CONVENTIONALLY-ZONED DISTRICTS WITHIN  
THE SAN QUENTIN STUDY AREA

| Zoned District                    | Min. Lot Size  | Average Width | Front Setback | Side Setback | Rear Setback                     | Height                        | Floor Area Ratio (FAR) |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Single Family Residential:</b> |                |               |               |              |                                  |                               |                        |
| R-1                               | 7,500 Sq. Ft.  | 60 Ft.        | 25 Ft.        | 5 Ft.        | 20% Lot Depth<br>25 Ft. Maximum  | 2½ Stories/<br>35 Ft. Maximum | 30%                    |
| R-1:B-2                           | 10,000 Sq. Ft. | 75 Ft.        | 25 Ft.        | 10 Ft.       | See Above                        | See Above                     | See Above              |
| R-1:B-3                           | 20,000 Sq. Ft. | 100 Ft.       | 30 Ft.        | 15 Ft.       | See Above                        | See Above                     | See Above              |
| <b>Multiple Residential:</b>      |                |               |               |              |                                  |                               |                        |
| R-3:G-2-H                         | 7,500 Ft.      | 60 Ft.        | 25 Ft.        | 10 Ft.       | 10 Ft./15 Ft.†                   | 3 Stories/<br>45 Ft. Maximum  | 40%                    |
| <b>Limited Agricultural:</b>      |                |               |               |              |                                  |                               |                        |
| A-2:B-4                           | 1 Acre         | 150 Ft.       | 30 Ft.        | 20 Ft.       | 20% Lot Depth/<br>25 Ft. Maximum | 3 Stories/<br>35 Ft. Maximum  | 30%                    |

† 10-foot rear setback for dwelling groups; 15-foot rear setback for all other uses.

Planned district zoning differs from conventional zoning in that it requires "Master Plan/Development Plan" and "Design Review" approvals which allow discretionary public review during the site plan and design stage. Conditions may be imposed for approval of the development which would benefit the general welfare of the residents and their environment or ameliorate any impacts that could occur as a result of the development. In planned districts, specific development standards are replaced with performance standards for site preparation, design and use of the project. For example, in a RSP district, performance standards include requirements for grading; erosion control; tree, rare plant community and wild life habitat preservation; landscaping; building height; and open space dedication, maintenance and uses. The ordinance adopting a residential planned district specifies maximum density allowed for that district. Thus, a RSP 5.8 district allows 5.8 dwelling units per acre and a RSP 6.0 district allows 6 dwelling units per acre.

### **Development Concerns in Point San Quentin Village**

Point San Quentin Village community groups and individuals have recently expressed concern that the existing land use controls may not be adequate to ensure that new development is harmonious with the existing community. Major concerns are as follows:

1. The existing zoning does not provide for design review in most of the village study area. In addition, conventional zoning does not provide for discretionary public review, thus, specific community concerns may not be addressed during the review process.
2. The existing character of the village would change dramatically if the large block of State-owned lands within the study area were developed. Presently, these parcels are undeveloped and used primarily for grazing of horses and burros. Development of these lots would increase the density of Point San Quentin Village and areas to the north by about 25%. Although the actual impact of this increase in density could not be determined without detailed analysis, it is likely that impacts would include loss of open space view corridors, increased demand for on-street parking and significant increases in traffic volumes on Main Street.
3. The number of existing on-street parking spaces is not adequate for residents and guests. Most of the existing homes were built prior to parking requirements, therefore, many do not provide on-site parking. As a consequence, many cars are parked on the street which results in view blockage and restricted pedestrian access, especially along Main Street.

### **Proposed Rezoning**

Because of the problems and concerns described in the previous section, this report recommends rezoning of existing conventionally-zoned districts to planned districts. Planned district designation would require Design Review for all new construction. Proposed rezoning would be as follows:

1. With the exception of those parcels listed in item #2 below, all parcels in the existing single-family residential districts (i.e., R-1; R-1:B-2; and R-1:B-3) would be rezoned as single-family residential, planned districts (i.e., RSP 5.8; RSP 4.4; and RSP 2.2, respectively) as shown in Table 2, proposed rezoning would approximate existing zoning densities.

2. The R-3:G-2-H (Multiple Residential) district would be rezoned as RMP-8.5 (Multiple-Residential, Planned) district which allows 8.5 dwelling units per acre. The existing R-3:G-2-H district is comprised of one parcel (A.P. #18-163-20) which contains 9 units. Taking the size of this parcel (approximately 18,800 square feet) into consideration, three units could be built on the parcel, if the parcel were vacant. Three parcels (A.P.#18-163-02, 18 and 19), presently zoned R-1 and located adjacent to the R-3:G-2-H district, currently contain two dwelling units on each parcel. These parcels would be also be rezoned as RMP-8.5 to reflect existing uses and densities.
3. The A-2:B-4 (Limited Agriculture) district would be rezoned as an ARP-1.0 (Agricultural Residential, Planned) district which allows agricultural uses and single-family residential development at one (1) unit per acre. As shown in Table 2, the proposed density would reflect the existing density.

It is important to note that public service uses or public buildings may be allowed in any zoning district if found to be necessary for the public health, safety, convenience or welfare. Thus, no zoning district would disallow use of state-owned lands in the event the penitentiary chose to expand.

Existing and proposed zoning for the Point San Quentin Village and areas to the north is shown in Figures 2a and 2b.

The proposed rezoning would accomplish several things. First, it would confirm uses and densities that exist in the community and continue the uses permitted under existing zoning. Second, new development and improvements in the study area would be subject to review to ensure that their design would be responsive to site conditions and the character of the community. Lastly, Master Plan/Development Plan and Design Review procedures would incorporate specific guidelines for development in the Point San Quentin. These guidelines will be discussed further in the report.

One potential problem with the proposed rezoning, is the imposition of Design Review on relatively minor improvements. This is inconvenient to property owners and could require an unnecessary expenditure of time. While new houses, second story additions and other large improvements should be subject to Design Review, a mechanism should be provided to address minor improvements to existing houses. This report recommends that where a property owner can demonstrate that their project is minor and consistent with Design Review guidelines for the community and when letters of support are submitted from all adjacent property owners, the Planning Director may consider this sufficient to waive Design Review requirements.

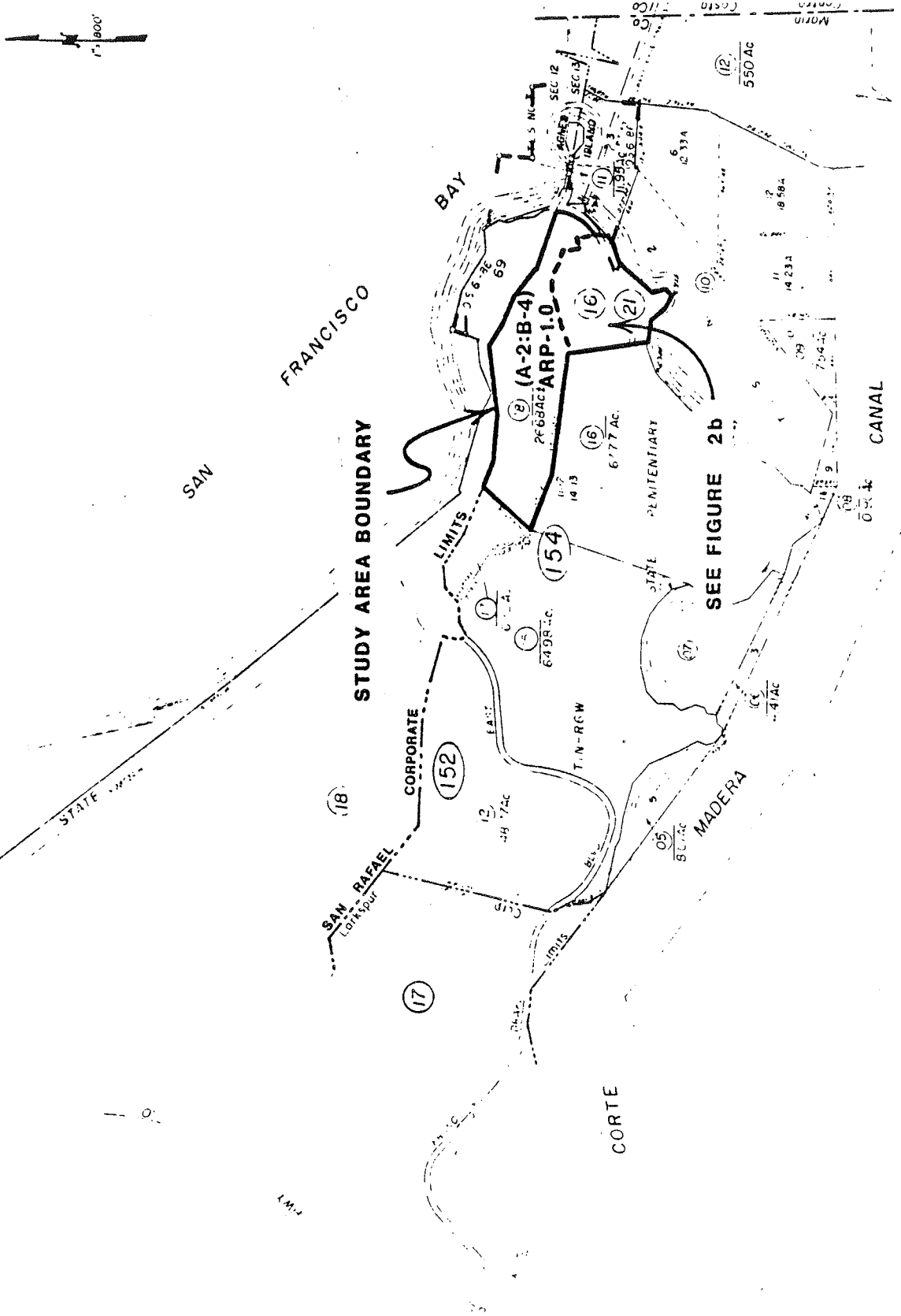
Table 2

DENSITY COMPARISONS FOR EXISTING  
AND PROPOSED ZONING DISTRICTS

| Existing<br>Conventionally-<br>Zoned District | Density<br>(sq. ft./unit) | Proposed<br>Planned<br>District | Density<br>(sq. ft./unit) <sup>1,2</sup> |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| R-1   | 7,500 sq. ft.             | RSP 5.8                         | 7,510 sq. ft.                            |
| R-1:B-2                                       | 10,000 sq. ft.            | RSP 4.4                         | 9,900 sq. ft.                            |
| R-1:B-3                                       | 20,000 sq. ft.            | RSP 2.2                         | 19,800 sq. ft.                           |
| R-3:G-2-H                                     | N/A <sup>3</sup>          | RMP 8.5 <sup>4</sup>            | 5,125 sq. ft.                            |
| A-2:B-4                                       | 1 Acre                    | ARP 1.0                         | 1 Acre                                   |

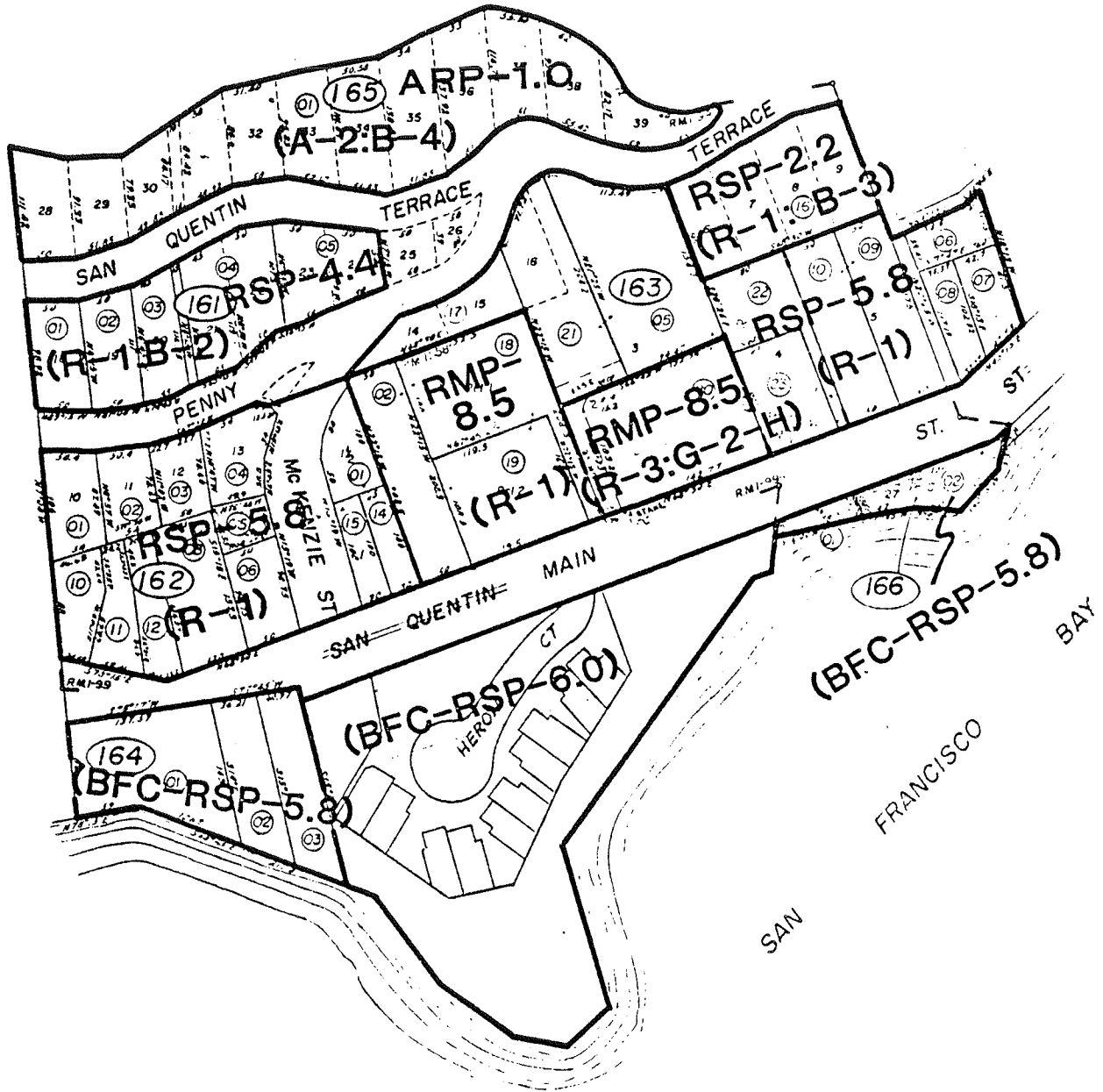
- <sup>1</sup> Density calculated by dividing one acre (43,560 sq. ft.) by the planned district density designation (eg. 5.8, 4.4, etc.)
- <sup>2</sup> Numbers are rounded
- <sup>3</sup> Minimum building site area of 7,500 sq. ft.; number of dwellings units equals the size of the building site divided by 2,000, adjusted to the next whole number
- <sup>4</sup> Three parcels (A.P. 18-163-02, 18 and 19 are currently zoned R-1 and are proposed to be rezoned as RMP 8.5)

POR. RANCHO PUNTA DE QUENTIN  
 POR. RANCHO SAN PEDRO, SANTA MARGARITA, Y LAS GALLINAS



**(EXISTING) AND PROPOSED ZONING**  
**Figure 2a**

POR. RANCHO PUNTA DE QUENTIN



**(EXISTING) AND PROPOSED ZONING**  
**Figure 2b**

## Guidelines for Design Review in Point San Quentin Village

In order to ensure compatible development with the community, additional guidelines which reflect the particular design concepts and concerns of the community should be implemented through the Master Plan and Design Review procedures. This report recommends that in addition to the design guidelines contained in Section 22.47.024 and 22.82 of the Marin County Code, the following guidelines be approved and implemented in the Point San Quentin Village study area:

1. Interested community groups within Point San Quentin Village shall be given an opportunity to review all applications, except for minor improvements to existing houses. The Planning Department shall take the written response of these groups under serious consideration in preparing its decisions or recommendations.
2. The height, scale and design of new structures shall be compatible with the single-family character of the surrounding natural or built environment. Structures shall be designed to follow the natural contours of the landscape and sited so as not to obstruct significant views as seen from public viewing places and shall minimize, to the fullest extent possible, obstruction of existing views from adjacent properties.
3. The existing architecture contains a mix of historic architectural styles including Victorian, Greek Revival, and other early California influences; natural exterior materials predominate. New development, including remodeling of existing houses, should reinforce this historic architectural character in terms of compatible exterior design treatments, colors and materials. In particular, reflective surfaces and light-colored roofs should not be allowed.
4. Because on-street parking is not provided by many existing homes, enforcement of existing parking requirements, as stipulated in Title 24 of Marin County Code, shall be reviewed for all development applications. Where possible, the provision of on-site parking shall be a condition of permit approval.
5. A landscaping plan shall be submitted with the development application, subject to the review and approval of the Planning Director, if new landscaping is proposed or if existing landscaping is to be altered as a result of a proposed project. Existing trees and vegetation should be retained as much as possible. When landscaping is done, care should be taken not to use a design or species that could block existing views of adjacent property owners.
6. The front, rear and side yards provided for all improvements and new development in the single-family residential districts shall meet the standards of the R-1 zoning district. These setback standards are the minimum and greater setbacks may be required under Design Review because of unique aspects of the site. The Planning Director may also relax setback standards where the Planning Director finds that such a reduction is necessary for the use and enjoyment of the property owners and where a reduction would not affect neighboring properties.

### Summary of Recommendations

1. That property in Point San Quentin Village be rezoned as shown in Figures 2a and 2b, "(Existing) and Proposed Zoning."
2. That if a property owner can submit letters of support from all adjacent owners for a minor improvement to an existing house, and where the project is consistent with guidelines for Design Review in Point San Quentin Village, then the Planning Director may consider this sufficient to waive Design Review requirements.
3. That the "Guidelines for Design Review in Point San Quentin Village," contained in this report be approved and implemented through Master Plan/Development Plan and Design Review procedures.

