

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

SAN DIEGO COAST AREA
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December 1, 1995

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TO: COMMISSIONERS AND INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: PETER DOUGLAS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TOM CRANDALL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, COASTAL AND OCEAN RESOURCES
DEBORAH N. LEE, ASSISTANT DISTRICT DIRECTOR, SAN DIEGO AREA OFFICE
DIANA LILLY, COASTAL PROGRAM ANALYST, SAN DIEGO AREA OFFICE

SUBJECT: Report by Executive Director to the Commission on Determination of Minor Port Master Plan Amendment, Port of San Diego Plan Amendment No. 20 (Design Refinements to Immediate Action Plan/Lindbergh Field), at the Commission Hearing of December 12-15, 1995

I. INTRODUCTION. The purpose of this report is to inform the Commission of action taken by the Executive Director on the Port of San Diego's Minor Port Master Plan Amendment No. 20. The amendment will graphically depict a refinement to the airport roadway layout reflecting a realignment of the vehicle circulation system in the Lindbergh Field airport terminal area, to construct a roadway flyover in the area of the existing Harbor Drive and Harbor Island Drive clover leaf intersection. The realignment of the roadways will reallocate a portion of land around the existing clover leaf intersection currently designated for "Open Space" to "Road," and an area of existing "Road" will be conversely redesignated for "Open Space." No net change in land or water use allocation will result.

Section 30716(b) of the Coastal Act and California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 1367 (the full citations are found in Section II, below) provide for a process whereby the Executive Director can determine that a port plan amendment is minor in nature, and require that any such determination be reported to the Commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting. This determination does not require a vote by the Commission, and becomes effective 10 working days following the Executive Director's determination on December 1, 1995. The subject minor plan amendment therefore becomes effective on December 15, 1995. The Commission previously reviewed and approved, in part, a port master plan amendment in 1993 for the original Immediate Action Plan (IAP) for Lindbergh Field. The Commission denied the portion of the IAP which would have provided for a large flyover structure ramp onto Harbor Drive which would have encroached upon park land and blocked scenic views. The subject minor plan amendment involves only a minor reallocation of road and open space land use designations, and provides for a revised Harbor Drive/Harbor Island Drive realignment and relocated flyover which will not have an adverse impact on land use, open space, or visual quality. The amendment raises no other issues that were not examined by the Commission during its approval of the Immediate Action Plan. The project conforms to the applicable resource protection policies of Chapter 3 and Chapter 8 of the Coastal Act.

II. MINOR PORT MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT PROCEDURE. Section 30716(b) of the Coastal Act states that:

The commission shall, by regulation, establish a procedure whereby proposed amendments to a certified port master plan may be reviewed and designated by the executive director of the commission as being minor in nature and need not comply with Section 30714. [which provides for Commission review and action on proposed port master plans and amendments]. Such amendments shall take effect on the 10th working day after the executive director designates such amendments as minor.

California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 13637 states that:

(a) The governing body of a port may request the executive director of the commission to designate an amendment to the port master plan as being minor in nature pursuant to Public Resources Code, Section 30716(b). Any such amendment shall be submitted to the executive director and shall be accompanied by the same information supporting such amendment as would be required for any other amendment. Notice of such amendment shall be given to all persons who the executive director has reason to know may be interested. No sooner than 15 working days from the date that such notice was transmitted, the executive director shall make a determination as to whether to designate such amendment as minor in nature. Any such determination shall be in writing with findings supporting the determination and the conformance of the amendment with the provisions of this division. The determination shall be transmitted to those receiving notice. No amendment shall be designated minor in nature if it involves significant filling, dredging or diking or a type of use not specifically provided for in the certified master plan or if in the opinion of the executive director the proposed amendment would not be consistent with the provisions of this division, would materially alter any significant condition or situation that formed a basis for certification of the port master plan, would result in any substantial adverse environmental effect, or would have a reasonable risk of producing such a result. An amendment designated as being minor in nature shall not become effective for 10 working days following the designation by the executive director.

(b) Any determination pursuant to subsection (a) shall be reported to the commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting by the executive director.

The proposed amendment would redesign the roadway system of the existing intersection at Harbor Drive and Harbor Island Drive, including construction of an overpass replacing the existing cloverleaf intersection. The revised roadway would result in the reallocation of a portion of land currently designated "Open Space" to "Road," and from "Road" to "Open Space," with no net change in land allocation.

In determining the standard of review for the proposed plan amendment, Section 30714 of the Coastal Act provides guidance and states that:

...The Commission shall certify the plan, or a portion of a plan, if the Commissions finds both of the following:

- (a) The master plan, or certified portions thereof, conforms with and carries out the policies of this chapter.
- (b) Where a master plan [or in this case, a master plan amendment] or certified portions thereof, provide for any of the developments listed as appealable in Section 30715, the development or developments are in conformity with all the policies of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200).

Section 30715 of the Coastal Act states, in part, that:

After a port master plan or any portion thereof has been certified... approvals of any of the following categories of development by the port governing body may be appealed to the commission:

- (3) Roads or highways which are not principally for internal circulation within the port boundaries.

Although the proposed roadway improvements would primarily affect the airport circulation system, the realignment will also impact Harbor Drive. Harbor Drive is a major coastal access corridor along San Diego Bay and it is not principally designed for internal circulation within the port boundaries. In its previous review of the IAP major amendment, the Commission found that the roadway realignment and flyover as then proposed and denied, did constitute an appealable development. The Commission determines that the proposed amendment would similarly affect the configuration of Harbor Drive; therefore, the policies of Chapter 3 and Chapter 8 of the Coastal Act are the standard of review for the proposed amendment.

III. PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION. The Commission certified the San Diego Unified Port Master Plan on October 14, 1980. The Commission has reviewed nineteen amendments since then, most recently in November, 1994.

IV. CONTENT OF PORT MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT. As noted above, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 13637 requires that a minor port master plan amendment be accompanied by the same information that is required of regular amendments, as called for under Section 30711 of the Coastal Act and the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 13628(a). The Executive Director finds that the proposed plan amendment meets the requirements of Section 30711 and Section 13628(a). The proposed changes in land and water uses are outlined, and there are adequate details in the port master plan submittal, Final Negative Declaration and associated materials, for the Executive Director to make a determination of the proposed amendment's conformance with the Chapter 3 and Chapter 8 policies of the Coastal Act.

The proposed amendment has undergone environmental review under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. The amendment was subject to public review and hearing, and was certified by the Board of Port Commissioners on July 11, 1995. The proposed amendment was received by the Commission on September 26, 1995. Notice of the proposed amendment was transmitted by the Executive Director to interested individuals and agencies on November 6, 1995. The determination as to whether the amendment is minor in nature could be made by the Executive Director no sooner than November 30, 1995, 15 working days after notice was made. No comments were received by that date, and the Executive Director has determined on December 1, 1995, that the proposed amendment is minor in nature. The findings supporting that determination are provided in Sections V and VI below.

V. SUMMARY OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT. The Commission previously reviewed a major amendment for the Lindbergh Field Immediate Action Plan (IAP) in April, 1993. The amendment had three major components: Changing the land use designation of the west end of Parking Lots #3 and #4 from "Airport Related Commercial" to "International Airport"; redesignating a portion of Spanish Landing from "Park" to "Road"; and providing for the implementation of the Immediate Action Program, including the addition of one air terminal concourse with eight new gates and expansion of the airport fuel farm. The project included construction of a roadway "flyover" connector from the airport facilities to Harbor Drive near Spanish Landing Park. The Commission approved the amendment with the exception of the Harbor Drive flyover, which was denied due to the loss of parkland and visual impacts associated with the flyover.

Since the time the Commission approved in part/denied in part the IAP amendment, the Port District has developed several design refinements to the IAP. These refinements include a significant expansion of the square footage of the west terminal (but no expansion in capacity), a temporary relocation of commuter airline activities, and a redesign of the Harbor Drive/Harbor Island Drive intersection. Of these design changes, only the redesign of the roadway system involves impacts and/or changes to the master plan not previously reviewed by the Commission in the original IAP amendment; therefore, only the roadway realignment requires a Master Plan Amendment.

The proposed amendment would replace the existing Harbor Drive/Harbor Island Drive interchange and four-lane bridge overpass with an at-grade intersection and a direct, two-lane eastbound overpass/flyover. The new overpass would cross over, then merge with Harbor Drive several hundred feet east of the existing interchange. The two lane overpass would be on concrete columns approximately 30 feet above Harbor Drive at its highest point. The mounded, landscaped open space areas associated with the existing cloverleaf intersection would be replaced with an at-grade, level open space. The re-alignment would place the new diamond intersection farther away from Spanish Landing Park than the existing cloverleaf. The existing pedestrian/bikeway will be realigned to cross Harbor Drive at the new signal-controlled intersection. The redesign would result in a portion of land currently designated for "Open Space" in the Master Plan being

redesignated "Road," and a portion of land currently designated "Road," being redesignated for "Open Space." However, no net change in land use allocation will occur.

The amendment is minor in nature because it does not involve any filling, dredging or diking, or a type of use not specifically provided for in the certified port master plan. Major streets, internal access roads, and pedestrian and bicycle routes are uses provided for in the master plan. The proposed amendment would not alter any significant condition or situation that formed a basis for certification of the port master plan. As discussed below, the amendment would not result in any substantial environmental effect.

VI. CONFORMANCE WITH THE COASTAL ACT. The proposed amendment would result in a change to the basic land use categories and to Figure 9 of the master plan depicting the Precise Plan for Planning District 2. In order for the Commission to certify the proposed master plan amendment, the Commission must determine that the amendment conforms to the following applicable Chapter 3 and Chapter 8 policies of the Act:

Section 30221. Oceanfront land suitable for recreational use shall be protected for recreational use and development unless present and foreseeable future demand for public or commercial recreational activities that could be accommodated on the property is already adequately provided for in the area.

Section 30240(b). Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.

Section 30251. The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas....

Section 30252. The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by...providing adequate parking facilities or providing substitute means of serving the development with public transportation....

Section 30708. All port-related developments shall be located, designed, and constructed so as to:

- (a) Minimize substantial adverse environmental impacts.
- (b) Minimize potential traffic conflicts between vessels.
- (c) Give highest priority to the use of existing land space within harbors for port purposes, including, but not limited to, navigational facilities, shipping industries, and necessary support and access facilities.

(d) Provide for other beneficial uses consistent with the public trust, including, but not limited to, recreation and wildlife habitat uses, to the extent feasible.

(e) Encourage rail service to port areas and multi-company use of facilities.

The previously denied flyover was located at the western end of the airport, and would have converted a portion of Spanish Landing Park to road uses. The flyover structure would also have blocked all or portions of views of the water from Harbor Drive for a distance of about 400 feet. In contrast, the amendment as now proposed would locate the overpass just east of the existing cloverleaf intersection at the east end of the airport, and would not affect Spanish Landing Park in any way. The project would convert the existing cloverleaf intersection to a diamond interchange, thereby converting a small area of open space within and around the existing cloverleaf to road, while portions of the existing road will be removed, landscaped, and redesignated for open space. The total amount of designated open space and designated road area will remain the same. The open space area currently consists of large, landscaped berms. The area is not available for recreational use, nor does it contain native habitat. An existing bicycle/pedestrian promenade along Harbor Drive will be realigned to cross at a crosswalk at the newly signalized intersection. This will increase public safety, provides a more direct linkage, and improves the quality of the recreational pathway.

The height of the new exit overpass (30 feet) will be approximately the same as the existing bridge. A visual analysis performed for the construction of the road realignment found that removal of the existing bridge and the removal of the large berms associated with the existing cloverleaf intersection will increase the views from Harbor Drive to the water and the downtown skyline. The open space areas will be recontoured and landscaped with palm trees and ficus trees to match the new airport master theme. Thus, the new overpass will not block views anymore than the existing bridge, and the redesign of the existing cloverleaf will open additional views to the waterfront and the downtown skyline which are not currently available.

In addition, the proposed roadway modifications will result in an improvement in Level of Service (LOS) from the projected LOS F to LOS C or better at the Harbor Drive intersection. Therefore, the Executive Director finds that the proposed amendment for the roadway realignment will not result in any significant adverse impacts on recreation, open space, visual quality, or traffic, and that the project conforms to the public access and resource protection policies of Sections 30221, 30240(b), 30251, 30252 and 30708 of the Coastal Act.

VII. CONSISTENCY WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA).

As described above, the proposed amendment does not have the potential to result in resource damage in the form of adverse individual or cumulative impacts to land use and sensitive resources. No significant environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed road realignment. There

are no feasible alternatives available which would substantially lessen any adverse impacts which the proposed development may have on the environment of the coastal zone. The proposed amendment was the subject of an environmental impact report under CEQA. The EIR associated with the plan amendment was subject to public review and hearing and was adopted by the Board of Port Commissioners on July 11, 1995. Therefore, as no significant environmental impacts have been identified, the Commission finds that the proposed project is consistent with the requirements of CEQA.

(0722A)

Proposed
Realignment

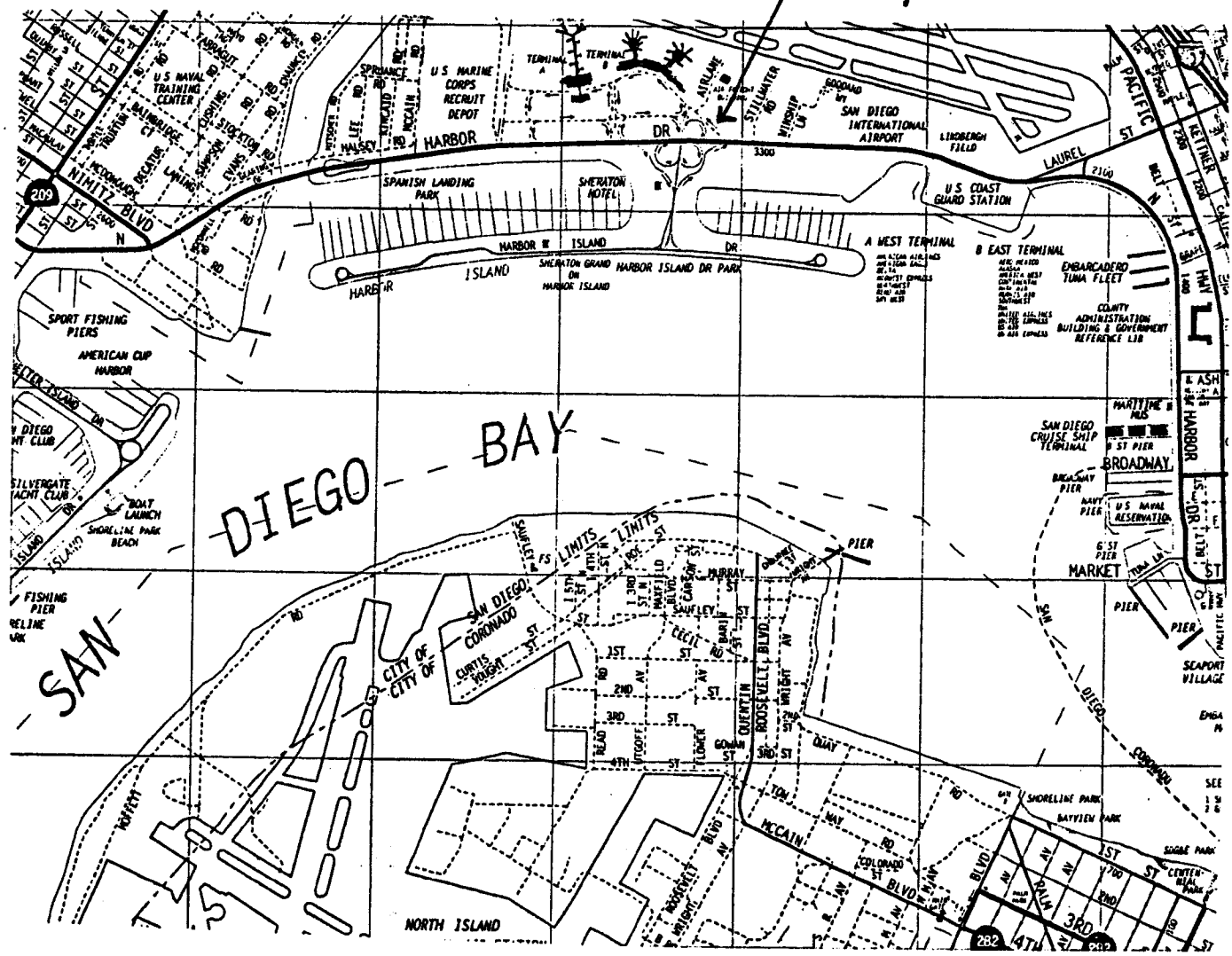
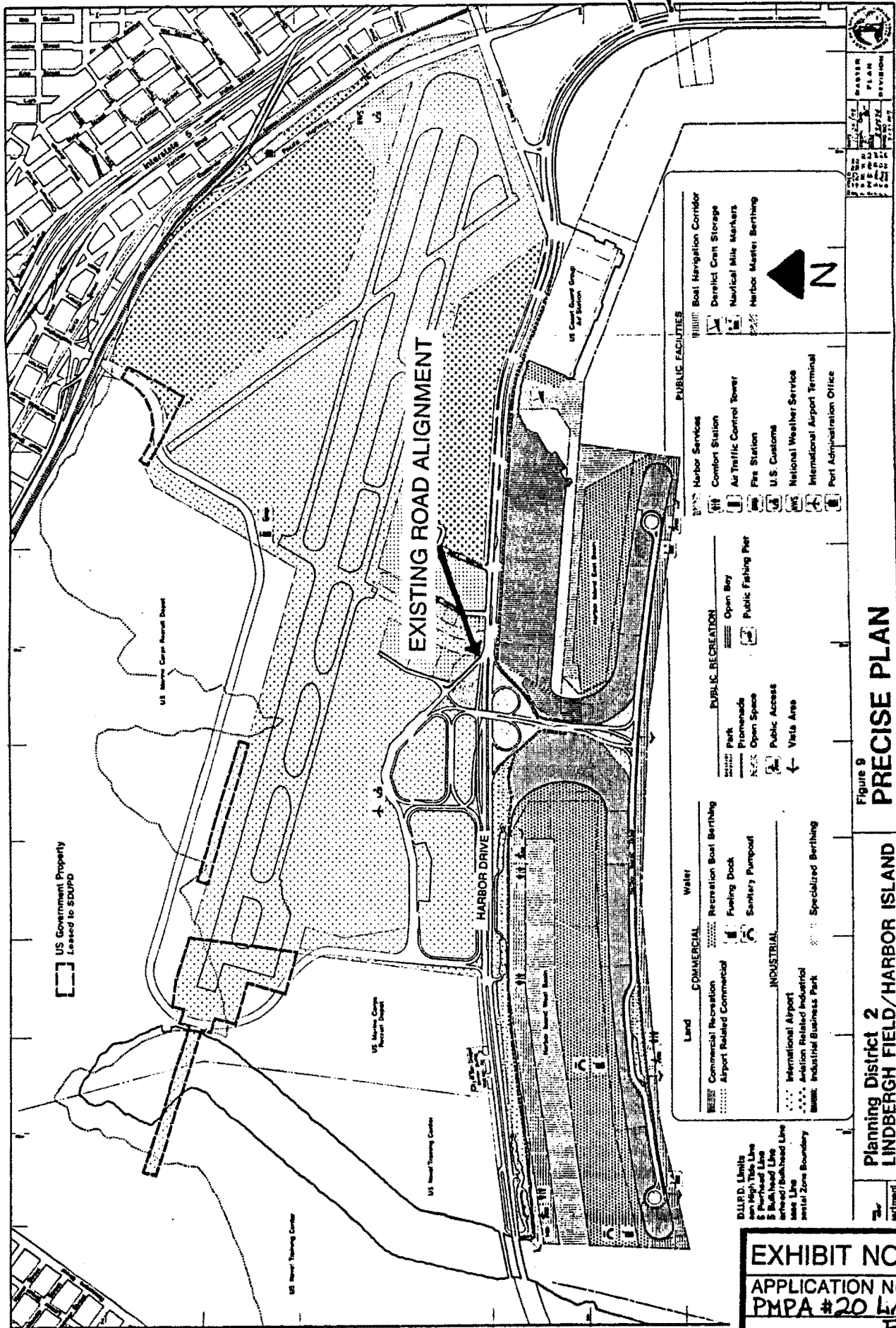


EXHIBIT NO. 1
APPLICATION NO.
PMPA #20 Lindbergh
Field
Location Map
California Coastal Commission



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- COMMERCIAL**
 - Commercial Recreation
 - Airport Related Commercial
 - International Airport
 - Airport Related Industrial
 - Industrial Business Park
- INDUSTRIAL**
 - Specialized Berthing
- RECREATION**
 - Park
 - Promenade
 - Open Space
 - Public Access
 - Vista Area
- PUBLIC RECREATION**
 - Open Bay
 - Public Fishing Pier
- PUBLIC FACILITIES**
 - Harbor Services
 - Comfort Station
 - Air Traffic Control Tower
 - Fire Station
 - U.S. Customs
 - National Weather Service
 - International Airport Terminal
 - Port Administration Office
 - Boat Navigation Corridor
 - Direct Car Storage
 - Nautical Mile Markers
 - Harbor Master Berthing

Figure 9
PRECISE PLAN
 Planning District 2
 LINDBERGH FIELD/HARBOR ISLAND

EXHIBIT NO. 2
 APPLICATION NO.
 PMPA #20 Lindbergh
 Field
 Existing Master
 Plan
 California Coastal Commission

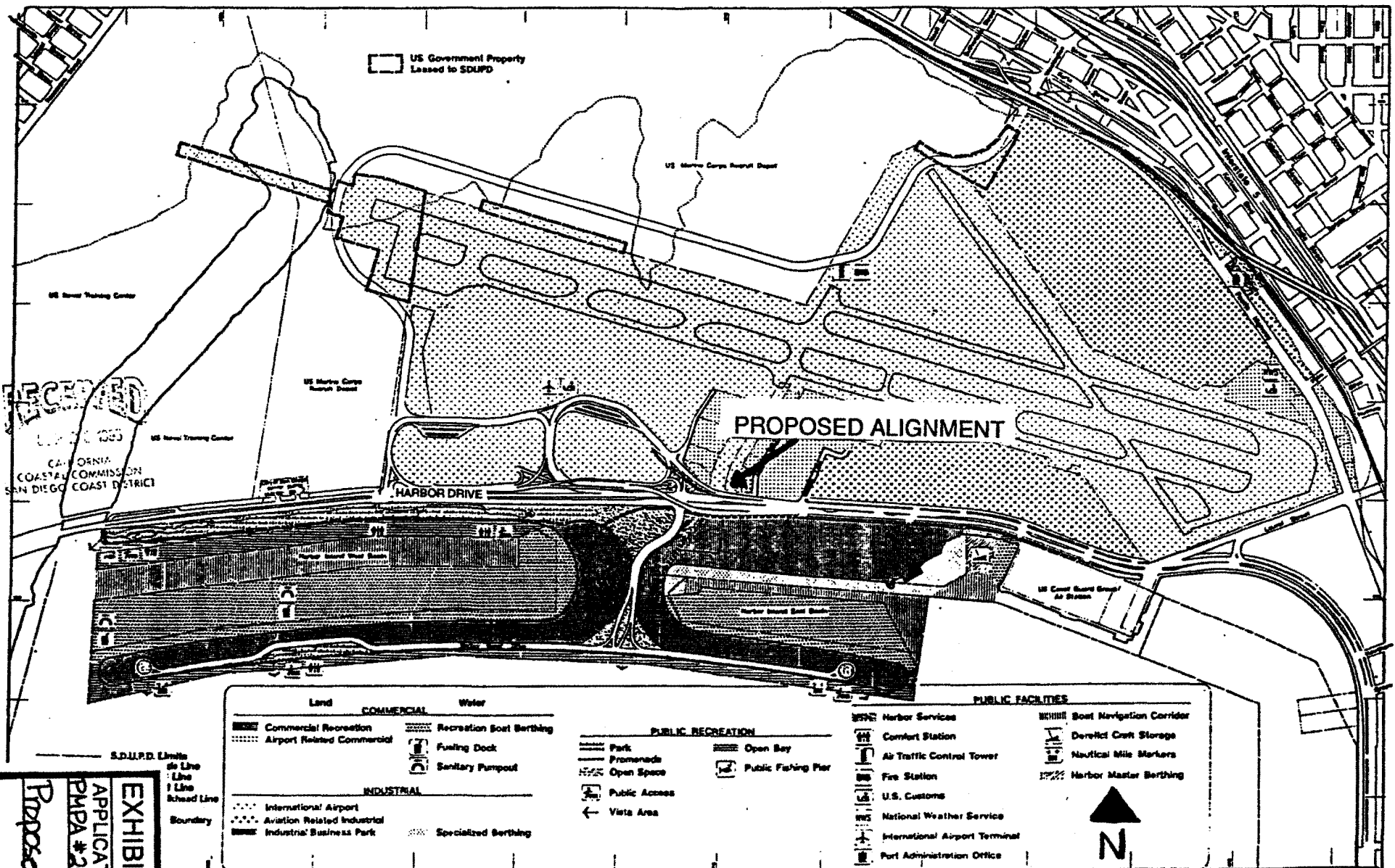


EXHIBIT NO. 3
 APPLICATION NO.
 PMPA #20 Lindbergh
 Field
 Proposed Master
 Plan
 California Coastal Commission

Planning District 2
LINDBERGH FIELD/HARBOR ISLAND
 Figure 6
PRECISE PLAN
DRAFT

RECEIVED

OCT 25 1995

CALIFORNIA
COASTAL COMMISSION
SAN DIEGO COAST DISTRICT

ALFRED C. STROHLEIN

559 Jewell Street, San Diego, CA
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OCT 24 1995

CALIFORNIA
COASTAL COMMISSION

Chairman Carl L. Williams and Commissioners October 19, 1995
California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont Street, Ste. 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105-2219

SUBJECT: San Diego Convention Center Hearing

Dear Chairman Williams and Commissioners:

In scope, scale and cost, the San Diego Convention Center is second only to Jack Murphy Stadium. With its proposed expansion, it is second to nothing.

As for its effect on our bay-front view and downtown development, the Convention Center has no peer.

A project this large and costly should be available to every resident of San Diego to comment upon, especially if they are going to pay for it and live with it for years to come.

For that reason, I beg you to schedule the Coastal Commission hearing on the expansion of the Convention Center in San Diego and not in any other city. Few citizens have the time or the money to express their concerns on this issue were it to be held in Sacramento or even Los Angeles. San Diego is the only fair venue.

I quote from §13630 of the Coastal regulations: "Where practicable, public hearings on a port master plan should be held near the port involved." San Diego is both practicable and involved.

Thank you for your understanding and consideration,

Catherine A. Strohleim Alfred C. Strohleim
Alfred C. and Catherine A. Strohleim

CONVENT/10/19/95