

## CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

SAN DIEGO COAST AREA  
11 CAMINO DEL RIO NORTH, SUITE 200  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92108-1725  
(619) 521-8036



Filed: October 1, 1996  
49th Day: November 19, 1996  
180th Day: March 30, 1997  
Staff: LRO-SD  
Staff Report: November 4, 1996  
Hearing Date: December 10-13, 1996

STAFF REPORT: CONSENT CALENDAR

Application No.: 6-96-137

Applicant: City of San Diego Metropolitan Wastewater Department      Agent: Jim Wageman  
Kim Lutz

Description: Construction of a new 630 sq.ft., approx. 13-foot high compressor building, construction of new concrete stairs between the new compressor building and an existing compressor building to the west, construction of a new 4,000 gallon, nine-foot high diesel fuel storage tank, expansion of power centers, addition of one handicapped parking space with access ramp, installation of landscaping and other miscellaneous/minor improvements.

Lot Area	1,743,341 sq.ft. (40.11 acres)
Building Coverage	309,236 sq.ft. (18%)
Pavement Coverage	172,872 sq.ft. (10%)
Landscape Coverage	222,507 sq.ft. (13%)
Unimproved Area	1,038,726 sq.ft. (59%)
Parking Spaces	36
Zoning	Unzoned
Plan Designation	Public Utility
Ht abv fin grade	15 feet

Site: Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant, 1092 Gatchell Road, Peninsula, San Diego, San Diego County. APN 532-520-06

Substantive File Documents: CCC #6-95-159; Environmental Impact Report/SCH No. 94-101024 for Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant Master Plan - 10/3/95; Final Geotechnical Investigation Report by SOTA dated 8/12/96

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends the Commission adopt the following resolution:

I. Approval with Conditions.

The Commission hereby grants a permit for the proposed development, subject to the conditions below, on the grounds that the development will be

in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act of 1976, will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, and will not have any significant adverse impacts on the environment within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act.

## II. Standard Conditions.

See attached page.

## III. Special Conditions.

The permit is subject to the following conditions:

1. Final Plans/Construction Materials. Prior to issuance of the coastal development permit, the applicant shall submit to the Executive Director for review and written approval, final plans for the compressor building which documents the proposed facility shall be of an earthtone color to blend in with the natural setting of the existing coastal bluffs in the area.

## IV. Findings and Declarations.

The Commission finds and declares as follows:

1. Project Description. Several miscellaneous improvements are proposed in association with the power generation and distribution upgrades at the Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant which have been broken down into three "packages". Proposal "A" consists of construction of a new compressor building approx. 630 sq.ft. in size and approx. 13 feet high to be located between two existing digester storage tanks (#s 4 & 5). New concrete stairs will also be constructed on grade to connect the new compressor buildings to the existing compressor building to the west. The new compressor building provides enclosure for compressors that maintain digestive gas pressure at a level required for proper operation of engine generators. In addition, a new concrete vaulted and spill proof, 4,000 gallon, 9-foot high, 140 sq.ft. diesel fuel storage tank will be installed on a new concrete pad located between First and Second Streets near the Gas Utilization Facility (GUF) building.

Proposal "B" consists of improvements near the (GUF) building which is located between First and Second Streets. Extensive landscaping is proposed adjacent to the building including construction of an exterior observation deck and walkways around the building including new plant and tree elements. Trees will be planted along the east side of First Street and mix of native plants and trees on a slope west of the GUF building. However, the project will not involve installation of any type of irrigation system located within 40 feet of the bluff edge as the project site is located more than 40 feet from the coastal bluffs to the west. A handicapped-accessible walkway along the west side of First Street is also proposed. In addition, a handicapped parking stall and access ramp at the north side of the building will be installed.

Proposal "C" consists of improvements to the power centers which will provide upgrades to the power distribution system within the entire plant. Six power centers will be upgraded and expanded in size. The existing size of the power centers range from 171 sq.ft. to 298 sq.ft. The size of the expansion to the centers ranges from 150 sq.ft. to 277 sq.ft. in additional square footage for each site. The power centers are comprised of electrical substation equipment mounted on concrete pads and are enclosed with concrete block walls and a grid-type structure on top. The pads will be expanded to accommodate new equipment and the concrete block walls demolished and replaced with different materials consisting of colored, plastic-coated chain link fabric on modular metal frames. Total grading for all three "packages" will be 100 cy. of balanced on site grading.

Many of the improvements described in the permit application not mentioned above are exempt from permit requirements because they involve replacement or maintenance of existing facilities which do not alter the service capacity, do not involve construction of new roads, grading of undisturbed area of greater than 500 sq.ft., or removal of major vegetation. They are described herein for information purposes only.

Other minor improvements which do not require a coastal development permit include: demolition of an existing 518 sq.ft. compressor building and reconstruction of a new compressor building the same size and height in the same location, installation of a new heat exchanger outside the compressor building and new effluent cooling pumps and heat exchanger piping at the existing effluent channel east of First Street, installation of a new heat exchanger and piping at the lower floor of the existing Digester Gas Utilization Facility (GUF building), replacement of existing natural gas fueled engine generators with diesel fueled emergency engine generators within an existing enclosed building, construction of exterior stairs attached to the existing GUF building, replacement of engine generators with gas fueled engine generators inside the GUF building, installation of windows on the GUF building, addition of a new mezzanine level (660 sq.ft.) consisting of a handicapped-accessible office area that represents a less than 10% increase in internal floor area of the existing structure (GUF building), and interior remodeling and improvements to the employee break room and shower and locker facilities within the GUF building, etc.

2. Geologic Hazards/Shoreline Erosion. Coastal Act Section 30253 states, in part:

New development shall:

(1) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood and fire hazard.

(2) Assure stability and structural integrity, neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs. ...

Most of the proposed improvements are located well inland from the coastal bluffs with the closest project element to the coastal bluff edge being the Power Center 6 upgrade. As earlier described, this project component consists of electrical substation equipment mounted on concrete pads enclosed within concrete block walls with a grid-type covering. The pads will be expanded to accommodate new equipment. Power Center No. 6 is located on the east side of First Street, approx. 40 feet from the bluff edge, however, the proposed work at this location is to an existing structure and will not result in any further seaward encroachment of the facility. In addition, existing shoreline protection and erosion control improvements currently exist seaward of this location.

A geology report was submitted, nonetheless, which addressed the geologic integrity of the site and concluded the site was stable to support the new development. In addition, a detailed geology report was prepared for the subject site in May, 1988, when extensive shoreline protective devices were proposed for the existing sewage treatment facilities (CDP #6-89-217). Included in that report is the delineation of a 75-year bluff retreat line. This projected line was based on a combination of on-site soil studies and research of over a hundred years of maps and photographs of the area, and was coordinated between local, state and federal geologists. Therefore, it is believed that the depicted 75-year bluff retreat line represents a scientifically-sound projection of future site conditions.

The entire Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant is sited on a broad shelf, midway down the bluff-face from the top of the Point Loma peninsula. Some of the existing facilities are in close proximity to the bluff edge, and the outfall itself extends seaward down the bluff then underwater approximately two miles out to sea. The proposed development for construction of a new compressor building, new concrete stairs between two compressor buildings, new diesel fuel storage tank, a handicapped parking space, installation of landscaping and miscellaneous improvements, will all be landward of the bluff retreat line.

Just past the security gate entrance to the plant site, there are three primary roads on which the majority of the improvements are situated. First Street is the road furthest to the west and closest to the coastal bluffs. Second Street is more inland to the east, and Third Street is the easternmost street. The proposed facilities will be located in various places on the treatment plant site including those areas west of Third Street, east of Third Street and east of First Street. However, the latter site is still located inland from the coastal bluffs and there are other structures located to the west (across First Street) between the project site and the bluffs/ocean.

It has been documented in earlier permits for this site that the entire facility is located in an area which is extremely environmentally and geologically sensitive. Any improvements to the facility must be reviewed carefully in order to assure that impacts do not occur to fragile coastal resources. Under CDP #6-89-217, shoreline protection improvements were permitted to stabilize the bluffs west of the facility and to protect existing development. However, the proposed improvements herein should not warrant the

construction of any future shoreline protection devices, pursuant to Coastal Act Section 30253. In summary, due to the siting of the proposed improvements being landward of the bluff retreat line, it can be found that the project should not result in any geologic impacts and the proposal can thus be found consistent with Section 30253.

3. Shoreline Access. Coastal Act Sections 30211 and 30212 provide, in part:

Section 30211

Development shall not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rocky coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation.

Section 30212

(a) Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development projects except where:

- (1) it is inconsistent with public safety, military security needs, or the protection of fragile coastal resources,
- (2) adequate access exists nearby, ...

Currently, there is no public access to the shoreline at the project site. The shoreline presently consists of rocky headlands interspersed with the previously constructed revetments. Due to the revetments and the rocky headlands, lateral access opportunities have been relatively non-existent at the subject site since the time of plant construction. Also, due to the nature of the sewage treatment facility, public use of the area is restricted. Construction of the proposed project and related improvements, will not further diminish shoreline access in this area.

Additionally, to the north of the project site are Navy owned lands which prohibit public access along the shoreline. To the south is the Cabrillo National Monument which encourages public access to the tip and westerly side of Point Loma. Parking lots and shoreline viewing areas are available at the Monument and along the access road south of the treatment plant facility, but only limited access to the shoreline is allowed because of the sensitive marine resources found at the base of the bluffs. The Monument offers guided tours of the tide pools, which does allow the public the opportunity to view inter- and sub-tidal marine life.

For this project site only, it is inappropriate to require public access along the shoreline due to the presence of revetments (CCC# 6-89-217) which encompass the entire beach zone (rocky, cobble beach) into the inter-tidal zone, sensitive marine resources (i.e, surfgrass) located within the inter- and sub-tidal areas, and public safety concerns due to the nature of the existing sewer treatment operations. Furthermore, adequate public access and

recreational opportunities are available at the adjacent Cabrillo National Monument. Therefore, the Coastal Commission finds the proposed project consistent with the cited sections of the Coastal Act, and with all other public access and recreation policies of the Coastal Act as well, as required in Section 30604(c) of the Act for any site that is located between the first coastal road and the sea.

4. Growth Impacts. Section 30254 of the Act states, in part:

"New or expanded public works facilities shall be designed and limited to accommodate needs generated by development or uses permitted consistent with the provisions of this division..."

All of the proposed improvements are intended to improve the operations at the plant facility associated with power generation and distribution, as opposed to accommodating redevelopment or new growth in the area beyond what has been planned for in the City's certified LCP. Treatment capacity is governed by the size and number of sedimentation basins and outfall capacity. It is estimated that the plant is presently operating at 180 MGD (million gallons per day), however, each of the sedimentation basins can treat approx. 20-22 MGD of influent for a maximum total of 240 MGD which is the ultimate design capacity for the facility. No modifications to the basins--other than maintenance and repairs--are proposed as part of the project and no increases to the maximum capacity of the plant will occur as a result of the proposed project. As such, the project will not increase treatment capacity and will not induce further growth. The Commission therefore finds the proposed development consistent with Section 30254 of the Act.

5. Visual and Scenic Resources. Coastal Act Section 30251 provides, in part, that the scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance and that new development shall be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas. Portions of the PLWTP are within the viewshed of Cabrillo National Monument, and the facility is highly visible from offshore. The specific project site will not be visible from the Point Loma Cabrillo National Monument to the south of the project site due to intervening topography.

As noted in the project description, the project will be located in various places at the treatment plant. According to the applicant, much of the proposed improvements will be shielded from public views from the west due to the existence of other treatment plant development located between the proposed improvements and the coastal bluffs. The new compressor building will not be visible within public viewsheds as it will be blocked from views to the west from the existing compressor building. The only aspect of the proposed improvements which will be visible from the west is the proposed improvement to Power Center No. 6; however, this structure is already existing and the concrete pad is being expanded slightly in size and should not result in any adverse visual impacts. In addition, this upgrade includes installation of a brown vinyl-coated chain link fence around the power center which will help to further buffer it from views to the west.

In addition, the applicant is proposing to paint the exterior of the proposed structures an earthtone color in order to blend in with the color of the natural surrounding areas along the hillside and bluffs and reduce any adverse visual impacts associated with the structure. Furthermore, the installation of landscaping near the GUF building will help to buffer existing development and will greatly improve the plant appearance from the ocean.

Although the applicant has proposed that the compressor building be painted to minimize impact on the surrounding area, and that the exterior colors comply with the "Report on Landscape, Architectural and Aesthetic Improvements to the Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant" which was prepared for the PLWTP, a color board or other sample of the proposed color has not been submitted with the subject project. Therefore, Special Condition #1 has been attached requiring the applicant to submit final plans which indicate the proposed compressor building shall be of an earthtone color in order to blend in with the surrounding coastal bluffs. With requirements for color treatment, any potential adverse visual impacts associated with the completed development will be significantly reduced. The Commission, therefore, finds the project, as conditioned, consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act.

6. Local Coastal Planning. Section 30604 (a) also requires that a coastal development permit shall be issued only if the Commission finds that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a Local Coastal Program (LCP) in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. In this case, such a finding can be made for the proposed project, as conditioned.

The subject site is located within the unzoned geographic area included in the Peninsula land use plan segment of the City of San Diego Local Coastal Program, which designates the property as Public Utility. The Point Loma Wastewater/Sewage Treatment Plant has existed on the site since 1963. This area was not included in the City of San Diego's certified Local Coastal Program, and the Commission retains permit jurisdiction over the site at this time. Pursuant to the above findings, the Commission finds the proposed development, as conditioned, to be consistent with all applicable Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. Therefore, approval of the project, as conditioned, should not prejudice the ability of the City of San Diego to implement its certified LCP or to continue developing a certifiable Master Plan for the facility.

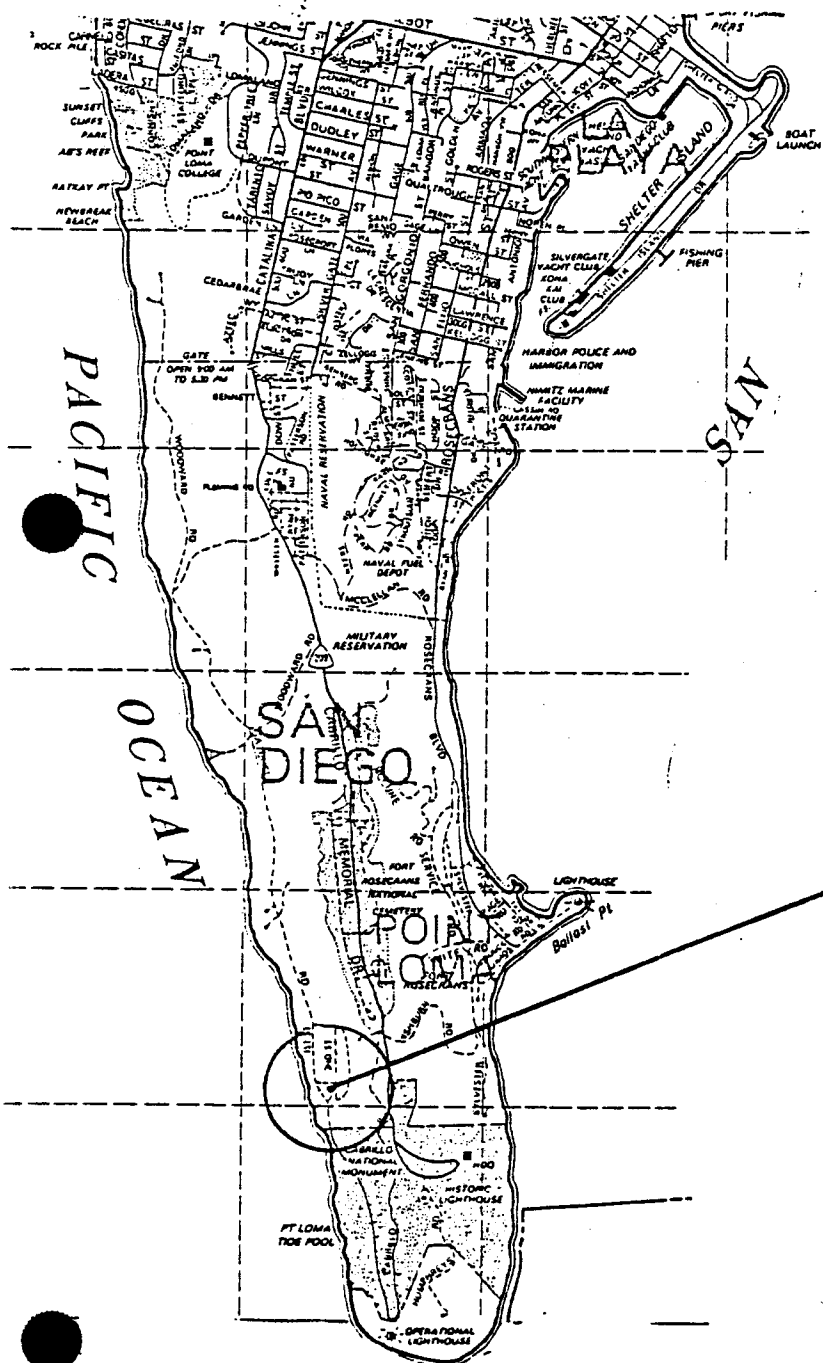
7. Consistency with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 13096 of the Commission's Code of Regulations requires Commission approval of coastal development permits to be supported by a finding showing the permit to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5(d)(2)(i) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the activity may have on the environment.

The proposed project has been conditioned in order to be found consistent with the visual resource policies of the Coastal Act. Mitigation measures,

including a condition addressing color of construction materials, will minimize all adverse environmental impacts. As conditioned, there are no feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the activity may have on the environment. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project is the least environmentally-damaging feasible alternative and can be found consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Act to conform to CEQA.

(6137R)





SITE

EXHIBIT NO. 1  
APPLICATION NO.  
**6-96-137**  
Location Maps

California Coastal Commission

LEAD & SCREW CATALINA BLVD.  
500' SLY OF THE NW. COR OF CEMETERY IN  
SW. COR OF WATER METER BOX  
ELEV= 379.071MSL

- ① NEW COMPRESSOR BUILDING
- ② MECHANICAL CONCRETE PADS
- ③ CONCRETE STAIRS
- ④ AMMONIA TANK CONCRETE PAD
- ⑤ DIESEL FUEL STORAGE TANK CONCRETE PAD
- ⑥ GAS UTILIZATION FACILITY (GLF BUILDING)
- ⑦ POWER CENTER NO. 5
- ⑧ SLUDGE PUMP STATION
- ⑨ WARE METAL & EDDY PROJECT
- ⑩ EFFLUENT COOLING PUMPS
- ⑪ EXISTING COMPRESSOR BUILDING

姓名	性别	年龄	职业
张德胜	男	45	教师
李小红	女	32	医生
王小明	男	28	工程师
赵大刚	男	50	农民
孙小丽	女	25	护士
周国强	男	38	公务员
吴小芳	女	22	学生
郑大伟	男	42	商人
陈小红	女	35	作家
周小明	男	30	程序员
吴大刚	男	48	工人
孙小丽	女	27	记者
周国强	男	33	律师
吴小芳	女	24	歌手
郑大伟	男	40	画家
陈小红	女	36	舞蹈家
周小明	男	31	科学家
吴大刚	男	49	企业家
孙小丽	女	26	模特
周国强	男	34	建筑师
吴小芳	女	23	演员
郑大伟	男	41	音乐家
陈小红	女	37	作家
周小明	男	32	程序员
吴大刚	男	51	工人
孙小丽	女	28	记者
周国强	男	35	律师
吴小芳	女	25	歌手
郑大伟	男	43	画家
陈小红	女	38	舞蹈家
周小明	男	33	科学家
吴大刚	男	52	企业家
孙小丽	女	29	模特
周国强	男	36	建筑师
吴小芳	女	26	演员
郑大伟	男	44	音乐家
陈小红	女	39	作家
周小明	男	34	程序员
吴大刚	男	53	工人
孙小丽	女	30	记者
周国强	男	37	律师
吴小芳	女	27	歌手
郑大伟	男	45	画家
陈小红	女	40	舞蹈家
周小明	男	35	科学家
吴大刚	男	54	企业家
孙小丽	女	31	模特
周国强	男	38	建筑师
吴小芳	女	28	演员
郑大伟	男	46	音乐家
陈小红	女	41	作家
周小明	男	36	程序员
吴大刚	男	55	工人
孙小丽	女	32	记者
周国强	男	39	律师
吴小芳	女	29	歌手
郑大伟	男	47	画家
陈小红	女	42	舞蹈家
周小明	男	37	科学家
吴大刚	男	56	企业家
孙小丽	女	33	模特
周国强	男	40	建筑师
吴小芳	女	30	演员
郑大伟	男	48	音乐家
陈小红	女	43	作家
周小明	男	38	程序员
吴大刚	男	57	工人
孙小丽	女	34	记者
周国强	男	41	律师
吴小芳	女	31	歌手
郑大伟	男	49	画家
陈小红	女	44	舞蹈家
周小明	男	39	科学家
吴大刚	男	58	企业家
孙小丽	女	35	模特
周国强	男	42	建筑师
吴小芳	女	32	演员
郑大伟	男	50	音乐家
陈小红	女	45	作家
周小明	男	40	程序员
吴大刚	男	59	工人
孙小丽	女	36	记者
周国强	男	43	律师
吴小芳	女	33	歌手
郑大伟	男	51	画家
陈小红	女	46	舞蹈家
周小明	男	41	科学家
吴大刚	男	60	企业家
孙小丽	女	37	模特
周国强	男	44	建筑师
吴小芳	女	34	演员
郑大伟	男	52	音乐家
陈小红	女	47	作家
周小明	男	42	程序员
吴大刚	男	61	工人
孙小丽	女	38	记者
周国强	男	45	律师
吴小芳	女	35	歌手
郑大伟	男	53	画家
陈小红	女	48	舞蹈家
周小明	男	43	科学家
吴大刚	男	62	企业家
孙小丽	女	39	模特
周国强	男	46	建筑师
吴小芳	女	36	演员
郑大伟	男	54	音乐家
陈小红	女	49	作家
周小明	男	4	

[illegible]