

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONON CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION

Consistency Determination

No. CD-88-96

Staff: LJS-SF

File Date: August 6, 1996

45th Day: September 20, 1996

60th Day: October 5, 1996

Commission Meeting: Sept. 11, 1996

FEDERAL AGENCY: U.S. NavyDEVELOPMENTLOCATION:

Naval Amphibious Base (NAB), Coronado, San Diego County
 (Exhibits 1 and 2).

DEVELOPMENTDESCRIPTION:

Construct a replacement waterfront facility to support Navy
 explosives ordnance disposal operations at NAB.

SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS:

1. CD-15-81 (U.S. Navy, NAB Master Plan)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 6, 1996, the Commission received a consistency determination from the U.S. Navy for the relocation of a waterfront operations facility to the northwest corner of the Naval Amphibious Base (NAB) in Coronado, to replace existing temporary facilities at the NAB used by the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Three (EOD Unit). The facility is needed to support boating, marine mammal, operations, and administrative functions of the coastal-dependent EOD Unit. The project includes a three-story operations building, a two-story maintenance building, a boat launching ramp, a jib crane pier, demolition of a pier and a temporary building, relocation of floating causeways and marine mammal pier and pens, and security fencing and landscaping. The project will result in an unavoidable loss of 0.05 acres of eelgrass habitat; however mitigation for that impact has been incorporated into the project. The demolition, construction, and relocation of several in-water structures will lead to a net reduction in shaded waters adjacent to the NAB and is a project benefit. All in-water construction activity will be scheduled to avoid the nesting season of the California least tern. Public

access and recreation would not be affected as the shoreline adjacent to the project site is not publically accessible due to military security needs. The project is consistent with the marine resource, environmentally sensitive habitat, visual resource, and public access and recreation policies of the California Coastal Management Program (Sections 30230, 30233, 30240 30251, 30210, 30211, and 30212 of the Coastal Act).

STAFF SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION:

I. Project Description. The Navy proposes to construct a waterfront operations facility at the northwest corner of the Naval Amphibious Base (NAB) to replace existing temporary facilities at the NAB used by the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Three (EOD Unit)(Exhibits 1 and 2). The facility is needed to support boating, marine mammal, operations, and administrative functions of the EOD Unit. The proposed facility includes the following:

- * A three-story operations building with a footprint of 15,830 sq.ft. to house administrative functions, diving lockers, mechanical/storage/academic instruction space, and marine mammal support services.
- * A two-story maintenance building with a footprint of 5,775 sq.ft. to house repair shops, a 76-foot high paraloft tower (a structure for drying EOD Unit parachutes) at the maintenance building, boat shop, and storage area.
- * A boat launch ramp (approximately 130 feet long by 40 feet wide) extending 35 feet bayward of the existing bulkhead and covering approximately 1,400 sq.ft. of subtidal soft bottom habitat.
- * Demolition of the existing pier at the proposed facility site and relocation of three floating causeway docks from the site to the end of Pier 19 on the south side of the NAB.
- * Construction of an approximately 1,650 sq.ft. concrete jib crane pier to provide waterfront loading capability, and transfer of the 2,060 sq.ft. EOD Unit marine mammal pier and pens (floating enclosures attached to the pier) from their present NAB location at Pier 18 to the proposed jib crane pier site.
- * Raising the existing quay wall a maximum of five feet to provide additional level work area between the bayward side of the proposed operations building and the quaywall.
- * Site grading, paving, sidewalks, lighting, utilities, security fencing, and landscaping.
- * Demolition of a temporary building and asbestos abatement.

No dredging is required or proposed for this project and in-water construction would be limited to the boat launch ramp segment bayward of the existing quay wall, pile driving for the jib crane pier, removal of the existing CB pier, and relocation of marine mammal pier and pens and the floating causeway

sections. Construction is expected to take eight months (commencing in 1998) and will occur outside the California least tern nesting season. The proposed development is consistent with the NAB master plan and is located in an existing developed area at the NAB.

II. Status of Local Coastal Program. The standard of review for federal consistency determinations is the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, and not the Local Coastal Program (LCP) of the affected area. If the LCP has been certified by the Commission and incorporated into the California Coastal Management Program (CCMP), it can provide guidance in applying Chapter 3 policies in light of local circumstances. If the LCP has not been incorporated into the CCMP, it cannot be used to guide the Commission's decision, but it can be used as background information. The City of Coronado's LCP has been incorporated into the CCMP.

III. Federal Agency's Consistency Determination. The U.S. Navy has determined the project to be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the California Coastal Management Program.

IV. Staff Recommendation:

The staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following resolution:

CONCURRENCE.

The Commission hereby concurs with the consistency determination made by the U.S. Navy for the proposed waterfront operations facility, finding that the project is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the California Coastal Management Program.

V. Findings and Declarations:

The Commission finds and declares as follows:

A. Marine Resources. Section 30230 of the Coastal Act provides:

Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored. Special protection shall be given to areas and species of special biological or economic significance. Uses of the marine environment shall be carried out in a manner that will sustain the biological productivity of coastal waters and that will maintain healthy populations of all species of marine organisms adequate for long-term commercial, recreational, scientific, and educational purposes.

Section 30233 provides in part:

(a) The diking, filling, or dredging of open coastal waters, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes shall be permitted in accordance with other applicable provisions of this division, where there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative, and where feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects, and shall be limited to the following:

(1) New or expanded port, energy, and coastal-dependent industrial facilities, including commercial fishing facilities.

(2) Maintaining existing, or restoring previously dredged, depths in existing navigational channels, turning basins, vessel berthing and mooring areas, and boat launching ramps.

(3) In wetland areas only, entrance channels for new or expanded boating facilities; and in a degraded wetland, identified by the Department of Fish and Game pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 30411, for boating facilities if, in conjunction with such boating facilities, a substantial portion of the degraded wetland is restored and maintained as a biologically productive wetland. The size of the wetland area used for boating facilities, including berthing space, turning basins, necessary navigation channels, and any necessary support service facilities, shall not exceed 25 percent of the degraded wetland.

(4) In open coastal waters, other than wetlands, including streams, estuaries, and lakes, new or expanded boating facilities and the placement of structural pilings for public recreational piers that provide public access and recreational opportunities.

(5) Incidental public service purposes, including but not limited to, burying cables and pipes or inspection of piers and maintenance of existing intake and outfall lines.

(6) Mineral extraction, including sand for restoring beaches, except in environmentally sensitive areas.

(7) Restoration purposes.

(8) Nature study, aquaculture, or similar resource dependent activities....

Section 30240 provides in part:

(a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those resources shall be allowed within those areas.

(b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat 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 ... areas.

The proposed EOD Unit facility includes several in-water components that hold the potential to adversely affect marine resources: (1) construction of a boat launch ramp at the project site; (2) relocation of floating causeway sections from the project site to Pier 19 on the south side of the NAB; (3) demolition of an existing pier at the project site; (4) construction of a new jib crane pier at the project site; and (5) relocation of the existing marine mammal pier and pens to the project site. These activities (except for the pier demolition) involve fill of estuarine coastal waters and as such must pass the allowable use, alternatives, and mitigation tests of Section 30233 of the Coastal Act.

The proposed boat launch ramp, jib crane pier, floating docks, and marine mammal pier and pens serve a coastal dependent Navy port facility and are therefore allowable uses under Section 30233(a)(1). Section 30233 also requires that there be no feasible less environmentally damaging alternatives to the proposed project. The Navy examined several alternatives to relocating the EOD Unit to the proposed site:

Under a no action alternative, the EOD Unit would continue to operate at a diminished capacity at its present location at the NAB because of inadequate facilities that do not meet current safety standards. The proposed relocation would provide a protected area for marine mammals which at their present location are exposed to southern storms and wakes from boat traffic. If the no action alternative were selected, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-mandated Installation/Restoration Project at the site of the present EOD Unit facilities could not be accomplished. Therefore, the no action alternative was considered unacceptable.

Other alternative sites at NAB were eliminated from consideration because no other existing facilities are available to house EOD Unit operations, and other NAB sites to develop a new facilities are constrained.

Relocating the EOD Unit to facilities remote from NAB would be feasible but would severely impact the daily operations of the mission because Navy personnel would need to be transported to the marine mammal systems whenever it was necessary to work with marine mammals.

A reduced size facility was examined but was considered unacceptable because the proposed facilities are the minimum size to support the EOD Unit mission.

Given the coastal-dependent nature of the EOD Unit facility, the requirement to be located adjacent to the waterfront, and the need to remain at the NAB, the Commission agrees with the Navy that there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative to relocating the EOD Unit facility to the proposed site.

Next the Commission must determine the need for and type of mitigation necessary to minimize any adverse environmental effects generated by the proposed project. Relocation and demolition of existing in-water structures and construction of new in-water structures will result in changes to marine habitats in and the amount of shading of shallow bay waters adjacent to the NAB. The demolition of the existing CB Pier at the proposed EOD Unit site, the relocation of floating causway sections from that site to Pier 19 at the northeast corner of the NAB, the construction of the new jib crane pier at the proposed site, and the relocation of the marine mammal pier and pens to the proposed site will result in a net reduction of shaded bay waters at the NAB by 1.26 acres. The Navy believes that approximately 0.39 acres of this newly-uncovered water area at the proposed EOD Unit site could serve as California least tern foraging habitat, and that much of the 1.26-acre area could support the growth of eelgrass beds.

Relocation of the floating causeway sections to Pier 19 and construction of the boat ramp will result in a loss of approximately 0.05 acres of eelgrass (Exhibits 3-6). Construction of the boat ramp will also result in the loss of approximately 0.01 acres of rip rap habitat (at the existing quay wall) and 0.03 acres of soft bottom habitat. Construction barge anchors will temporarily disturb approximately 280 square-feet of soft bottom habitat. Concrete pilings which support the marine mammal pier and pens will be reused at their new location, leading to no soft-bottom habitat loss or gain.

The proposed project will generate adverse and positive effects on marine resources adjacent to the NAB. Except for the loss of eelgrass, the adverse effects on rip rap and soft bottom habitat are not significant and do not require additional mitigation. However, the expected loss of approximately 0.05 acres of eelgrass (2180 sq.ft.) presents a cumulatively significant adverse project impact due to the importance of eelgrass beds as a particularly valuable type of marine habitat in San Diego Bay. While the Navy believes that the exposure to sunlight of 1.26 acres of shallow water, soft bottom habitat at the proposed EOD Unit site could lead to eelgrass revegetation, and that the project would therefore lead to a net increase in eelgrass beds at NAB, it nevertheless has proposed the following mitigation program for eelgrass impacts should natural revegetation not occur:

- * The construction barge should be anchored to avoid or minimize impacts on eelgrass. Eelgrass is the least extensive in the northwest portion of the project area. It may be possible to avoid anchoring in eelgrass if the barge can anchor there.
- * Eelgrass should be monitored following project construction to determine whether eelgrass was lost to shading at the floating causeway relocation site and whether previously shaded areas at the P-144 site have revegetated.
- * After two growing seasons following construction, if there is a net eelgrass loss to construction of P-144, the loss should be mitigated. The Navy has established eelgrass mitigation sites to compensate for eelgrass losses due to in-water construction projects. Two of the Navy Eelgrass Mitigation Sites (NEMS) are on NAB. NEMS 1 is 2.83 hectares and NEMS 4 is 0.40 hectares. Eelgrass losses due to P-144 would be mitigated at one of these existing NEMS.

With the Navy's commitments to avoid eelgrass beds during in-water construction, to generate a net reduction in structural shading of shallow bay waters that can support eelgrass beds, and to provide mitigation at its existing eelgrass mitigation sites should the project cause a net loss in eelgrass, the Commission finds that the project's impacts have been adequately mitigated and that the project is consistent with the Section 30233 of the Coastal Act.

The project will occur within the foraging area of the federally endangered California least tern (Exhibit 7). The Navy states that potential impacts on the least tern include displacement from this portion of their foraging habitat due to increased human presence and construction noise, and temporary

degradation of foraging habitat due to turbidity from disturbance of soft bottom habitat. To avoid impacts to the least tern, the Navy will undertake project construction outside the least tern nesting season, between September 15 and April 1. In addition, removal of the existing CB Pier at the project site will result in a small but permanent gain of 0.39 acres of shallow water foraging habitat. With these provisions, the Navy concludes that no adverse impacts on the least tern are expected with project implementation. The Commission concurs and finds the project consistent with Section 30230 and 30240 of the Coastal Act.

B. Public Access. Section 30210 of the Coastal Act provides:

In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

Section 30211 provides:

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 provides in part:

(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....

The Navy states in its consistency determination that the proposed relocation of the EOD Unit is consistent with the public access policies of the Coastal Act. The proposed waterfront operations facility will not affect public access because the shoreline adjacent to the site and waters extending 200 feet into San Diego Bay are not now publically accessible due to military security needs. Due to the lack of burdens on public access generated by the project, and the military security needs which have traditionally been accepted by the Commission at the NAB, the Commission finds that the project consistent with the public access and recreation Sections 30210, 30211, and 30212 of the Coastal Act.

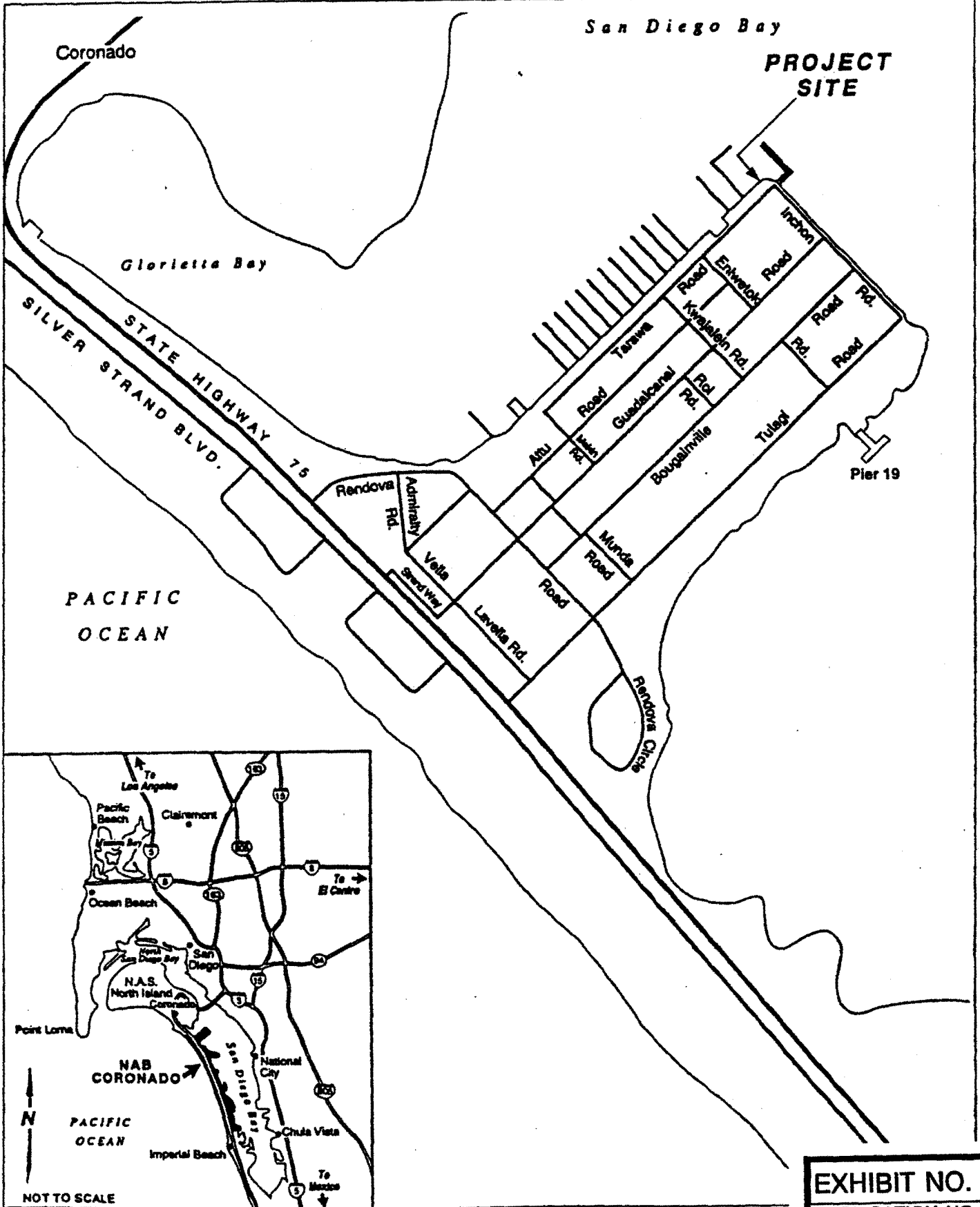
C. Visual Resources. Section 30251 of the Coastal Act provides:

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, and,

where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

The proposed upland and in-water facilities would be consistent with the existing type and intensity of naval industrial development on the north side of the NAB. The height and architectural character of the proposed structures would be compatible with adjacent structures at the NAB. While the 76-foot high paraloft tower (Exhibit 8) would be higher than other structures on the base, its presence will not significantly alter nor adversely affect the character of the NAB or public views to the NAB from San Diego Bay, Coronado, or the San Diego-Coronado Bay Bridge. The northeast corner of the NAB is already heavily developed and not particularly scenic. The Navy concludes that existing coastal views towards the NAB would not be significantly degraded by the proposed facility. The Commission agrees with the Navy's conclusion that the project will not adversely affect public views and will be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding area. The Commission therefore finds the project consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act.

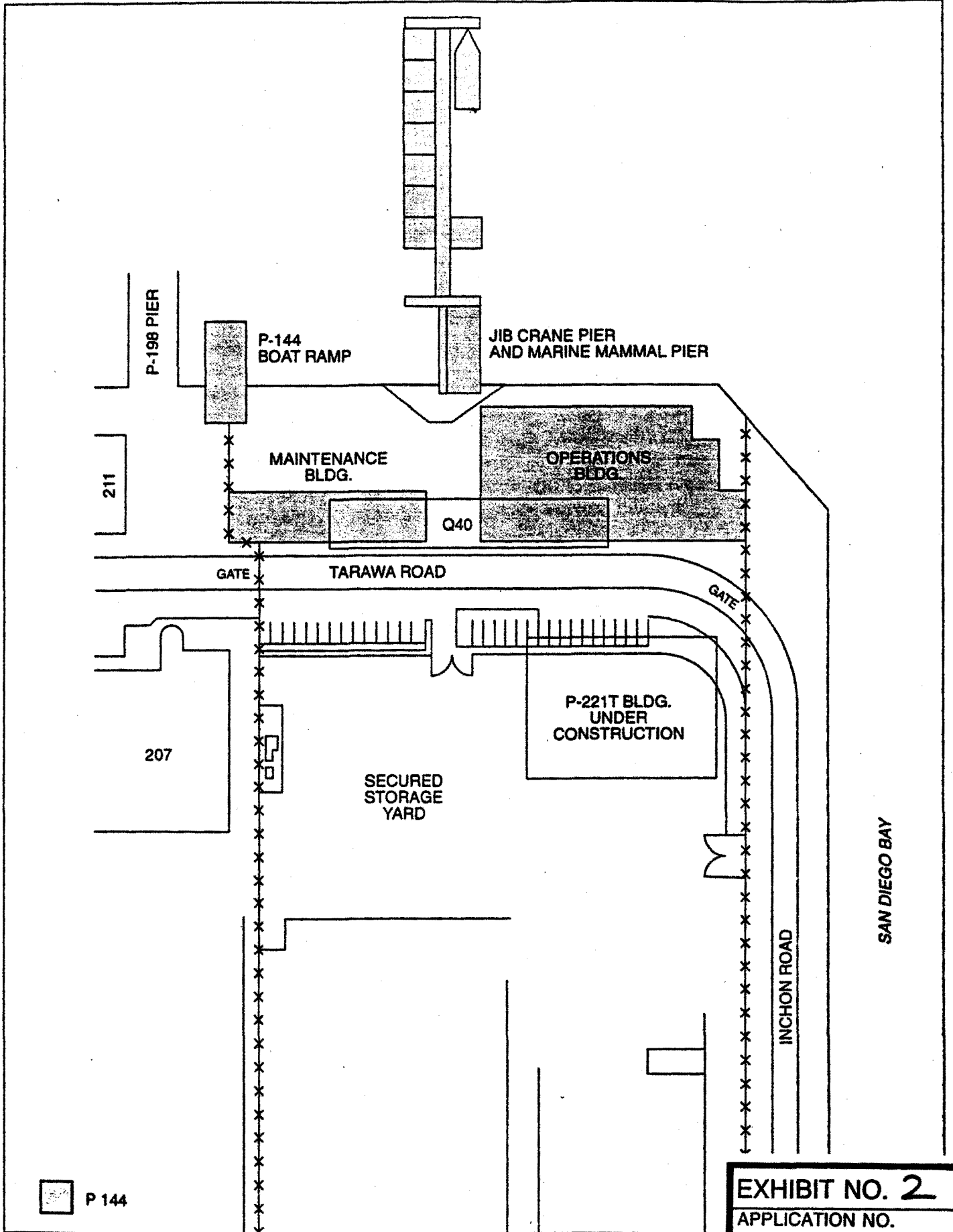
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Feet
 0 800
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 Source: United States Navy

PROJECT

EXHIBIT NO. 1
APPLICATION NO.
CD-88-96
California Coastal Commission



P 144




 Feet

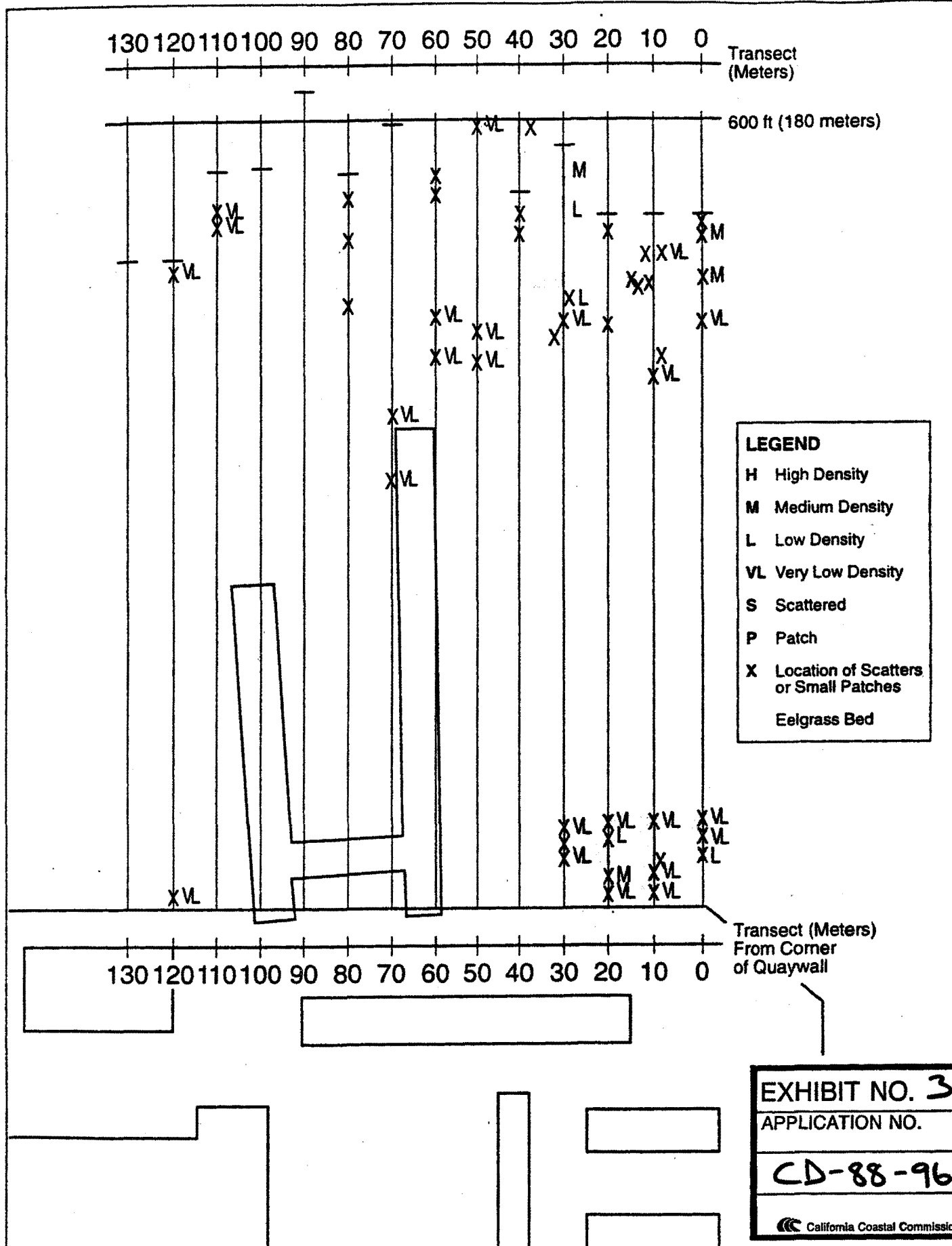
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 Source: Navy 1995

1-4

PROPOSED

EXHIBIT NO. 2
APPLICATION NO.
CD-88-96
 California Coastal Commission



EELGRASS DISTRIBUTION IN NORTHWEST CORNER OF NAB
Figure 3.2-3

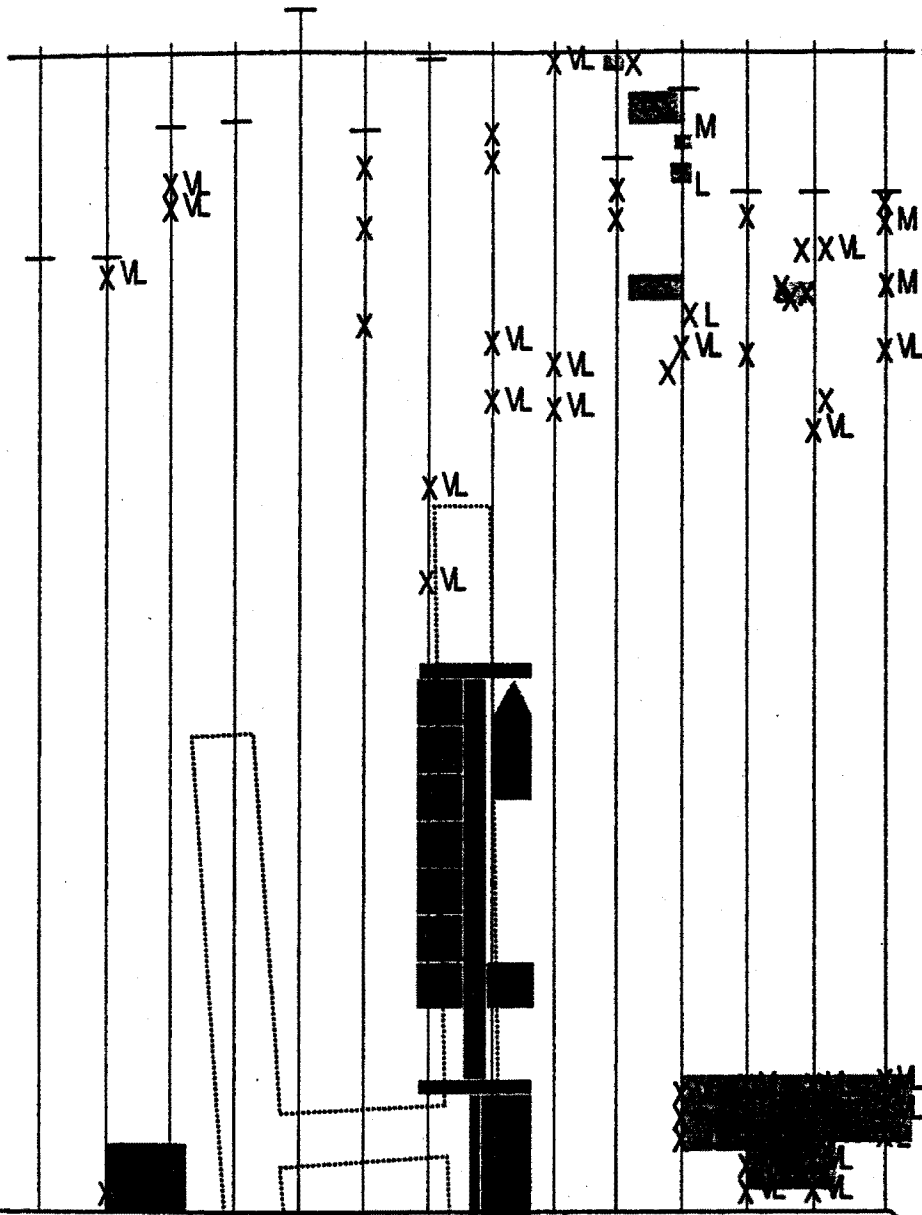
130 120 110 100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 - 0

Transect (Meters)

600ft

LEGEND

- H High Density
- M Medium Density
- L Low Density
- VL Very Low Density
- S Scattered
- P Patch
- X Location of Scatters or Small Patches
- Ø Break in Bed
- Eelgrass Bed
- Floating Docks



130 120 110 100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0

Transect (Meters) From Corner of Quaywall

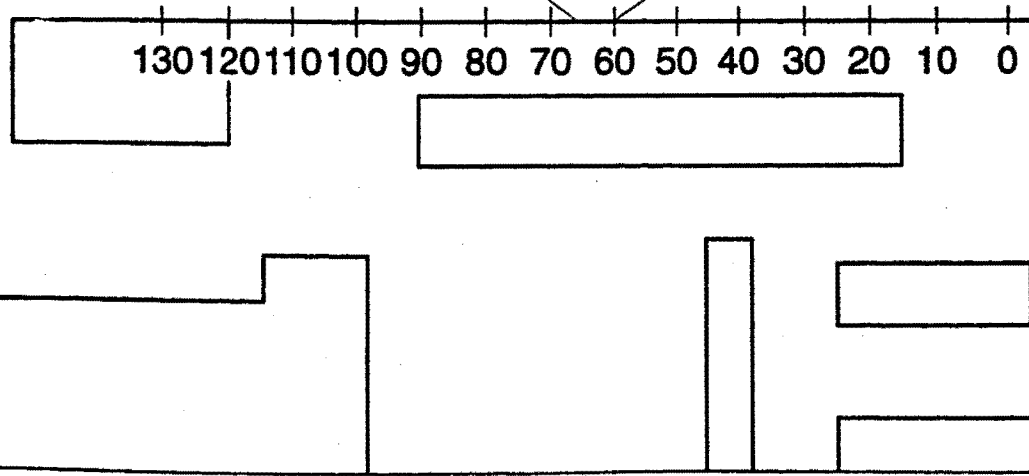
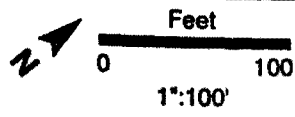


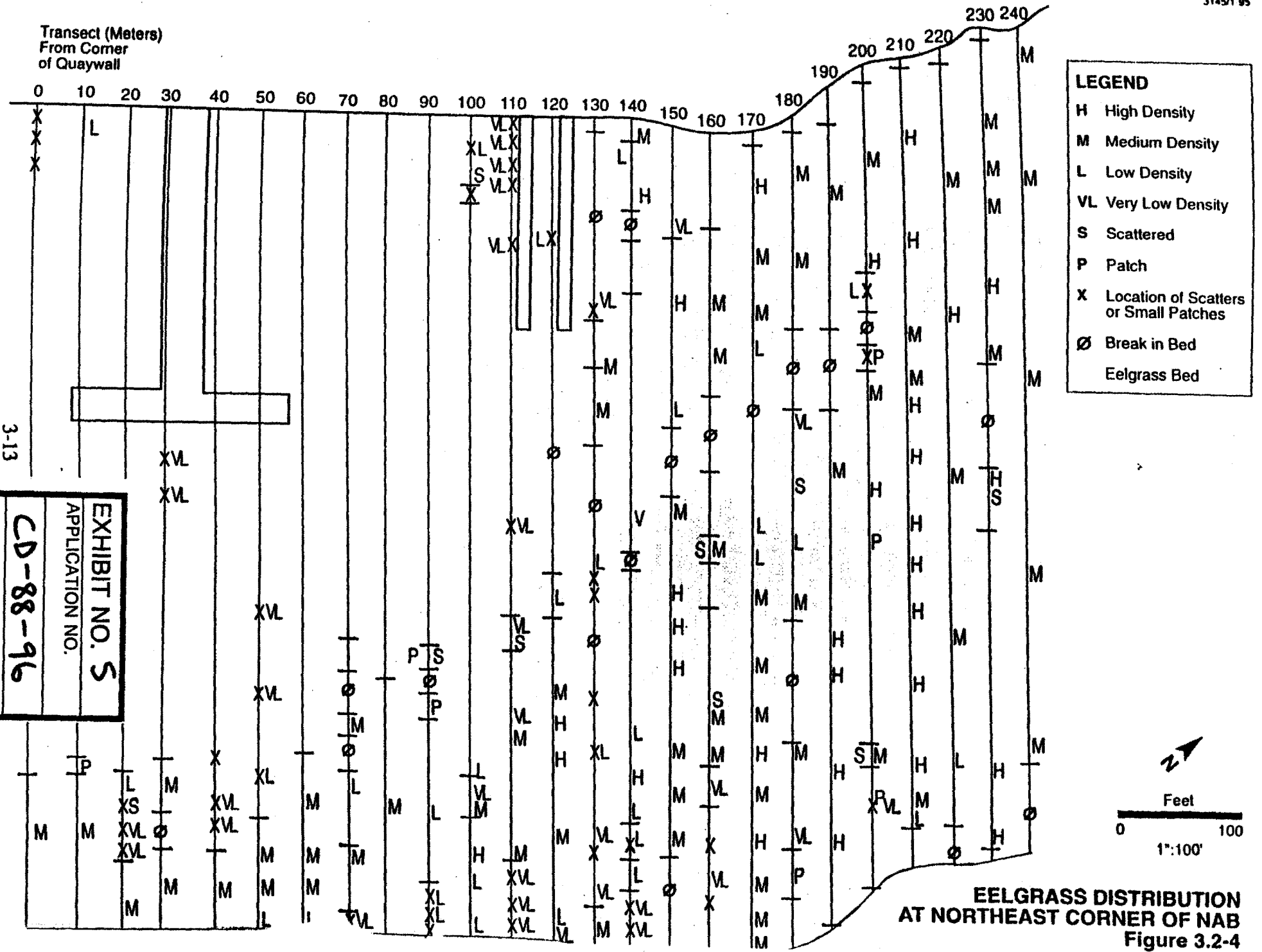
EXHIBIT NO. 4

APPLICATION NO.

CD-88-96

California Coastal Commission



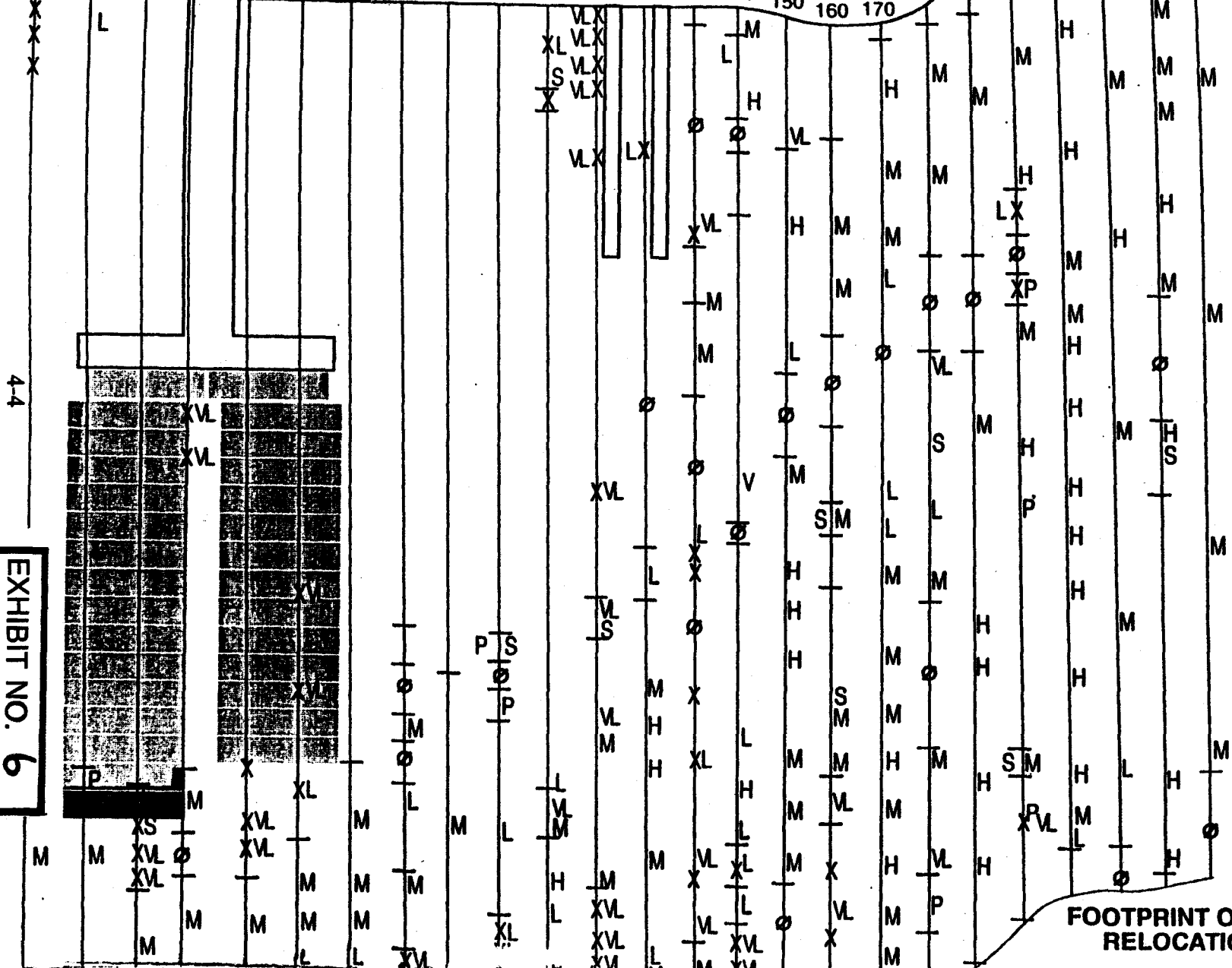


Transect (Meters)
From Corner
of Quaywall

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180 190 200 210 220 230 240

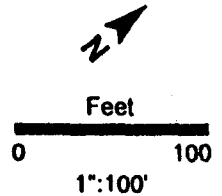
LEGEND

- H High Density
- M Medium Density
- L Low Density
- VL Very Low Density
- S Scattered
- P Patch
- X Location of Scatters or Small Patches
- ∅ Break in Bed
- Eelgrass Bed
- ▨ Floating Docks
- Floating Docks/ Eelgrass Bed

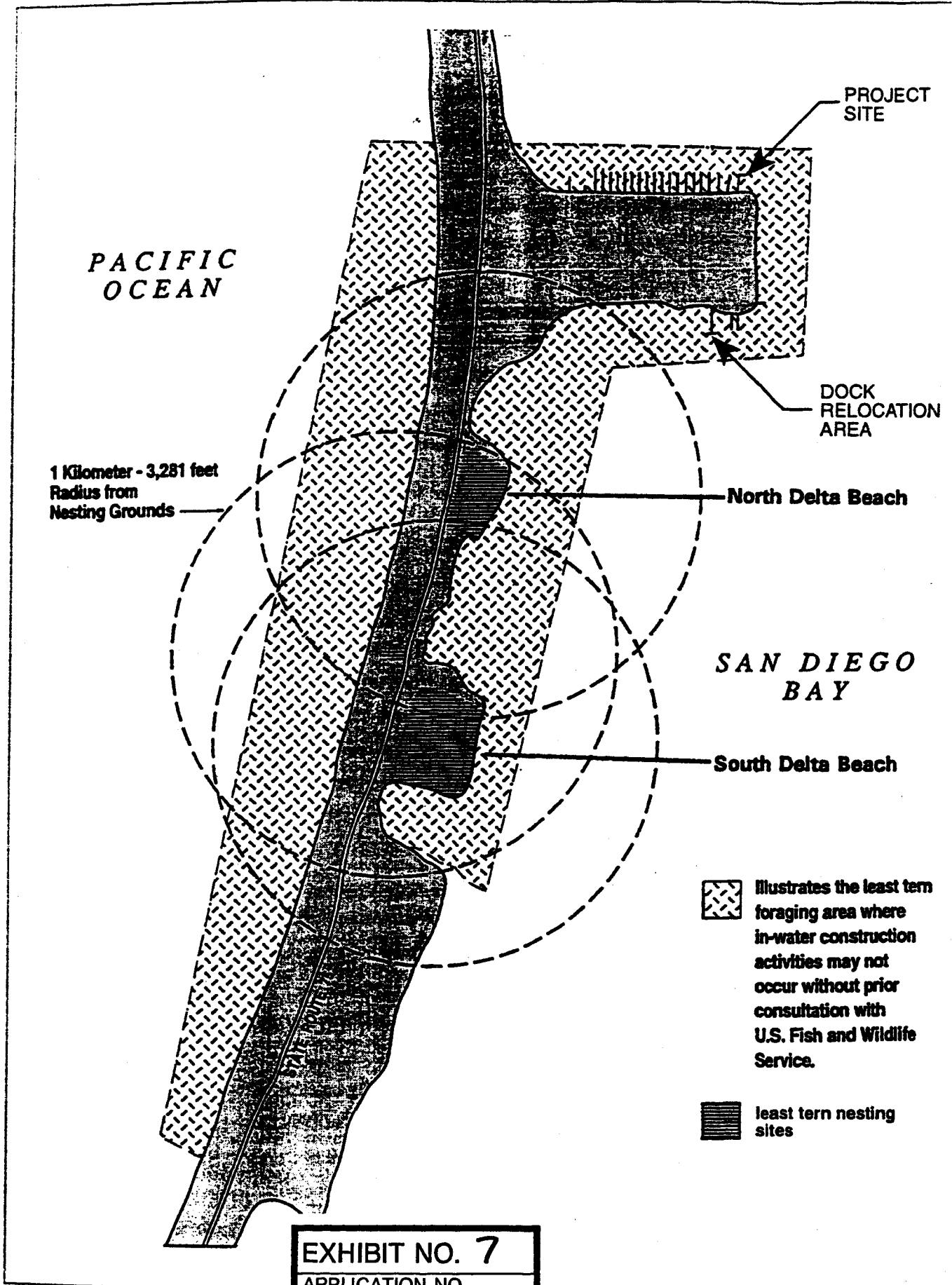


4-4

EXHIBIT NO. 6
APPLICATION NO.
CD-88-96



**FOOTPRINT OF FLOATING DOCK
RELOCATION AT NORTHEAST
CORNER OF NAR**



Feet

 0 ————— 2000

 Source: MOU between U.S. Fish and Naval Facilities Engineering

EXHIBIT NO. 7

 APPLICATION NO.

CD-88-96

 California Coastal Commission

CALIFORNIA LEAST TERN FORAGING AREA AND NESTING GROUND IN THE VICINITY OF NAB CORONA

 Figure 3

DEPT. OF THE NAVY PAC BUREAU OF
PUBLIC WORKS CENTER
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

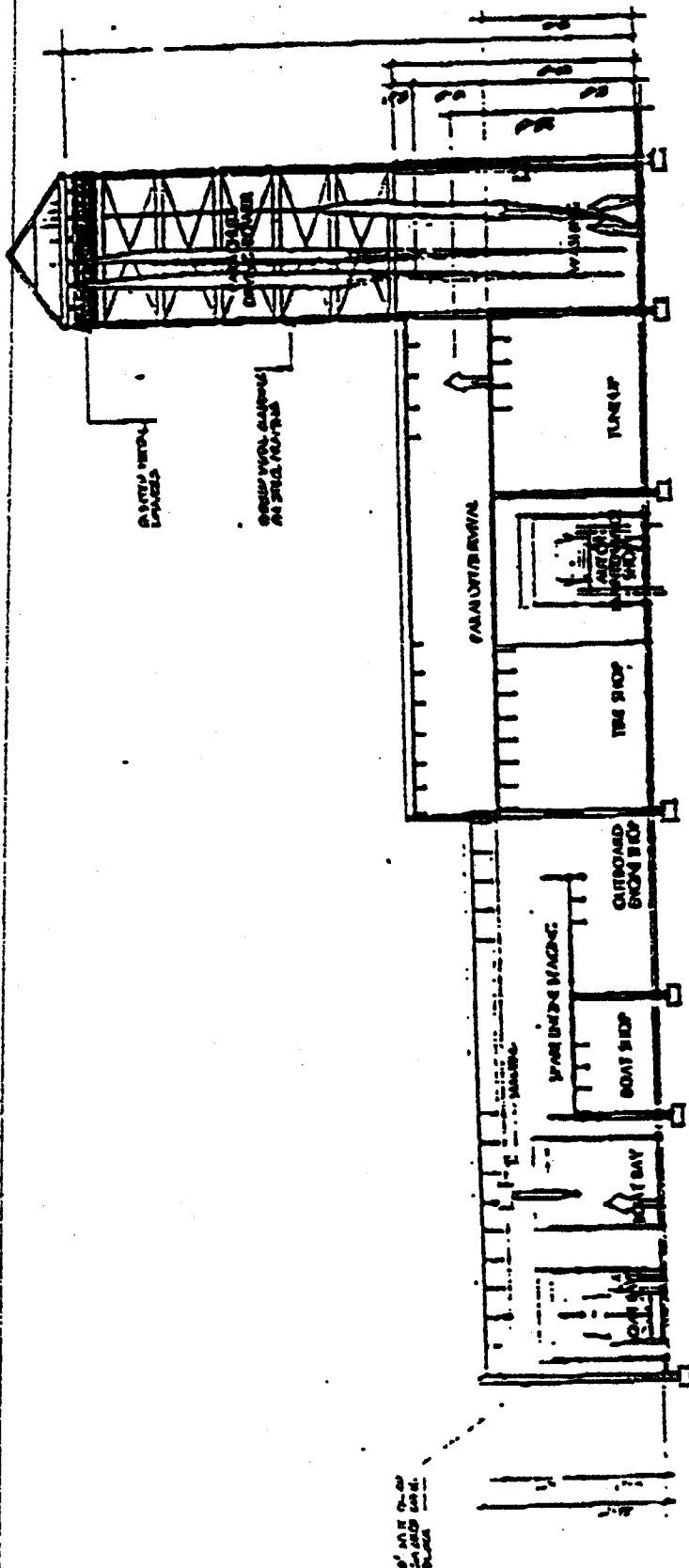
WATERFRONT OPERATIONS BUILDING, P-144
NAVAL AMPHIBIOUS BASE, CORONADO

PREPARED BY **ERIC DAY ALA. & ASSOCIATES**
DATE **27 SEP. 1991**

REV.

REV. NO.

REV. NO.



SECTION B-B

EXHIBIT NO. 8
APPLICATION NO.
CD-88-96