

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

SAN DIEGO AREA

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November 13, 1997

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TO: COMMISSIONERS AND INTERESTED PERSONS

FROM: CHUCK DAMM, SOUTH COAST DEPUTY DIRECTOR
DEBORAH N. LEE, DISTRICT MANAGER, SAN DIEGO AREA OFFICE
DIANA LILLY, COASTAL PLANNER, SAN DIEGO AREA OFFICE

SUBJECT: **Staff Recommendation on San Diego Unified Port District Port Master Plan Amendment No. 24 (Imperial Beach Oceanfront).** For Commission consideration and possible action at the Meeting of December 9-12, 1997.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is recommending that the Commission approve the proposed amendment adding a new planning district to the Port Master Plan, totaling approximately 410 acres. The plan area would consist of 403 acres of water, (402 acres designated open ocean and 1 acre designated Sportfishing Berthing) and 7 acres of land, designated Commercial Recreation (1.2 acres), Public Recreation (2.7 acres) and Public Facilities (3.1 acres). Major projects which would be added to the project list include renovation and expansion of the existing Imperial Beach Pier Plaza with removal of a 75 space parking lot and construction of restrooms, commercial space, landscaping, and an outdoor performance area, a 4,000-7,000 sq.ft. restaurant on an expanded area of the Ocean Pier, public improvements to Dunes Parks, and street ends enhancements. Staff recommends that the Commission find the amendment, as submitted, consistent with the resource protection and public recreation policies of Chapter 3 and Chapter 8 of the Coastal Act.

The appropriate motions and resolutions can be found on Page 2. The main findings for approval of the amendment as submitted begin on Page 3.

Port Master Plan Amendment Procedure. California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 13636 calls for port master plan amendments to be certified in the same manner as provided in Section 30714 of the Coastal Act for certification of port master plans. Section 13628 of the Regulations states that, upon the determination of the Executive Director that the master plan amendment and accompanying materials required by Section 13628(a) are sufficient, the master plan amendment shall be deemed submitted to the Commission for purposes of Section 30714 of the Coastal Act. The subject amendment was deemed submitted on October 8, 1997. Within 90 days after this submittal date, the

Commission, after public hearing, shall certify or reject the amendment, in whole or in part. If the Commission fails to take action on the amendment submittal within the 90-day period, the proposed amendment is deemed certified. The date by which the Commission must take action, absent a waiver by the Port District of the 90-day period, is January 6, 1998.

Section 30700 of the Coastal Act states that Chapter 8 shall govern those portions of the San Diego Unified Port District located within the coastal zone, excluding any wetland, estuary, or existing recreation area indicated in Part IV of the Coastal Plan. The entire oceanfront area of Imperial Beach is classified in the Coastal Plan as "existing recreation area" on the maps adopted by the Commission pursuant to Section 30710 of the Act. Therefore, all of the planning district is subject to review under the policies of Chapter 3. Chapter 3 and Chapter 8 of the Coastal Act are the standard of review for the proposed amendment.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

I. PORT MASTER PLAN SUBMITTAL - RESOLUTIONS

Following a public hearing, staff recommends the Commission adopt the following resolution and findings. The appropriate motions to introduce the resolution and a staff recommendation are provided just prior to the resolution.

RESOLUTION I (Resolution to approve certification of Port of San Diego Master Plan Amendment No. 24)

MOTION I

I move that the Commission certify the Port Master Plan Amendment as submitted.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends a **YES** vote and the adoption of the following resolution and findings. An affirmative vote by a majority of the Commissioners present is needed to pass the motion.

Resolution I

Certification of Amendment

The Commission hereby certifies San Diego Unified Port District Master Plan Amendment No. 24, and finds, for the reasons discussed below, that the amended Port Master Plan conforms with and carries out the policies of Chapter 3 and

Chapter 8 of the Coastal Act. The Commission further finds that the plan amendment will not have any significant adverse impacts on the environment within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

II. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS.

The Commission finds and declares as follows:

A. Previous Commission Action. The Commission certified the San Diego Unified Port District Master Plan on October 14, 1980. The Commission has reviewed twenty-three amendments since that date.

B. Contents of Port Master Plan Amendments. California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 13656 calls for port master plan amendments to be certified in the same manner as port master plans. Section 30711 of the Coastal Act states, in part, that a port master plan shall include all the following:

- (1) The proposed uses of land and water areas, where known.
- (2) The proposed design and location of port land areas, water areas, berthing, and navigation ways and systems intended to serve commercial traffic within the area of jurisdiction of the port governing body.
- (3) An estimate of the effect of development on habitat areas and the marine environment, a review of existing water quality, habitat areas, and quantitative and qualitative biological inventories, and proposals to minimize and mitigate any substantial adverse impact.
- (4) Proposed projects listed as appealable in Section 30715 in sufficient detail to be able to determine their consistency with the policies of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200) of this division.
- (5) Provisions for adequate public hearings and public participation in port planning and development decisions.

The Commission finds that the proposed port master plan amendment conforms with the provisions of Section 30711 of the Coastal Act. The proposed changes in land and water uses are outlined in sufficient detail in the port master plan submittal for the Commission to make a determination of the proposed amendment's consistency with the Chapter 3 and Chapter 8 policies of the Coastal Act.

The proposed amendment was the subject of an Initial Study and Negative Declaration under the California Environmental Quality Act. The Negative Declaration associated with the plan amendment was subject to public review and hearing and was adopted by

the Board of Port Commissioners on May 27, 1997, as Resolution 97-100. A public hearing on the proposed master plan amendment was held and the amendment was adopted by the Board of Port Commissioners on August 12, 1997, as Resolution #97-187.

C. Standard of Review. Section 30710 states that Chapter 8 shall govern those portions of the San Diego Unified Port District, excluding any wetland, estuary, or existing recreation area indicated in Part IV of the Coastal Plan. The proposed project would incorporate a water area mapped as an existing recreation area in the Coastal Plan. Therefore, the policies of Chapter 3 and Chapter 8 of the Coastal Act are the standard of review for the proposed amendment.

D. Summary of Proposed Plan Amendment/History. The proposed master plan amendment would add a new planning district, the "Imperial Beach Oceanfront." The plan area would consist of 403 acres of water, (402 acres designated open ocean and 1 acre designated Sportfishing Berthing) and 7 acres of land, designated Commercial Recreation (1.2 acres), Public Recreation (2.7 acres) and Public Facilities (3.1 acres).

The planning district would also include a project list with several major proposed projects. The existing Imperial Beach Pier Plaza would be renovated and expanded to remove the existing 75 space parking lot and construct new restrooms, up to 1,400 sq.ft. of commercial retail space, an outdoor performance area, public park improvements such as landscaping, picnic tables, and public area. The existing Ocean Pier would be expanded with a pier "saddle" over the water area, to accommodate a 4,000-7,000 sq.ft. restaurant and associated retail space. Dunes Park would be expanded to increase its total area to about 1.4 acres and various public recreational features such as restrooms and play areas would be constructed. Also proposed is the enhancement of thirteen street ends on the beach with shoreline protection, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, and improved beach accessways.

The Imperial Beach Oceanfront planning district consists of tidelands and submerged lands that had previously been granted by the State of California to the City of Imperial Beach, but were transferred by the State Legislature to the San Diego Unified Port District on June 13, 1990. In addition, the plan also includes several upland areas which are currently within the Port District's legal geographic boundary, having been acquired by the District in fee title from private parties, or which have been leased by the Port District from the City of Imperial Beach or private owners, or have easements granted to the District by the City of Imperial Beach. The San Diego Unified Port District Act provides that the district shall have land management authority and powers over any lands or interest in lands acquired by the district in furtherance of the district's powers and purposes, and this "interest in lands" includes lands which have been leased or have a easement to the District. These lands are the subject of a boundary amendment to be heard at the Commission's December 9-12, 1997 to formally incorporate the land into the Port District.

For planning purposes, the Imperial Beach Oceanfront district has been divided into various subareas in the proposed Master Plan amendment according to geography and proposed projects. The following analysis describes and reviews each subarea, (Ocean Beach, Imperial Beach Municipal Pier, Pier Plaza, Dunes Park, Street End Enhancements and Parking Facilities), as listed in the text of the plan amendment.

E. Conformance with the Coastal Act. The proposed amendment would add both basic land/water use categories and specific policies contained in a new Planning District. 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:

1. Applicable Policies

Section 30210

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

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...

Section 30212.5

Wherever appropriate and feasible, public facilities, including parking areas or facilities, shall be distributed throughout an area so as to mitigate against the impacts, social and otherwise, of overcrowding or overuse by the public of any single area.

Section 30213

Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities shall be protected, encouraged, and, where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred.

Section 30220

Coastal areas suited for water-oriented recreational activities that cannot readily be provided at inland water areas shall be protected for such uses.

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 30222

The use of private lands suitable for visitor-serving commercial recreational facilities designed to enhance public opportunities for coastal recreation shall have priority over private residential, general industrial, or general commercial development, but not over agriculture or coastal-dependent industry.

Section 30223

Upland areas necessary to support coastal recreational uses shall be reserved for such uses, where feasible.

Section 30230

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 30231

The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored

through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

Section 30233

(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:

[...]

(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.

[...]

(b) Dredging and spoils disposal shall be planned and carried out to avoid significant disruption to marine and wildlife habitats and water circulation. Dredge spoils suitable for beach replenishment should be transported for such purposes to appropriate beaches or into suitable long shore current systems.

[...]

Section 30234

Facilities serving the commercial fishing and recreational boating industries shall be protected and, where feasible, upgraded. Existing commercial fishing and recreational boating harbor space shall not be reduced unless the demand for those facilities no longer exists or adequate substitute space has been provided. Proposed recreational boating facilities shall, where feasible, be designed and located in such a fashion as not to interfere with the needs of the commercial fishing industry.

Section 30234.5

The economic, commercial, and recreational importance of fishing activities shall be recognized and protected.

Section 30235

Revetments, breakwaters, groins, harbor channels, seawalls, cliff retaining walls, and other such construction that alters natural shoreline processes shall be permitted when required to serve coastal-dependent uses or to protect existing structures or public beaches in danger from erosion, and when designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on local shoreline sand supply....

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, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas....

Section 30252

The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by... providing adequate parking facilities....

Section 30705

(a) Water areas may be diked, filled, or dredged when consistent with a certified port master plan only for the following:

[...]

(2) New or expanded facilities or waterfront land for port-related facilities.

(3) New or expanded commercial fishing facilities or recreational boating facilities.

[...]

(8) Minor fill for improving shoreline appearance or public access to the water.

[...]

(d) For water areas to be diked, filled, or dredged, the commission shall balance and consider socioeconomic and environmental factors.

Section 30706

In addition to the other provisions of this chapter, the policies contained in this section shall govern filling seaward of the mean high tide line within the jurisdiction of ports:

(a) The water area to be filled shall be the minimum necessary to achieve the purpose of the fill.

(b) The nature, location, and extent of any fill, including the disposal of dredge spoils within an area designated for fill, shall minimize harmful effects to coastal resources, such as water quality, fish or wildlife resources, recreational resources, or sand transport systems, and shall minimize reductions of the volume, surface area, or circulation of water.

(c) The fill is constructed in accordance with sound safety standards which will afford reasonable protection to persons and property against the hazards of unstable geologic or soil conditions or of flood or storm waters.

(d) The fill is consistent with navigational safety.

Section 30708

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

(a) Minimize substantial adverse environmental impacts.

[...]

(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....

2. Findings for Consistency with Chapter 3/Chapter 8 of the Coastal Act

A. Ocean Beach. This subarea consists of the sandy ocean beach area and two stone jetties on the northern edge of the beach, one located on Navy land and one on the extension of Palm Avenue. Future projects proposed for this area include opportunistic beach sand replenishment and continuing support for lifeguard services, beach

maintenance services and special events, such as beach festivals and the International Sandcastle Competition. Existing recreational activities such as sunbathing, bird watching, fishing, swimming, surfing, etc., are proposed to continue. The Port District has not included the "paper street" Ocean Lane in the planning district due to unresolved encroachment problems between the City of Imperial Beach and private beach front property owners regarding the placement of stone revetment.

1. Public Recreation/Public Access

Continued and enhanced recreational use of the beaches is consistent with the many recreational policies of the Coastal Act and sand replenishment is also strongly encouraged by the Act. Using portable lifeguard towers, which is stated as a "preferred practice" in the plan text, rather than constructing new permanent structures on sandy beach will ensure that the maximum amount of beach remains available for public use and will reduce the need to install additional shoreline protection to protect new structures. Elsewhere in the proposed plan text (p. 147, under Pier Plaza), the plan indicates that activities associated with the pier will be open to the public without charge. In reviewing recent local coastal program amendments, the Commission has found that charging for special, temporary events which take place on sandy beach can be inconsistent with the public access and recreation policies of the Coastal Act. The Commission supports the Port District's commitment to beach and ocean-related events that are free of charge as provided for in this amendment. Therefore, the amendment can be found consistent with the applicable sections of the Coastal Act.

B. Imperial Beach Municipal Pier. The existing Ocean Pier is 24 feet wide and approximately 1,500 feet long. Existing public recreational activities on the pier include fishing, strolling, viewing and approximately 1,500 sq.ft. of visitor-serving commercial concessions such as fishing services and refreshments. A 150-foot wide safety zone has been established on either side of the pier to prevent swimmers, surfers and water craft from potential hazards from fishing hooks and lines or collision with the pier pilings.

The plan proposes more intensive development on the pier in the future, including an expansion of the pier structure itself and a new 4,000-7,000 sq.ft. restaurant. Although not specified in the plan, environmental documents for the amendment indicate that the proposed pier "saddle" would not exceed 9,000 sq.ft. The saddle would be constructed over the water and may require the installation of additional pier pilings. In association with the restaurant, additional retail space may also be constructed, with priority given to businesses oriented towards tourism and beach visitors. Because the specifics of the proposed restaurant have not been developed at this time, the plan indicates that the restaurant will be subject to additional environmental review in the future.

1. Visitor-Serving Uses/Recreational Uses

Visitor-serving commercial uses are a high priority use under the Coastal Act. However, the proposed intensification of use has the potential to adversely impact public access and recreation. The fill required to construct the pier saddle can be found consistent with Section 30233 of the Act as the placement of structural pilings for a public recreational pier that provides public access and recreational opportunities. But expansion of the pier would require a commensurate expansion of the safety zone around the pier saddle, thus reducing the amount of area available for water recreation. Even a minor reduction in the amount of area available for water recreation must be evaluated carefully. However, looking at this location and the availability of access points with support facilities both north and south of the pier, the expansion of the safety zone is not expected to adversely or significantly affect water recreational opportunities. The plan provides that functional public accessways will be provided around the proposed restaurant on the pier saddle. Thus, in this particular case, the loss of water area will be very small and construction of the pier saddle may increase opportunities for the public to enjoy passive viewing of the water area.

2. Public Access

Construction of the proposed restaurant would provide a new amenity to the pier, offering support facilities for beachgoers and providing a new attraction to the area. However, the restaurant and associated commercial development would create a demand for additional parking. As stated above, Section 30252 of the Act requires that new development maintain and enhance public access to the coast by providing adequate parking facilities. If adequate parking is not provided for new uses, parking spaces previously available for beach users could be usurped. The plan text indicates that "public parking is available on the streets in the Seacoast Drive area and commercially generated parking demands will be met in parking lots." Thus, existing street parking currently available for public parking will not be impacted by the future proposed restaurant development. Elsewhere in the proposed plan (page 148, under Parking Facilities), it is suggested that the proposed Elkwood/Seacoast Drive parking lot could serve as parking for patrons of the proposed restaurant. However, as discussed below, under Pier Plaza, the Elkwood lot is necessary to provide replacement parking for the 75-space lot planned to be demolished at Pier Plaza. Thus, parking for new development on the pier saddle must be satisfied with new, off-street parking facilities not required to meet the parking demands of any other development. Only if the Commission can be assured that all new development will have adequate parking, such that no existing public parking is displaced, can the amendment be found consistent with the Coastal Act. As stated in the plan, the streets around Seacoast Drive are for public parking and public uses, while private commercial development must provide separate off-street parking. Therefore, the Commission finds that the amendment can be found consistent with the applicable policies of the Coastal Act.

C. Pier Plaza. The plan proposes a major renovation and expansion of the existing 1.5 acre Pier Plaza, which currently consists of a park and a 75 space parking lot. The existing asphalt parking area would be demolished and replaced with a 20,000 sq.ft. turf area, an amphitheater/performance area and landscape and hardscape improvements. A new restroom facility and concession building totaling approximately 2,200 sq.ft., with 1,200 to 1,400 sq.ft. of retail floor space would also be constructed at the plaza. Other enhancements include lighting, signs, park furniture, a children's play area with equipment and public art. The plaza enhancements would serve as a venue for numerous activities including shoreline access, beach activities, civic events, farmer's markets, community meetings and concerts open to the public without charge. A public service building to house a relocated lifeguard administrative center and other public services would be located on a vacant site on the south edge of Pier Plaza. A new 46-space parking lot (which has been constructed but is not yet open) would be located on the northeast corner of Elkwood Drive and Seacoast Drive.

The City of Imperial Beach has already issued a permit to the Port District for the bulk of the public Pier Plaza improvements, since at the time the permit was approved (July 2, 1997), the area was under the City's jurisdiction. The permit, which was appealable to the Coastal Commission, was not appealed and became final on July 23, 1997.

1. Public Access/Public Recreation/Visitor-Serving Uses

The redevelopment of Pier Plaza would provide a focal point of public activity, recreational opportunities and public amenities not currently available in the Imperial Beach area. But the removal of 75 existing parking spaces raises serious concerns about the public's ability to access the beach and coastline. Not only is parking simply for passive beach uses typically at a premium on the shoreline, but the enhancement of the Plaza will itself attract more people to the beach. The replacement parking proposed would be located on the east side of Seacoast, farther away from the beach, and would provide less than two-thirds the amount of parking being lost.

A parking study commissioned by the City of Imperial Beach determined that due to a lack of amenities and the historic underutilization of the City's beaches and facilities, there is currently little demand for parking in the Pier Plaza lot. The study found that on a typical weekend day, a maximum of only 34 vehicles were parked in the existing lot. The parking standard for retail commercial development in the City is one parking space for every 250 sq.ft. of retail floor area. With the development of 1,400 sq.ft. of retail space, plus an estimated three spaces for employee parking, an additional nine spaces would be required. Thus, the required 43 spaces (34 + 9), could be provided in the 46 space Elkwood Lot. In addition, the existing pier parking lot does not conform to current parking codes relative to stall size and turning lanes, which, if brought up to current standards, would reduce the number of potential spaces on the existing site to 60.

Of course, this analysis does not take into account the additional demand for parking which can be expected as a result of the improved facilities at Pier Plaza, nor does it take into account that over time, demand for beach parking almost inevitably rises as population increases. Nevertheless, by providing new and improved low-cost, visitor-serving coastal facilities, the proposed Pier Plaza redevelopment will significantly benefit the public, which as a whole, outweighs the adverse impacts of reducing the existing public parking. As currently proposed, the new parking facility at Elkwood will provide the minimum amount of parking necessary to replace the existing parking facility and assure the public will not be precluded from accessing the beach. However, because only the minimum amount of parking is being provided, as noted in the previous section, the Elkwood parking lot cannot be relied upon to serve as parking for any uses other than replacement parking for Pier Plaza. The Commission can only find the amendment consistent with the Coastal Act if it is assured that any additional intensification of private commercial uses at Pier Plaza or the surrounding area will provide adequate parking to serve the new development. As noted below, under Parking Facilities, the Port District has committed to using the Elkwood lot "to provide replacement off-street parking to serve the municipal pier." Therefore, the Commission finds that the amendment is consistent with the applicable sections of the Coastal Act.

D. Dunes Park. Dunes Park is an existing park containing children's play areas, landscaping, public art and other public park features. The plan proposes to expand the park to 1.4 acres and add additional features such as public restrooms and a hard surface play area. View corridors and public accessways would be maintained.

1. Public Recreation

The proposed improvements would provide additional public, low-cost, visitor-serving recreational facilities consistent with the priorities of the Coastal Act. Although park improvements have the potential to increase parking demand, as proposed, the improvements do not appear to have the potential to generate significant new demand for parking. Moreover, the City's parking study did find that there is currently adequate on-street parking which could appropriately serve public uses such as parks and park facilities. Therefore, the amendment can be found consistent with the applicable provisions of the Coastal Act.

E. Street Ends Enhancements. The plan includes the enhancement of thirteen coastal accessways/street ends with textured paving, drainage, curbs and gutters, sidewalk, lighting, beach access, landscaping and shoreline protection. No existing public access areas will be removed and the plan indicates that no cumulative reduction of parking will occur. As proposed, the shoreline protection at the street ends will not extend into the beach beyond the toe of any existing shore protection.

1. Public Access/Visual Quality

The landscape and hardscape improvements will increase the visibility and attractiveness of the accessways, thereby generally improving public beach access. The Port District has indicated that there may be some redesign and shifting of the existing parking spaces at the street ends to accommodate the improvements. As long as the cumulative total number of spaces remains the same within the prime beach access area (west of Seacoast Drive between Palm Avenue and Imperial Beach Boulevard), minor rearrangements in the parking would not adversely impact public access.

Section 30235 of the Coastal Act permits the construction of shoreline protection devices to protect existing structures. The proposed shoreline protection is intended to protect existing public street ends and public accessways. The Port District has indicated that the design objective of the protective structures is to maximize public beach and shoreline access opportunities and has committed that, in no event, will any shoreline protective structures encroach further seaward than presently existing protection. To the maximum extent feasible, shoreline protection will be integrated into existing and proposed public access structures to avoid or minimize encroachment on sandy beach. As part of the master plan submittal, the Port District has stated that engineered vertical seawalls that minimize physical intrusion are preferred. These standards are consistent with both the previously certified Imperial Beach LCP criteria for shoreline protection in the Seacoast District, and with the public access and recreation policies of the Coastal Act. Therefore, the amendment can be found consistent with the applicable Coastal Act policies.

F. Parking Facilities. As discussed above, the Port has developed a 0.5 acre parking lot on the northeast corner of Elkwood and Seacoast Drive to replace the parking removed for the Pier Plaza development. The plan includes the Port District's commitment to perform a parking demand and supply monitoring study following the completion of the Pier Plaza development and provide mitigation for any additional parking demand identified by the study. The plan also suggests that ultimate development of the off-site parking area could involve a parking structure with commercial uses.

1. Public Access

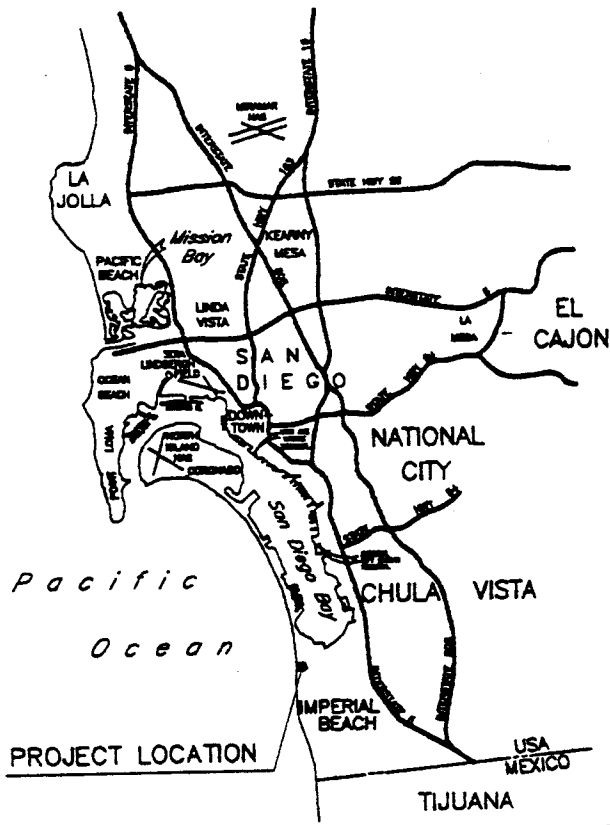
Currently, the amount of parking provided on the lot is the minimum amount required to serve the Pier Plaza development. Although the plan indicates that this lot "may" provide space for patrons of the proposed restaurant on the pier saddle, it is incumbent on the Port District to determine the need and provide parking for the restaurant and any other commercial uses which may be developed in the future prior to construction of these uses, as any increase in the use of the Elkwood lot would result in spill-over onto the public on-street parking spaces, impacting public beach access. As previously noted, the plan requires that parking for the restaurant be accommodated with off-street parking in a parking lot. Providing a parking structure as suggested could potentially allow the

Elkwood lot to serve as parking for additional uses. However, as there are currently no specific plans to develop a parking structure or commercial uses on this site, the project has not been included in the planning district's project list and would require an additional port master plan amendment in the future. The proposed monitoring program could provide support for the appropriateness of restaurant and/or commercial development on and around Pier Plaza.

G. Summary Findings.

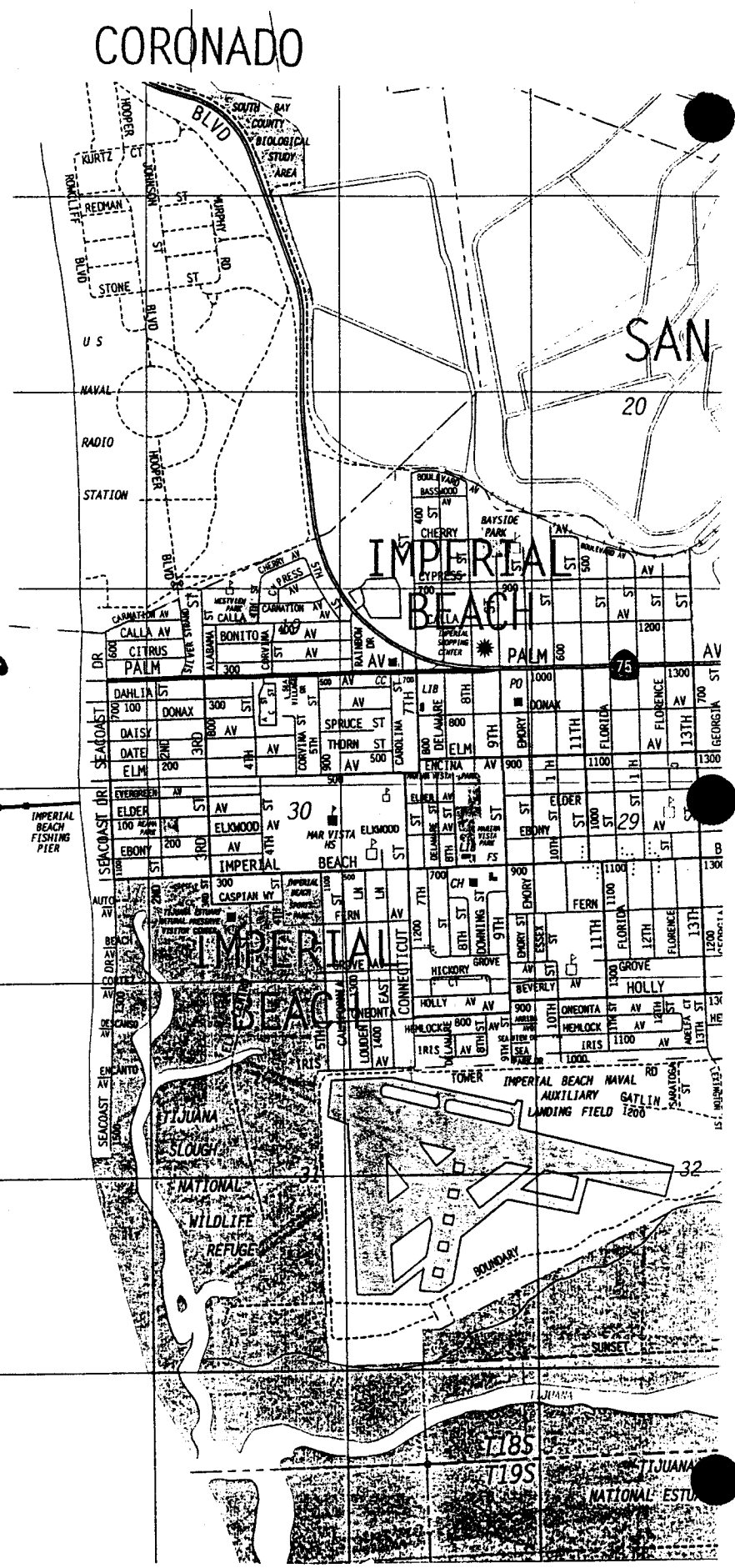
In summary, the proposed Imperial Beach Oceanfront planning district will protect and enhance public access and recreation by providing additional public recreational amenities and new visitor-serving public and commercial development. Although the extensive new development proposed has the potential to adversely public beach access by reducing existing public parking supplies and increasing the demand for parking, the new Pier Plaza will significantly improve the existing public recreational facilities, there is some evidence of a public parking reservoir remaining on the streets and new commercial development will be required to provide adequate off-street parking. Therefore, the Commission finds that the amendment as submitted is consistent with the cited sections of the Coastal Act.

F. Consistency with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The proposed amendment would not have an adverse impact on sensitive biological resources or water quality. Incorporation of the proposed land and water uses in the Imperial Beach Oceanfront planning district into the Master Plan will not adversely affect the natural environment. The Commission therefore finds that there are no feasible alternatives to the proposed amendment, as it will not result in significant adverse impacts on the environment of the coastal zone.



VICINITY MAP

SUBJECT AREA



San Diego Unified Port District
Master Plan Amendment

Imperial Beach Oceanfront

Adopted by the Board of Port Commissioners
San Diego Unified Port District

August 12, 1997

IMPERIAL BEACH OCEANFRONT

Precise Plan Concept

The plan concept recognizes the city's shoreline as a focal point for recreational and associated commercial activities. To some extent, the future success of economic enterprises and community events is dependent on improvements and maintenance activities that enhance and strengthen a positive image along the waterfront. The plan concept proposes to: maintain existing view corridors to the water; improve public access to the shoreline; develop, rehabilitate and increase the size of public facilities and areas; enhance the amenities of public areas; and promote opportunities for appropriate visitor-serving commercial uses that makes the oceanfront an attractive place.

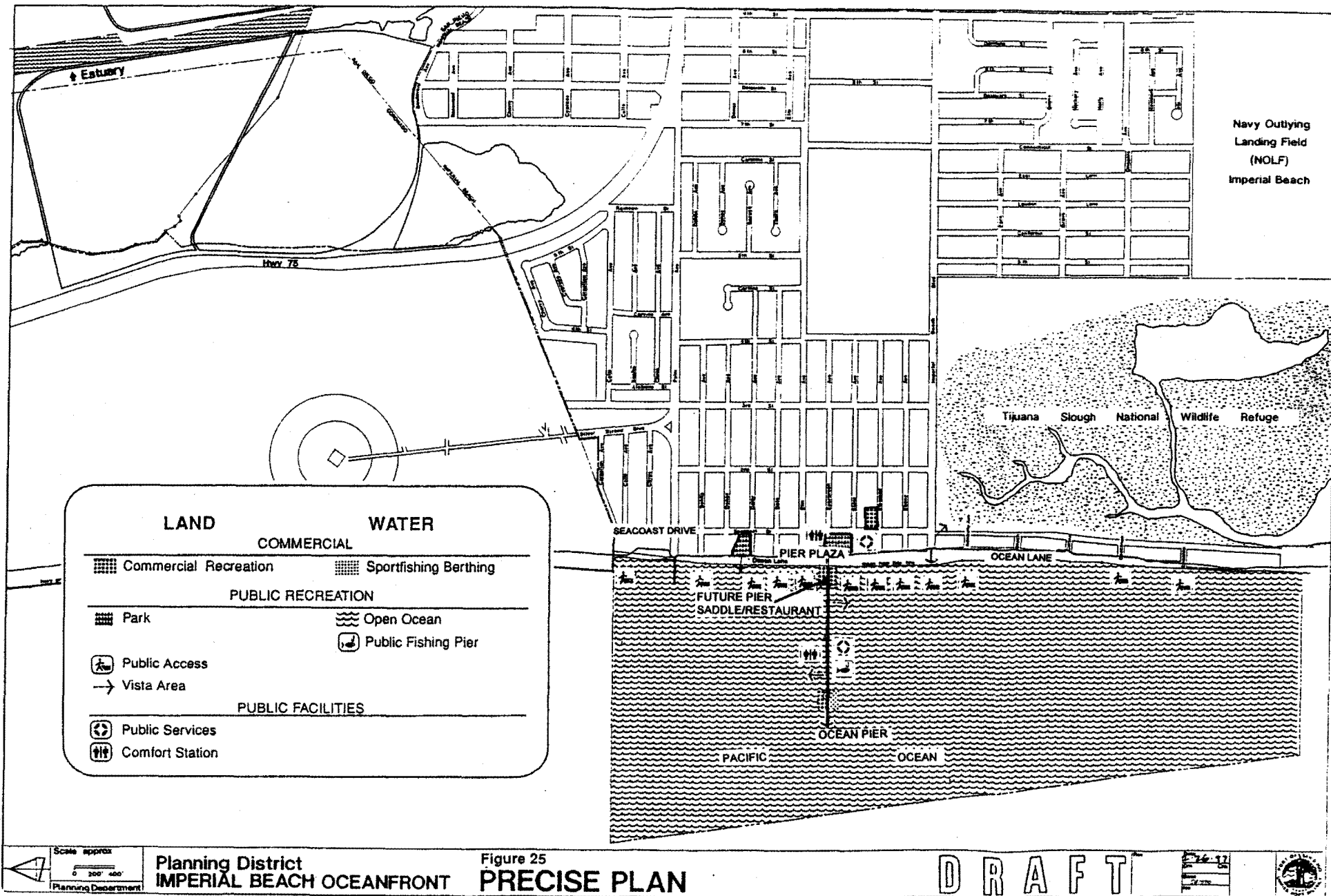
Land and Water Use Allocation

The Imperial Beach Oceanfront planning area comprises a total of roughly 410 acres, consisting of about 7 acres of land and 403 acres of water. The Land and Water Use plan proposes developments in the major use categories of commercial, public recreation, and public facilities. Acreage allocations are indicated in Table 23. All of the planned land and water use categories are shown on the Precise Plan map, Figure 25.

The District's plan area in Imperial Beach does not have the homogeneity of property entitlements found in the other Planning Districts. The District's property interest in Imperial Beach consists of land grants, leases, easements, and land purchases. In all cases, the Port Master Plan addresses land and water use and management intent consistent with the overall District purposes of promoting commerce, navigation, fisheries, and recreation as well as applicable Coastal Act policies.

TABLE 23: Land & Water Use Allocation
Imperial Beach Oceanfront

| | Land | Water |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| <u>Commercial</u> | | |
| Commercial Recreation | 1.2 · Sportfishing Berthing | 0.8 |
| <u>Public Recreation</u> | | |
| Park/plaza | 2.7 | |
| | Open Ocean | 402.0 |
| <u>Public Facilities</u> | | |
| Public Service Facility | 0.1 | |
| Street | 3.1 | |
| | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | 7.1 | 402.8 |
| <hr/> | | |
| TOTAL | | 409.9 |



The District has been granted, by the state of California, about 402.8 acres of Pacific Ocean tide and submerged lands. The granted lands are bounded by the historic mean high tide line for about 1.4 miles along the shoreline and extend westerly into the Pacific Ocean approximately 1,950 feet on the south end of the granted area and about 3,000 feet on the north end at the City boundary line. Proposed uses on granted lands include open space, open ocean, specialized berthing and on the Pier structure, a small amount of commercial recreation.

The District also holds leases from the City for Dunes Park and Pier Plaza. These areas are indicated on the precise plan map as park with some commercial recreation use for concessions at Pier Plaza.

The District proposes to obtain easements to facilitate improvements within the public right-of-way of thirteen streets that terminate at the beach. Approximately 3 acres are involved in easements. The plan indicates the use of these properties as streets and coastal accessways. Proposed shoreline protections at the street ends will not extend into the beach beyond the toe of the existing shore protection structures.

In several instances, a finding has been made that adequate area is not available for District purposes within existing land holdings so property purchases have been undertaken or are planned. The District plan involves purchased property to be used for the expansion of Dunes Park, expansion of Pier Plaza, additional parking areas, possibly a public service facility or other uses allowed under the Port Master Plan. These acquisitions are undertaken to promote the development of an enlivened and attractive oceanfront area that will be a desirable place to enjoy recreational activities.

Imperial Beach Oceanfront Planning Subareas

The following narrative organizes the Imperial Beach Oceanfront Planning District into a series of subareas for the purpose of discussing the plan. The geographic subareas are essentially project oriented and consist of the following areas; Ocean Beach, the Pier, Pier Plaza, Dunes Park, street endings, and automobile parking facilities.

Ocean Beach

The sandy ocean beach is probably the most important natural physical asset in the area. Existing beach activities planned to continue include beach volleyball, jogging, sunbathing, wading, bird watching, fishing, swimming, surfing, community beach festivals and special events, such as the International Sandcastle Competition. The District provides financial support for lifeguard, police, animal control, and beach and pier maintenance services. As a matter of preferred practice, portable lifeguard towers will continue to provide flexibility for responding to the shifting beach sand and beach user activities. The area is shown as open space on the Precise Plan illustration (Figure 25).

Other than the municipal pier and a jetty, the beaches located within the Port's legislative tidelands grant are free of structures. On the northern edge of the City's beach, there are two stone jetties. One jetty is located on Navy land and one is on the extension of Palm Avenue. The jetties were installed as part of a four-jetty plan to control beach sand erosion. These structures have not functioned as anticipated, and plans for the two remaining jetties were dropped.

The most challenging long term problem for the ocean beach area has to do with sand depletion and international sewage pollution. The deterioration of the beach can have a corresponding negative impact on the community's tourist generated income, on the recreational amenities available to the population, and flooding damage to adjacent properties. The width of the beach and its annual erosion rate have a direct bearing on recreational accommodations and erosion control measures necessary for upland properties. The ultimate solution probably involves actions that reduce sand loss, resupply and redistribute sand along the Silver Strand littoral cell to counter the general northward movement of sand. A continuing effort is desirable to replenish the beach sand lost by natural erosion through the use of opportunistic sand sources, provided the material is suitable for beach use and cost factors are feasible. Material produced from U.S. Navy dredging projects is proposed for near term use. Under the City's leadership, additional reconnaissance and feasibility studies are being pursued to address shoreline problems. Regional and bi-national programs and projects are underway outside the District's responsibility and jurisdiction to address and resolve the international sewage pollution of the Imperial Beach shoreline.

Imperial Beach Municipal Pier

The Ocean Pier is the major structure on the Imperial Beach beachfront. The pier is 24 feet wide and about 1,500 feet long terminating in the Pacific Ocean at a depth of approximately 20 feet. The wooden pier deck varies at heights of between 22 feet to 32 feet above Mean Lower Low Water. A 150 foot wide safety zone has been established on either side of the pier to separate swimmers, surfers, and water craft from the potential hazards of submerged obstructions, collisions with pier pilings and entanglement with fishing hooks and lines. Facilities on the public pier include fish cleaning basins, fresh water, and restrooms. At the western end of the pier, a building of about 1,500 square feet floor area provides commercial space for fishing supplies, food, beverages, cold storage, and other concessions. Commercial activities are illustrated as Commercial Recreation on the plan map (Figure 25). Close by the building is a retrievable ladder and gangway that provides access for a boat landing. The landing is exposed to the open ocean and so has limited usability; however, it can be used by sportfishing, charter, or towing boats. The landing is shown on the Precise Plan as recreational sportfishing berthing. Activities on the pier include pole and line fishing, bow and arrow fishing, strolling, viewing, and related visitor-serving concessions.

Future development plans place more intensive development on the pier within close proximity of the surf line to take advantage of views of the interesting ocean dynamics. The construction of a pier saddle and platform is proposed to attract a tenant and to promote opportunities for appropriate visitor-serving commercial uses. The saddle will be constructed out over the water beyond the surf line and may require the installation of additional pier pilings. The pier saddle will offer additional public pier access around the restaurant site and access to the end of the pier will not be restricted by the saddle improvements.

When market conditions provide justification, it is proposed to construct a restaurant of approximately 4,000 - 7,000 square feet on the saddle. Proposals for a pier saddle restaurant will be subject to additional environmental evaluation and review including assurance that functional public accessways are provided around the restaurant site on the pier saddle. Additional space may be constructed for associated retail space. Opportunities for businesses oriented to tourism and beach visitors would be given priority. Small retail merchants using pushcarts and temporary, seasonal stands might include the sale of ice cream, soft drinks, bathing and beach accessories, charcoal, souvenirs, novelties, and the rental of surfboards, beach chairs, umbrellas, and swim equipment. The Plan map indicates those areas as commercial recreation. The restaurant could encourage development of Imperial Beach's waterfront and pier area. Public parking is available on the streets in the Seacoast Drive area and commercially generated parking demands will be met in parking lots. The proposed pier redevelopment is meant to stimulate improvements in the area, with uses that promote recreational activities and attracts visitors to the ocean front.

Pier Plaza

The District plans extensive renovation and expansion of the 1.5 acre Pier Plaza which is shown as park and commercial recreation use on the Precise Plan illustration. The area was leased to the District in 1993, on a long term lease from the city, for park and parking lot use. Concessions that promote business opportunities oriented to tourist and beach uses would be given priority. The intent of the Plaza enhancement is to retain the best features of the existing plaza, especially the open space, expansive views, and public access across the plaza to the ocean. The plan proposes to relocate automobile parking primarily to the easterly side of Seacoast Drive. The existing pier plaza paved parking area will be replaced with lawn and pedestrian plaza hardscape in a more park like setting attractive to users.

New public restroom facilities are envisioned for increased accessibility and convenience. The acquisition of adjacent property will permit the full development of a public restroom and concession building totaling about 2,200 to 2,500 square feet. The building's retail space provides approximately 1,200 to 1,400 square feet of floor space. This commercial recreation use area is indicated on the plan map.

Plaza enhancements are planned to include an outdoor stage, trellis, lighting, banners, signs, textured paving, landscaping, fountain, picnic tables, barbecue grills, seating walls, children's play area with equipment, park furniture and public art features. The project includes street end improvements on Elder and Elm Avenues. Activities associated with the plaza include shoreline access, viewing, strolling, beach

activities, ocean fishing, civic events, farmers' market, community meetings and concerts open to the public without charge. New off site parking facilities have been constructed by the District on Elkwood Avenue and on street parking will be retained in street end enhancement plans. Parking studies conducted by the City have found an adequate parking supply on adjacent streets and in other facilities.

Following completion of acquisition now underway of vacant property located on the south edge of the Pier Plaza, it is proposed to construct a public service building to house a relocated lifeguard administrative center and observation tower. Other public services, such as law enforcement serving the beach front area may also be accommodated. The general location of this proposed public service use is denoted by symbol on the Precise Plan Map. The renovation of the terminus of Elder Avenue is to consider emergency vehicle access to the beach.

Dunes Park

The park, constructed by the District in 1995 on properties leased from the City or purchased by the District, serves to create a significant public access and public open space which opens the west side of Seacoast Drive to the ocean. Dunes Park is categorized as park use on the Precise Plan. The existing park contains children play areas, park furniture, arbors, landscaping, lighting, sea wall, irrigation system, textured paving and public art features. Following completion of acquisition now underway, the park is proposed for expansion to Daisy Avenue to increase its total area to about 1.4 acres. At ultimate buildout, the park will have additional features, such as public restrooms and a hard surface play area with markings for half of a basketball court. The project increases the size of the park, provides additional public park amenities, maintains view corridors, and improves public accessways to the ocean.

Street End Enhancements

Public coastal accessways and view corridors are proposed for renovation and enhancement or have been constructed within the street rights-of-way of Imperial Beach Blvd., Carnation, Palm, Dahlia, Daisy, Date, Elder, Elm, Elkwood, Ebony, Admiralty, Descanso, and Encanto Avenues. All improvements are to be consistent with a unified urban design theme and are to enhance the amenities of these public areas with textured paving, drainage, shoreline protection, curb and gutter, sidewalk, lighting, beach accessways, stairs or driveway, fencing, landscaping, irrigation, and automobile loading and parking space. The public access amenities and enhancements will be designed with a goal of no less than the cumulative total of existing public on-street parking spaces in the street right of way. All improved beach accessways will provide accessibility for handicapped persons. Two street endings are scheduled to be improved annually beginning in 1997. The District proposed to obtain from the City easements on the street ends for construction and maintenance purposes. No existing public access areas will be removed. Beach front accessibility will be improved beyond what currently exists. Emergency vehicle access to the beach will be evaluated at various

points. The street endings are indicated with a public access symbol on the plan map.

Parking Facilities

The District has purchased and developed a landscaped surface parking lot of about 0.5 acres in area, located on the northeast corner of Elkwood and Seacoast Drive to provide replacement off-street parking to serve the municipal pier. Ultimate development of the parking area could involve a parking structure with commercial uses on the ground level. The use category shown on the Precise Plan is Commercial Recreation. The parking facility may provide space for patrons of the proposed restaurant on the pier saddle as well as public users of the beach, Pier Plaza, and the Pier. The District and City of Imperial Beach will perform a cooperative peak parking demand and supply monitoring study for five years following the completion of Pier Plaza redevelopment, and will annually meet to confer with the California Coastal Commission to review its findings and recommendations. In the event that additional parking demand from projects implemented as a result of the Port's Master Plan is identified by the monitoring program, the Port will provide appropriate mitigation for it.

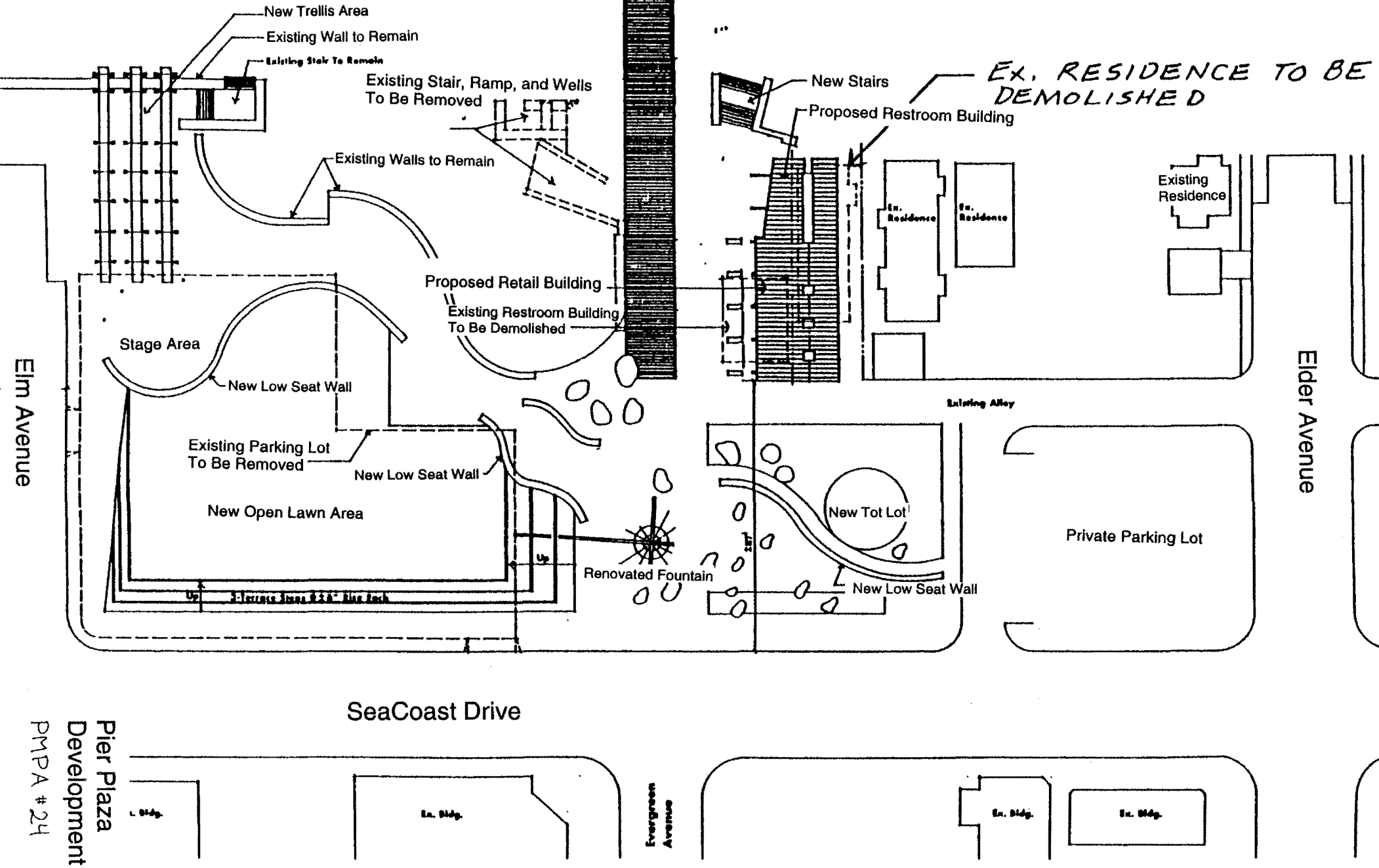
Project List

Identification of appealable projects is provided in the following table:

Table 24: Project List

| IMPERIAL BEACH OCEANFRONT | DEVELOPER↓ | APPEALABLE↓ | APPROX. FISCAL YEAR |
|--|------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 1. BEACH SAND REPLENISHMENT: supplement sand supply as opportunity and feasibility permit | Varies | N | Varies |
| 2. PIER PLAZA: demolish structures; construct restrooms and concession buildings, stage, tot lot, lighting, landscaping, irrigation, shoreline protection, enhanced paving, park furniture, street ending improvements on Elm and Elder Avenue | P | N | 1997-98 |
| 3. PIER SADDLE: expand pier deck area with placement of pilings | P | N | 1999-2000 |
| 4. RESTAURANT: construct restaurant and ancillary commercial uses on expanded pier platform when market demands | T | Y | 2000-2005 |
| 5. PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING: construct building for lifeguard and other public services; install erosion protection, parking, beach access, landscaping, irrigation system | P | N | 2000-01 |
| 6. DUNES PARK EXPANSION: demolish structures; construct public restrooms, install paving, landscaping, park furniture, irrigation system, erosion protection | P | N | 1998 |
| 7. ENHANCE 11 STREET ENDS: demolish and reconstruct; automobile travel and parking space, curb and gutter, drainage, shoreline protection, enhanced paving, lighting, fencing, landscape irrigation | P | N | 1997-2002 |
| 8. ENHANCE STREET END, PALM AVE: demolish structures, construct curb and gutter, public restroom, shoreline protection, sidewalk, enhanced paving, lighting, fencing, drainage, landscape and irrigation | P | N | 1998-2000 |
| 9. AUTOMOBILE PARKING FACILITIES: renovate lot with parking structure and irrigation | T | N | 1999-2000 |
| P - Port District N - No T - Tenant Y - Yes | | | |

NO SCALE



Pier Plaza
Development
PMPA # 24

Re Amendment of Port District]
Master Plan - Imperial Beach]
Oceanfront Planning District . . .]

RESOLUTION 97-187

WHEREAS, the San Diego Unified Port District (Port District) has an adopted Port Master Plan which has been certified by the California Coastal Commission; and

WHEREAS, said Plan was prepared, adopted and certified pursuant to the Port District Act, the California Coastal Act and other applicable laws; and

WHEREAS, an amendment to the Port Master Plan incorporating the Imperial Beach Oceanfront Planning District into said Plan, on file in the office of the Port District Clerk as Document No. 35980, was adopted by the Board of Port Commissioners (Board) of the San Diego Unified Port District on 27 May 1997; and

WHEREAS, subsequent to the adoption of the Imperial Beach Oceanfront Planning District amendment, and as a result of further consultation and review with regulating agencies and interested parties, revisions to the adopted amendment were considered at a duly noticed public hearing before the Board; and

WHEREAS, a Final Negative Declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, State CEQA Guidelines, and Port District procedures relative to said Amendment was adopted and approved by the Board on 27 May 1997,
NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Port Commissioners of the San Diego Unified Port District, as follows:

That the Master Plan of the Port District is amended by incorporating therein the Master Plan Amendment, on file in the office of the Port District Clerk as Document No. 36293, pertaining to said Imperial Beach Oceanfront Planning District.

Resolution of Approval

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Executive Director or his designated representative is hereby authorized and directed to transmit said Master Plan Amendment, together with all relevant factual information, the adopted Final Negative Declaration, and the Coastal Act consistency analysis to the California Coastal Commission for its review, approval and certification pursuant to the California Coastal Act, and that said Amendment will take effect automatically and be deemed fully certified upon Coastal Commission approval pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 30714. This action by the Board of Port Commissioners constitutes formal adoption of the Coastal Commission's certification of the referenced Amendment.

ADOPTED this 12th day of August, 1997.

SW
8/8/97

