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STATE OF CALIFORNIA - THE RESOURCES AGENCY

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CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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Commission Action::

STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALENDAR

APPLICATION NO.: 5-99-050

APPLICANT: City of Santa Monica

PROJECT LOCATION: Third Street between Pico Boulevard and Strand Street; Bay Street between Neilson Way and Third Street; Bicknell Avenue between Neilson Way and Third Street; Pacific Street between Neilson Way and Third Street; and Bicknell Avenue between Third and Fourth Streets, in the City of Santa Monica

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: After the fact permit for the establishment of a preferential parking zone for residents only with no parking or stopping for more than two hours between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. without a permit, and no parking or stopping between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. without a permit; expansion of the boundaries; and the erection of signs identifying the hours of the parking restrictions and demarcating the restricted areas (Zone M).

LOCAL APPROVALS RECEIVED: City Council approval

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the preferential parking zone with special conditions requiring the City to: (1) limit the authorization of the preferential parking restrictions approved by this permit to a three year time limit, at the end of which the applicant may reapply for a new permit to reinstate the parking program; and (2) place the applicant on notice that any change in the hours or boundaries of the preferential parking zone will require Commission approval. As conditioned, to mitigate the adverse individual and cumulative impacts on public access and recreation, the project can be found consistent with the access and recreation policies of the Coastal Act.

SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS: Coastal Development Permits #5-97-215, #5-96-22, #5-96-059 (City of Santa Monica), #5-90-989 (City of Los Angeles Dept. of Transportation), #5-91-498(Sanders); A-5-VEN-97-183 (City of Los Angeles; City of Santa Monica's certified LUP.

STAFF NOTE

In recent years the Commission has received applications from local governments to limit public parking on public streets where there are conflicts between local residents and beach visitors, trail users and/or people seeking coastal views. The streets subject to the current application request for preferential parking are two to four blocks inland from the beach and Santa Monica's South Beach Park. The City of Santa Monica proposes to restrict public parking to two hours throughout the day. Residents along the affected streets will be allowed to park on the street by obtaining a parking permit from the City.

Public access, parking and recreation can result in impacts to neighborhoods that are not designed to accommodate visitors. In this case, the City of Santa Monica has stated that the residential streets within the zone have been impacted by the Main Street businesses and patrons. The City is proposing the parking restriction to address the conflict that occurs when there is a lack of on-site parking and use of the streets by non-residents.

In this particular case, staff recommends that the Commission allow parking limitations as proposed by the applicant, except that staff recommends that the Commission limit the authorization of the restrictions to 3 years and require the applicant to apply for a new permit to reinstate the program after that time. Because the Coastal Act protects coastal related recreational opportunities, including jogging, bicycle and trail use, staff is recommending special conditions to ensure that the implementation of the hours will not adversely impact beach and recreational access. As proposed by the applicant and conditioned by this permit, staff does not believe the proposal will adversely affect public access and public recreational opportunities.

This permit application is one of seven after the fact permit applications for residential preferential parking zones in the City of Santa Monica (see Exhibit 1 and 2). The seven zones represent a total of approximately 936 parking spaces.

Six zones are located south of Pico Boulevard, with one zone located one block north of Pico Boulevard. The City created the seven residential preferential parking zones between 1983 and 1989 (three zones were expanded to include additional streets in 1984, 1987 and 1990). All seven zones were created without the benefit of a Coastal Development Permit.

After being contacted by South Coast Commission staff and informed that a Coastal Development Permit would be required for the preferential parking zones the City filed an application for the seven preferential parking zones. The City, in their submittal letter, states that they would like to resolve the preferential parking zone violation matter administratively (see Exhibit 3). However, the City further states that the application is being filed under protest and they are not waiving their right to bring or defend a legal challenge. The City maintains that the Coastal Commission does not have regulatory authority over preferential parking zones within the coastal zone of Santa Monica. The City states that their position on this matter is based on four primary factors:

(1) the creation of preferential parking zones does not require coastal commission approval, (2) in 1983 when the zones were first created, the Coastal Commission confirmed that such zones were not subject to Commission approval, (3) the City has exclusive authority to establish preferential parking zones, and (4) preferential parking zones in Santa Monica do not restrict coastal access.

The staff do not agree with the City's position and staffs' response to each of the City's contentions is addressed below in the following sections of this report.

The proposed project was scheduled for the January 1999 Commission hearing. However, the City withdrew the application in order to complete a parking and circulation study (Santa Monica Coastal Parking and Circulation Study, April 1999) and present staff with possible measures that would mitigate the loss of public parking where there was determined to be an adverse impact to public beach access.

The proposed project was again scheduled for Commission hearing in November 1999. However, the applications were postponed after Commission staff determined that portions of the on-street parking for two of the proposed seven districts were restricted as short-term public parking by prior Commission permit actions and that a staff recommendation of approval on two of the preferential parking district applications would be inconsistent with the Commission's previous permit actions. The City subsequently submitted two amendment applications to remove the restrictions imposed by the Commission in its previous actions and designate new parking in other nearby locations as short-term parking to replace the parking that was subject to the previous permits.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Commission APPROVE the permit application with special conditions.

MOTION

I move that the Commission approve CDP #5-99-050 pursuant to the staff recommendation.

This will result in adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

Staff recommends a YES vote.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that 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, as conditioned, 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.

1. Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment. The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.

2. Expiration. If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date this permit is reported to the Commission. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.

3. Compliance. All development must occur in strict compliance with the proposal as set forth in the application for permit, subject to any special conditions set forth below. Any deviation from the approved plans must be reviewed and approved by the staff and may require Commission approval.

4. Interpretation. Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.
5. Inspections. The Commission staff shall be allowed to inspect the site and the project during its development, subject to 24-hour advance notice.
6. Assignment. The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.
7. Terms and Conditions Run with the Land. These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the permittee to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

III. Special Conditions.

1. Termination of Preferential Parking Program

(a) The parking program authorized by this permit shall terminate five years from the date of approval of the permit.

(b) The City may apply for a new permit to reinstate the parking program. Any such application shall be filed complete no later than 54 months from the date of approval of this permit and shall include all of the following information: The application for a new permit shall include a parking study documenting parking utilization of the street within the preferential zone, the two public beach lots located at 2030 and 2600 Barnard Way, and the public parking lots on Neilson Way (Lots No. 26, 11, 10, and 9). The parking study shall include at least three non-consecutive summer weekends between, but not including, Memorial Day and Labor Day. The parking study shall also include a parking survey for the three non-consecutive summer weekends documenting purpose of trip, length of stay, parking location, destination, and frequency of visits

(c) All posted parking restriction signs shall be removed prior to termination of authorization for preferential parking unless the Commission has approved a new permit to authorize preferential parking beyond three years from the date of approval of this permit.

2. Future Changes

With the acceptance of this permit the applicant agrees that any change in the hours, days, or boundaries of the proposed preferential residential parking zone will require an amendment to this permit.

IV. Findings and Declarations.

The Commission hereby finds and declares as follows:

A. Project Description, Location and Background

The City of Santa Monica proposes to establish a residential preferential parking zone (zone M) that would restrict public parking to two hours without a permit between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., and prohibit public parking or stopping between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. without a permit along the following described streets within the City of Santa Monica:

Third Street between Pico Boulevard and Strand Street; Bay Street between Neilson Way and Third Street; Bicknell Avenue between Neilson Way and Third Street; Pacific Street between Neilson Way and Third Street; and Bicknell Avenue between Third and Fourth Streets.

The proposed project also includes the erection of signage within the preferential parking zone to identify the hours of the parking restrictions as well as demarcate the restricted areas.

Residents that front on the above streets are allowed to park on the street with the purchase of a parking permit from the City. The City charges \$15.00 for an annual parking permit. The City's municipal code states that the number of Permits per residential household is limited to the number of vehicles registered at that address. If more than three permits are requested the applicant must show that sufficient off-street parking is not available to the applicant (Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 3233). Any vehicle parked without a permit will be removed by the City. All designated streets will be posted with curbside signs indicating the parking restrictions.

The proposed zone is located in the City of Santa Monica's Ocean Park planning area. The zone is generally situated between Pico Boulevard to the north, Strand Street to the south, Neilson Way to the west and Fourth Street to the east (see Exhibit 1). The four streets (Third, Bay, Bicknell, and Pacific Street) affected by this zone provide approximately 208 curbside parking spaces, with parking on both sides of the street.

The zone is approximately 2 to 4 blocks from the beach and located within a residential neighborhood that abuts the Main Street visitor-serving commercial district. The proposed preferential parking zone is a residentially developed neighborhood consisting of a mix of single-family residences and multiple-family structures. The majority of the residential structures are older structures built between the 1920's and 1950's. These structures have limited on-site parking. The structures in the area that provide on-site parking have inadequate parking, based on current standards.

Main Street Commercial District provides a number of restaurants, art galleries, antique, and specialty-retail establishments. Over the years Main Street has become a popular visitor-serving commercial area both locally and regionally.

The City created the zone by City ordinance in March 1989 (Santa Monica Municipal Code Section 3238m). The restrictions were implemented in June 1989. The City subsequently enlarged the zone (Bicknell Street between 3rd and 4th Street) by an amending ordinance in September 1990. The zone was established, expanded, and implemented without the benefit of a Coastal Development Permit.

There are currently two other preferential residential parking zones (Zones C and I) that are east of and abut Main Street. All three zones extend approximately three blocks east of or behind Main Street, and extend from Pico Boulevard to the North to the City's southern City limit. The other two zones were also established without the benefit of a Coastal Development Permit.

B. Previous Commission Permit Action on Preferential Parking Programs within the City of Santa Monica.

The Commission has approved one previous residential preferential parking zone permit application within the City of Santa Monica. In 1996 the City proposed 24-hour preferential residential parking along Adelaide Drive and Fourth Street, between Adelaide Drive and San Vicente Boulevard, in the north part of the City (CDP #5-96-059). The Commission found that due to the zone's distance from the beach and absence of direct access to the beach from the street the area did not provide significant beach access parking. However, because the public used the area for scenic viewing and other recreational activities the Commission found that the City's proposed 24-hour parking restriction was too restrictive and would significantly impact access and coastal recreation in the area. The Commission denied the permit and directed it to work with the City to develop hours that the City could properly implement and would also protect public access and coastal recreation. The City subsequently submitted a new permit application with hours that restricted public parking only between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. The Commission approved the permit with the proposed evening hour restrictions with special conditions (CDP #5-96-221). One of the special conditions limited the authorization to two years and required the City to submit a new permit application if the City

wanted to continue the parking restrictions beyond that time, so that the program and possible impacts could be re-evaluated. The City is in the process of assembling the information to submit a new application for this parking zone.

C. State Wide Commission Permit Action on Preferential Parking Programs and Other Parking Prohibition Measures.

Over the last twenty years the Commission has acted on a number of permit applications throughout the State's coastal zone with regards to preferential parking programs along public streets (see Exhibit 9, for a chart of Preferential Parking Program Permit Applications). In 1979 the City of Santa Cruz submitted an application for a preferential parking program in the Live Oak residential area [P-79-295 (City of Santa Cruz)]. The program restricted public parking during the summer weekends between 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The City proposed to mitigate the loss of available parking along the public streets by the availability of day use permits to the general public, the provision of remote lots and a free shuttle system. The Commission approved the program with the identified mitigation measures.

In 1982 the City of Hermosa Beach submitted an application for a preferential parking program for the area located immediately adjacent to the coastline and extending approximately 1,000 feet inland [#5-82-251 (City of Hermosa Beach)]. The proposed restricted area included the downtown commercial district and a residential district that extended up a hill 1,000 feet inland. The purpose of the preferential parking zone was to alleviate parking congestion near the beach. The program included two major features: a disincentive system to park near the beach and a free remote parking system to replace the on-street spaces that were to be restricted. The Commission found that the project as proposed reduced access to the coastal zone and was not consistent with the access policies of the Coastal Act. Therefore, the Commission approved the preferential program with conditions to ensure consistency with the Coastal Act. The conditions included the availability of day-use parking permits to the general public and a shuttle system in addition to the provision of remote parking spaces. The Commission subsequently approved an amendment (July 1986) to remove the shuttle system since the City provided evidence that the shuttle was lightly used, the remote parking areas were within walking distance, and beach access would not be reduced by the elimination of the shuttle program. The City explained to staff that due to a loss of funds for the operation of the shuttle system it was necessary to discontinue the shuttle and request an amendment to the Coastal permit. The Commission approval of the City's amendment request to discontinue the shuttle system was based on findings that the shuttle system was not necessary to ensure maximum public access.

In 1983 the City of Santa Cruz submitted an application for the establishment of a residential parking permit program in the area known as the Beach Flats area [#3-83-209 (City of Santa Cruz)]. The Beach Flat area consists of a mix of residential and

commercial/visitor serving uses, just north of the Santa Cruz beach and boardwalk. The area was originally developed with summer beach cottages on small lots and narrow streets. The Commission found that insufficient off-street parking was provided when the original development took place, based on current standards. Over the years the beach cottages were converted to permanent residential units. With insufficient off-street parking plus an increase in public beach visitation, parking problems were exacerbated. The Commission found in this particular case that the residents were competing with visitors for parking spaces; parking was available for visitors and beach goers in public lots; and adequate public parking in non-metered spaces was available. Therefore, the Commission approved the permit with conditions to ensure that parking permits (a total of 150) were not issued to residents of projects that were recently constructed and subject to coastal development permits.

In 1987 the Commission approved, with conditions, a permit for a preferential parking program in the City of Capitola [#3-87-42 (City of Capitola)]. The program contained two parts: the Village parking permit program and the Neighborhood parking permit program. The Village consisted of a mixture of residential, commercial and visitor-serving uses. The Neighborhood district consisted of residential development located in the hills above the Village area. The Village, which has frontage along the beach, is surrounded on three sides by three separate neighborhoods. Two neighborhoods are located above along the coastal bluffs with little or no direct beach access. The third neighborhood is located inland, north of the Village.

Similar to the Santa Cruz area mentioned above the proposed Village area changed from summer beach cottages to permanent residential units, with insufficient off-street parking. Insufficient off-street parking with an increase in beach visitation on-street parking was again a problem for residents and businesses within the Village and within the Neighborhood. The proposed preferential parking programs were proposed to minimize traffic and other conflicts associated with the use of residential streets by the visiting public. The Village program allowed residents to obtain permits to exempt them from the two-hour on-street parking limit that was in place, and the requirement of paying the meter fee. The Neighborhood program would have restricted parking to residents only.

The Village program did not exclude the general public from parking anywhere within the Village. The Neighborhood program as proposed, however, would have excluded non-residents from parking in the Neighborhood streets. The Commission found that public access includes not only pedestrian access, but also the ability to drive into the Coastal Zone and park, to bicycle, and to view the shoreline. Therefore, as proposed the Commission found that the proposal would adversely affect public access opportunities. Without adequate provisions for public use of these public streets that include ocean vista points, residential permit parking programs present conflicts with Coastal Act access policies. Therefore, the Commission approved the permit with special conditions to assure public access. These conditions limited the number of permits within the Village area,

restricted public parking limitations to vista point areas in the Neighborhood district, required an access signage program, operation of a public shuttle system, and monitoring program and imposed a one-year time limit on the development that was authorized (requiring a new permit or amendment to continue the program).

In 1990 the City of Los Angeles submitted an application for preferential parking along portions of Mabery Road, Ocean Way Entrada Drive, West Channel Road and East Rustic Road in the Pacific Palisades area, within Santa Monica Canyon [#5-90-989 (City of Los Angeles)]. The proposed streets were located inland of and adjacent to Pacific Coast Highway. The preferential parking zone extended a maximum of approximately 2,500 feet inland along East Rustic Road. According to the City's application, the purpose of the proposal was for parking relief from non-residents. Despite available parking along surrounding streets and in nearby State beach parking lots along Pacific Coast Highway that closed at 5:30 p.m., the Commission denied the application because the areas were used for parking by beach goers and because elimination of public on-street parking along these streets would significantly reduce public beach parking in the evening and also reduce visitor serving commercial parking.

In 1997 the Commission denied, on appeal, a City of Los Angeles' Coastal Development Permit for preferential residential parking in the Venice area [A-5-VEN-97-183 (City of Los Angeles)]. The Commission found that because of the popularity of Venice Beach and Ocean Front Walk (boardwalk), the limited amount of off-street beach parking within the beach parking lots was not adequate to support the amount of visitors that came to the area and that the surrounding neighborhoods served as a parking alternative to the beach parking lots. Therefore, the Commission found that restricting public parking along these streets during the beach use period would adversely impact beach access.

As shown above, the Commission has had before them a number of preferential parking programs statewide. The Commission has approved all of the programs except for two programs. While the approved programs regulated public parking they did not exclude public parking in favor of exclusive residential use. Because the programs were designed or conditioned by the Commission to preserve public parking and access to the beach, the Commission found the programs consistent with the access policies of the Coastal Act.

All programs attempted to resolve a conflict between residents and coastal visitors over on-street parking. The Commission approved the programs only when the Commission could find a balance between the parking needs of the residents and the general public without adversely impacting public access. For example, in permit #P-79-295 (City of Santa Cruz) and #5-82-251 (City of Hermosa Beach) preferential parking was approved with mitigation offered by the City or as conditions of approval that were required by the Commission to make available day use permits to the general public, remote parking and a shuttle system. In #3-83-209 (City of Santa Cruz), because of a lack of on-site parking for the residents within a heavily used visitor serving area, and adequate nearby public

parking, the Commission approved the project to balance the needs of the residents with the general public without adversely impacting public access to the area. In #3-87-42 (City of Capitola) the Commission approved the program for the visitor serving area (the Village) because it did not exclude the general public from parking in the Village but only limited the amount of time a vehicle could park. However, preferential parking in the Neighborhood district, located in the upland area, was, for the most part, not approved since it excluded the general public from parking. The only areas within the Neighborhood district that were approved with parking restrictions were those areas immediately adjacent to vista points. In these areas the Commission allowed the City to limit public parking to two-hour time limits.

Where a balance between residents and the general public could not be found that would not adversely impact public access opportunities the Commission has denied the preferential parking programs, as in the case of #5-90-989 and A5-VEN-97-183 (City of Los Angeles).

In addition to preferential parking programs, the Commission has also reviewed proposals to prohibit general parking by such measures as posting "No parking" signs and "red curbing" public streets. In 1993 the City of Malibu submitted an application for prohibiting parking along the inland side of a 1.9 mile stretch of Pacific Coast Highway [#4-93-135 (City of Malibu)]. The project would have eliminated 300 to 350 parking spaces. The City's reason for the request was to minimize the number of beach goers crossing Pacific Coast Highway for public safety concerns. The Commission denied the request because the City failed to show that public safety was a problem and because no alternative parking sites were provided to mitigate the loss of available public parking. Although there were public parking lots located seaward of Pacific Coast Highway and in the upland areas, the City's proposal would have resulted in a significant loss of public parking. The Commission, therefore, found that the proposal would adversely impact public access and was inconsistent with the access policies of the Coastal Act. In denying the proposal, the Commission recognized the City's desire to maximize public safety and found that there were alternatives to the project, which would have increased public safety without decreasing public access.

In 1989 the Commission appealed the City of San Diego's permit for the institution of parking restrictions (red curbing and signage) along residential roads in the La Jolla Farms area (#A-6-LJS-89-166). The impetus for the parking restrictions was residential opposition to the number of students from the University of California at San Diego campus who parked on La Jolla Farms Road and Black Gold road, and the resulting traffic and public safety concerns associated with pedestrians and road congestion in the area. Specifically, the property owners association cited dangerous curves along some portions of the roadway, which inhibited visibility; lack of sidewalks in the area and narrow streets (between 37 to 38 feet wide); and increased crime.

The Commission filed the appeal due to concerns on the parking prohibition and its inconsistency with the public access policies of the Coastal Act. The area contained a number of coastal access routes for beach access and access to a major vista point. The Commission found that the City's permit would eliminate a source of public parking and would be inconsistent with the public access policies of the Coastal Act. The Commission further found that the elimination of the public parking spaces along the areas proposed could only be accepted with the assurance that a viable reservoir of public parking remained within the area. Therefore, the Commission approved the project with special conditions to limit public parking to two-hours during the weekdays and unrestricted parking on weekends and holidays. The Commission further allowed red-curbings basically along one side of the road(s) and all cul-de-sacs for emergency vehicle access. The Commission found, in approving the project as conditioned, the project maximized public access opportunities while taking into consideration the concerns of private property owners.

As in the preferential parking programs that have come before the Commission in the past, if proposed parking prohibition measures can be proposed or conditioned so that private property owner concerns can be balanced with coastal access opportunities, where impacts to public access is minimized, the Commission may find such proposals consistent with the public access policies of the Coastal Act.

D. Development Which Requires a Coastal Development Permit

Section 30600 of the Coastal Act requires a local government wishing to undertake development in the coastal zone to obtain a coastal development permit.

Pursuant to Section 30106 of the Coastal Act development includes a change in the intensity of use of land; a change in the intensity of use of water, or of access thereto; and placement of solid material or structure. In this instance the change in intensity of use of land is converting the on-street parking spaces from public spaces to private residential spaces, i.e. a change in use from a public use, to a private residential use, which in this instance is located on public property. A change in intensity of use of access to the water will also result from the creation of a preferential parking district (zone) by prohibiting public parking and completely limiting the amount of time one can park on a public street adjacent to the beach. Placement of the parking signs implementing the district also constitutes development.

The Commission has consistently maintained that the establishment of preferential parking programs constitutes development and could adversely impact public access to public beaches and other coastal recreational areas.

The City states that in 1983 Commission legal staff confirmed that permits were not required for the establishment of preferential parking zones. The City has included a City interoffice memo (dated September 3, 1983) stating that they spoke to Commission legal staff regarding preferential parking and that legal staff at the Commission told them that a permit would not be required (see Exhibit 4). The City has not provided Commission staff with any evidence of written correspondence between Commission staff and City Staff addressing this issue and Commission staff has not found any record of such correspondence with the City. Instead staff has located two legal staff letters written in 1983 which clearly state that a coastal development permit is required in order to establish a preferential parking program. In 1983 the Commission's staff counsel sent a letter to Santa Barbara's Office of the City Attorney (12/19/83) in response to the City's inquiry regarding whether or not a coastal development permit would be required for the establishment of a preferential parking program within the coastal zone of the City of Santa Barbara. The letter from Staff Counsel states, in part, that the establishment of preferential parking zones and the erection of signs is considered development and that the Commission has jurisdiction over the establishment of such zones/districts (see Exhibit 5). Again in 1983, another Commission staff counsel sent a letter to the City of Santa Cruz (9/29/83) concluding that a coastal development permit must be issued to authorize the proposed Beach Flats Residential Parking Program (see Exhibit 6). Finally, as stated above, the Commission has acted on numerous preferential parking programs over the last 20 years and has consistently asserted jurisdiction over the establishment of preferential parking zones/districts.

The City also states that the City has exclusive authority to create preferential parking zones. The Commission does not disagree with this point. Although the Vehicle Codes provide the City with the ability to create preferential parking zones, this authority is permissive and in no way eliminates the requirements of other applicable state laws such as the Coastal Act.

The City of Santa Monica further states that preferential parking zones in Santa Monica do not restrict coastal access. The Commission does not agree and has consistently maintained that such zones/districts have potential adverse impacts to coastal access and recreation. The impacts of each zone may vary depending on location, hours, boundaries and coastal and recreational facilities in the area. Therefore, each preferential parking zone needs to be analyzed on a case by case basis to determine the zone's impact to beach access and it's consistency with the Coastal Act. The proposed preferential parking zone's impact to coastal and recreational access is addressed below.

E. Public Access and Recreation

One of the strongest goals of the Coastal Act is to protect, provide and enhance public access to and along the coast. The establishment of a residential parking zone within walking distance of a public beach or other recreational areas will significantly reduce public access opportunities.

Several Coastal Act policies require the Commission to protect beach and recreation access:

Section 30210 of the Coastal Act states:

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 In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse. California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be

Section 30211 of the Coastal Act states:

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 30212.5 of the Coastal Act states:

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, or overcrowding or overuse by the public of any single area.

Section 30213 of the Coastal Act states in part:

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

Section 30214 of the Coastal Act states:

(a) The public access policies of this article shall be implemented in a manner that takes into account the need to regulate the time, place, and manner of public access depending on the facts and circumstances in each case including, but not limited to, the following:

(l) Topographic and geologic site characteristics.

(2) The capacity of the site to sustain use and at what level of intensity.

(3) The appropriateness of limiting public access to the right to pass and repass depending on such factors as the fragility of the natural resources in the area and the proximity of the access area to adjacent residential uses.

(4) The need to provide for the management of access areas so as to protect the privacy of adjacent property owners and to protect the aesthetic values of the area by providing for the collection of litter.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the public access policies of this article be carried out in a reasonable manner that considers the equities and that balances the rights of the individual property owner with the public's constitutional right of access pursuant to Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution. Nothing in this section or any amendment thereto shall be construed as a limitation on the rights guaranteed to the public under Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution.

(c) In carrying out the public access policies of this article, the commission, regional commissions, and any other responsible public agency shall consider and encourage the utilization of innovative access management techniques, including, but not limited to, agreements with private organizations which would minimize management costs and encourage the use of volunteer programs.

Section 30223:

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

Section 30252(4):

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

In preliminary studies that led to the adoption of the Coastal Act, the Commission and the Legislature reviewed evidence that land uses directly adjacent to the beach were required to be regulated to protect access and recreation opportunities. These sections of the Coastal Act provide that the priority of new development near beach areas shall be given to uses that provide support for beach recreation. The Commission has evaluated these concerns in upland and mountainous areas near the beach to provide coastal viewing and alternatives to the beach for jogging, strolling and cycling. Furthermore, the Commission has consistently addressed both public and private parking issues in order to protect the ability of beach visitors who depend on the automobile to access the beach.

The City's LUP states that the Santa Monica State Beach is the most heavily used beach in Los Angeles County and possibly in the State. The City has estimated that over 20 million people visit Santa Monica's beaches annually (City of Santa Monica's 1992 certified Land Use Plan). In 1998, between July and September approximately 7.5 million people came to Santa Monica beaches (County of Los Angeles Fire Department Lifeguard Division).

The beach area between the Pier and Pico Boulevard is a broad sandy beach and according to the City's LUP is the most active recreation-oriented area of the Santa Monica beaches. The area provides volleyball courts, outdoor gymnastic facilities, swings, a children's play area, Pedestrian promenade, and bike path. The Commission recently approved a permit [CDP #5-98-009 (City of Santa Monica)] for the renovation and improvement of this beach area including the recreational facilities and Promenade. The beach area south of Pico Boulevard is the South Beach area. The South Beach is improved with a landscaped beach park, picnic facilities, children's playground, food concessions, restrooms, pedestrian promenade and bike path [CDP #5-84-591 (Santa Monica Redevelopment Agency)]. With development of hotels, restaurants, and improvements to the Pier and beach, Santa Monica beach area has been attracting an increasing amount of visitors from throughout the Los Angeles area and from outside of the region.

The City provides approximately 5,434 parking spaces within public beach lots and on the Pier. Of this total approximately 2,486 spaces are located north of the Pier within 10 public beach lots that are spread out between the Pier and the City's northern boundary line. The Pier lot provides 286 spaces on the Pier's deck.

From the Pier south to the City's southern boundary line, the City provides approximately 2,948 spaces within 5 public beach lots. The largest lots are the two lots (2030 Barnard Way and 2600 Barnard Way) located south of Pico Boulevard (South Beach area). These two beach lots provide 2,406 spaces or approximately 81% of the total beachfront supply south of the pier.

The beach parking lots are owned by the State Department of Parks and Recreation. The lots are maintained by the City and the City contracts out the parking operation to a private

parking management firm. The parking fee for the beach lots is a flat fee of approximately \$6.00 during the winter and \$7.00 during the summer.

In addition to the public beach lots, the City also provides approximately 151 5-hour and 7 2-hour metered spaces along the first public road paralleling the sea (Ocean Avenue and Barnard Way) and on a few side streets that run perpendicular to the beach and terminate at the beach Promenade. Approximately 91% (144) of the total metered spaces are located south of Pico Boulevard. The meter fee is \$0.50 per hour.

One block inland, along Neilson Way, the City provides approximately 361 off-street metered parking spaces within four public lots (see Exhibit 8). Meter time limits are predominantly 3-hours in duration with some extending to 10 hours. These lots serve the Main Street visitor-serving commercial district. However, due to their close proximity to the beach and their hourly rate (\$0.50 per hour), as compared to the beach lots' flat fee (\$7.00 during the summer), the lots are also used by beach goers and recreationalists.

The City states that the reason for the preferential zone is due to the popularity of Main Street commercial businesses along Main Street and the lack of adequate on-site parking. Moreover, the availability of nearby free parking also served as an attraction to parking along the residential streets. The City's LUP states that.

Main Street is the closest commercially zoned area to the South Beach area, and has evolved during the past two decades from a commercial street of low-intensity development to a specialty shopping and visitor serving area. There has been a marked increase in the number of restaurants, art galleries, antique, and specialty-retail establishments, and traffic. Most of this activity is concentrated south of Ocean Park Boulevard. Recent development north of Ocean Park Boulevard includes offices over ground floor retail, furniture and accessory showrooms, gymnasiums and dance studios, and some restaurants...

Many of the buildings along Main Street date from before World War II, and do not provide off-street parking. Main Street has metered parking on the street and in several public parking lots. These lots include a small lot at Strand Street, a larger lot south of Hollister Avenue, and a major lot between Kinney and Hill streets behind the businesses located on Main Street. In recent years, several office buildings and mixed use retail and office structures have been built. The newer buildings provide off-street parking sufficient for their own needs.

In addition to the limited on-site parking there are a number of parking alternatives available along and surrounding Main street for patrons of the businesses along Main street and for employees. Based on a Parking Study prepared for the City in 1997 (Main Street Commercial District Parking Study, Technical Report & Appendices, by Wilbur

Smith Associates, October 1, 1997) the Main Street area, from Pico Boulevard to the City's southern boundary and second street to the east and Neilson Way to the west, provides approximately a total of 1,612 parking spaces. Out of this total there are approximately 923 municipal parking spaces, including all on-street curbside spaces and off-street public lots. The remaining approximately 689 spaces are located in private lots.

The curbside spaces within the Main Street area are restricted short-term parking either through meters or signage. Metered spaces have time limits, which range from 36 minutes to 10 hours.

According to the Parking Study:

Existing peak parking occupancy levels in the Main Street area are generally at or approaching "practical capacity." (When occupancy reaches 90% of the total supply, this is often considered "practical capacity." At this point, it may be extremely difficult to find an available parking space.

South of Ocean Park Boulevard-- On a summer Sunday between 4:00 and 5:00 PM in 1996, 91% of all spaces were occupied. The deficit (compared to practical capacity was 8 spaces. However, when private lots are excluded, conditions appear even worse, with Main Street area curb parking 94% occupied and Main Street public lot parking 99% occupied. Summer Sunday conditions are considered fairly representative of all warm weather weekend days from May through October. Furthermore, occupancy levels during all warm weather periods, including non-summer weekdays, were fairly similar, based on counts conducted at different times by Wilbur Smith Associates.

North of Ocean Park Boulevard- During the peak hour for the area south of Ocean Park Boulevard, overall parking occupancy to the north was about 57% (but with Main Street curbside parking 93% occupied. The Sunday peak was slightly higher.) On a non-summer Sunday between 1:00 and 2: PM, 64% of spaces were occupied...Main Street area curb parking was 93% occupied (with a deficit of 7 spaces) and public lot parking was 85% occupied. Thus, Main Street area public parking was approaching practical capacity even north of Ocean Park Boulevard.

Main Street and the surrounding area is also served by a mass transit system. The City has two bus services that operate along Main Street plus a summer beach shuttle. The Santa Monica Municipal Bus line operates routes throughout the City and surrounding area and includes two separate routes along Main Street, and along Fourth Street and the southern portion of Neilson Way. This mass transportation service provides local and regional transportation from as far inland as downtown Los Angeles. Transportation fare is \$.50 and \$1.25 for the express line to and from Downtown Los Angeles.

The second bus service is the local Tide shuttle. The shuttle service was established by the City in 1993. The shuttle operates between the Main Street area and the third Street Promenade in a one-way loop extending along Main Street from Marine Street, north to Bicknell street, east to 4th Street to Broadway in Downtown Santa Monica. It returns to the Main Street area via Ocean Avenue and Barnard Way. Transportation fare is \$0.25.

The City also provides a summer Pier/Beach Shuttle. This shuttle was established by the City in 1997. The shuttle is free and runs every ten minutes on summer weekends between the Santa Monica Pier and Santa Monica's South Beach lots. Riders receive \$2.00 off the parking fee at the beach lot. According to the City the purpose of this shuttle is to provide a better parking distribution among coastal visitors.

Because of the growing popularity of Main Street over the years, and the availability of nearby free parking, visitors to Main Street and employees of the businesses on Main Street were parking in the residential areas behind (east of) Main Street. As the popularity of the Main Street commercial area grew the residents in the surrounding area, from just south of Pico Boulevard to the City's southern city limit, began to compete with visitors and employees for the limited on-street parking spaces.

In the City's staff report (1/28/86) that was prepared for the abutting preferential zone to the south (Zone I) prior to the establishment of the proposed zone (Zone M), the report states that:

City staff has conducted various parking surveys in the area to determine the impact of non-residential parking in the area. The analysis of the northern area (north of Hollister) [area of proposed Zone M] and the southern area (south of Mills Street) of the proposed preferential parking zone indicates that the majority (64%) of on-street parking is occupied by non-resident vehicles. The analysis of the parking turnover indicates that the on-street parkers are customers of Main Street businesses...

Although the area is between 2 and 4 blocks inland of the beach and may have been used, to a limited extent by beach goers, the majority of the demand is due to patrons and employees of Main Street. The parking study by Wilbur Smith Associates (10/1/97) included a user survey to determine the destination of those that drove and parked in the Main Street area (approximately 560 out of a total of 770 surveyed). The survey indicated that during the peak day (Sunday) 87% of those surveyed indicated that their primary destination was Main Street (business, dinning/entertainment, and shopping) with 10-13% indicating that the beach was their main destination.

Moreover, if a significant number of beach goers were using the streets of this preferential zone prior to the implementation of the parking restrictions, in an effort to avoid the paid

lots, and were displaced by the restrictions, beach goers could have moved to the nearby area, south of Ocean Boulevard (Zone C), where the restrictions do not begin until 6:00 p.m. The streets within Zone C are the same distance from the beach as those streets in the proposed Zone M. Zone C was created in 1983 and provides approximately 294 curbside parking spaces. Since the establishment of the restrictions in Zone C the City has not received a petition or request by residents to expand the preferential parking restrictions into the daytime. However, the year following the implementation of the initial zone's boundary the zone was expanded to add one more inland street to allow 2-hour parking during the day and no parking during the late night.

The 2-hour parking limit will continue to provide public parking for beach goers, recreationalist, and the general public. Although the restriction discourages long-term parking the 2-hour limit provides increased turnover, whereby increasing the number of visitors to the area and provides a sufficient parking duration for short-term beach access parking.

As part of the City of Santa Monica's 1999 access study of the beach impact area parking utilization and duration surveys were conducted. The surveys were conducted on a summer weekday (August 26, 1998) and summer weekend (August 30, 1998), when peak beach use occurs. The report indicated that based on a survey of over 4,500 vehicles, users of the southern parking lots stayed an average of 2.4 hours. The majority of vehicles, or 64%, were short-term, staying two hours or less. Within the Main Street public lots the average stay is similar to the beach lots at 2.05 hours.

Because of the high proportion of short-term users in these lots the City argues that there is a need for short-term public spaces and that the provision of 2-hour parking will continue to provide alternative public parking for the general public. Moreover, the provision of longer-term spaces within close proximity to the Main Street commercial area will encourage use by employees. The provision of longer-term spaces would effectively remove a large percentage of the street spaces from public use since a majority of the businesses along Main Street do not have or do not provide adequate on-site parking.

The City is also planning to provide additional short-term spaces within one of the South Beach lots to minimize the conflict occurring on the street between general and residential use. The City is proposing to convert 68 parking spaces within the underutilized south beach parking lot to short-term (90 minutes) spaces. By converting some of the long-term, flat fee, spaces to short-term the City hopes to encourage and increase the utilization of the south lots.

The City feels that with the combination of short-term spaces along the street within Zone M, and as proposed within the South Beach lots, and the current supply of long term spaces, within the beach lots and on the street, there is adequate parking available to meet the current beach demand. The City states that within the Coastal Zone there are

over 10,000 public parking spaces including approximately 5,434 parking spaces within public beach lots and on the Pier; 550 metered street spaces; 330 metered lot spaces. Of the total parking within the beach lots the peak utilization rate during the summer was 58% or a total surplus of 3,151 spaces. Within the two main South Beach lots, that provide 2,406 spaces, the occupancy rate during the summer is approximately 67%. Therefore, the South Beach lots have a surplus of at least 793 parking spaces during the summer, including during summer holiday periods.

In addition to the City's beach lots relatively low occupancy rate the City provides significantly more parking than other beach Cities. Surrounding beaches, such as the Venice and Pacific Palisades area, provide less public beach lot parking than the City of Santa Monica. Venice Beach provides 954 public parking spaces within three public beach lots, or 17% of the total beach lot spaces provided by the City of Santa Monica. Will Rogers Beach, in the Pacific Palisades area, provides a total of 1,813 public spaces within five public beach lots, or 33% of the spaces provided by the City of Santa Monica. Furthermore, the Venice and Will Rogers beach lots operate near or at full capacity during the summer weekends, and do not have the surplus parking as the City of Santa Monica.

Moreover, the City beach parking rates are the lowest among the surrounding beaches (Venice and Pacific Palisades). During summer weekends the flat rate is \$7.00 for all-day a flat rate. Venice and Will Rogers beaches charge \$9.50. The City of Santa Monica is also considering lowering the current parking fee for the South Beach lots by \$1.00 to increase utilization in those lots.

To offset the loss of the evening use of the 733 parking spaces in Zones C, I and M, the City has recently added 200 evening (8 p.m. to 8 a.m.) public parking spaces along Neilson Way between Pico Boulevard and the south city limit. However, the Commission has not generally required replacement parking or additional mitigation for loss of evening street parking after normal beach operating hours if there is adequate beach parking in the area to serve evening use.

Furthermore, as stated earlier, the City of Santa Monica is well served by mass transit (Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus, the Tide shuttle and the Pier/Beach Shuttle) which provides easy access to the beach and other visitor destinations within the Coastal Zone. The transit service provides an attractive alternative to driving and parking at the beach and traveling from one coastal visitor destination to another. No other Southern California beach city provides the type of mass transit that the City of Santa Monica provides.

In addition to the parking and mass transit service, the City argues that they have committed significant resources towards improvements that will make access easier and safer. New improvements include additional signals, and crosswalks, reconstruction of intersections, and the addition of median islands. The City states

that they have invested over 25.9 million dollars in beach improvements over the last 14 years in order to accentuate the beach experience for coastal visitors. These improvements include creation of a beach bike path, improved park and play areas, and restoration of the Santa Monica Pier. The City has also implemented a signage program to improve visitor access to the coast. The City is also developing a marketing program to better inform regular visitors and new visitors of the various beach parking options available along the coast.

Based on the above information the Commission finds that the proposed preferential zone does not significantly adversely impact coastal access.

Over the last twenty years the Commission has found in past coastal permit action throughout the State, regarding preferential parking programs and other parking prohibition measures, the needs of the residents and the general public must be balanced without adversely impacting public access [#P-79-295 (City of Santa Cruz); #5-82-251 (City of Hermosa Beach); #3-83-209 (City of Santa Cruz); #3-87-42 (City of Capitola; #5-90-989 (City of Los Angeles); #4-93-135 (City of Malibu); #A-6-LJS-89-166 (City of San Diego); and #5-97-215 (City of Santa Monica)]. The hours proposed within this area of Santa Monica will balance the needs of the residents in regards to adequate curb side parking with the needs of the public in regards to the ability to access a visitor –serving commercial area that is within close proximity of the beach. There are 1, 2, 3, and 10-hour parking meters throughout the Main Street area providing the Main Street visitor a wide range of parking options.

As conditioned, the establishment of a preferential residential parking district in this area will not significantly impact public beach parking at this time. However, it has been estimated that approximately 7.5 million visitors came to Santa Monica beaches in 1998 during the summer, between July and September (County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Lifeguard Division. Beach attendance has increased by approximately 20% since 1972. With each subsequent year, as Southern California's population increases, the amount of visitors to the beach will increase and there will be an increase in the demand for short-term and long-term beach parking within the beach lots and surrounding area. Therefore, to ensure that the restrictions will not adversely impact beach access in the future, the authorization for the parking restrictions will terminate in three years. The City may apply for a new permit to reinstate the parking program. The City may also develop alternative parking for the public in the future that the Commission may consider as appropriate replacement parking to mitigate the loss of public on-street spaces. If the City decides to continue the parking restrictions, prior to the expiration of the authorization of the parking restrictions, the City shall submit a new permit application which shall include a parking study that evaluates parking utilization for the streets within the proposed preferential parking zone and the nearby beach parking during the summer weekends. To gather information that would be representative of the summer period the survey weekends shall be spread-out over the summer period and not consecutive

weekends. The study shall include a parking survey for the streets within the zone and within the surrounding area to determine purpose of trip, length of stay, parking location, destination, and frequency of visits.

All posted parking restriction signs shall be removed prior to termination of the preferential parking authorized by this permit, unless the Commission has approved a new permit to authorized preferential parking beyond three years from the date of approval of this permit. Furthermore, to ensure that any change in the restrictions or size of the zone will not adversely impact coastal access, any proposed change in the hours, days, or boundaries of the proposed preferential residential parking zone will require an amendment to this permit.

The City objects to a time limit on the development that is authorized by this permit. The City is concerned with residents' uncertainty as to whether their ability to park in their neighborhoods will continue into the future. A time restriction also poses difficulty for the City as it limits the City's ability to do any long-range planning in the area due to uncertainty regarding resident parking. A third concern is the level of analysis that would be required each time a permit is applied for and the cost. The City estimates that the cost would be approximately \$150,000 each time a permit is applied for.

In lieu of a time limit on the development authorized by this permit, the City is proposing a monitoring program. The City is proposing to conduct a parking monitoring program which will include filing a report with the Executive Director within a five year period after approval of the permit. The report will include a parking study of the two south beach parking lots during two summer months. If the Executive Director determines that there are changed circumstances that may affect the consistency of the parking program with the policies of Coastal Act, the City would then apply for an amendment to the permit.

Although the Commission understands the City's concerns, the City's proposed monitoring program would place Commission staff in a position where they would need to make a policy decision that is in the Commission's purview. The determination as to whether there is a significant change in the parking situation and the impacts to public access is a policy matter for the Commission. Furthermore, there could be a difference of opinion between Commission staff and City staff in terms of the conclusions of the report. Because the protection, provision and enhancement of public access to and along the coast is one of the strongest goals of the Coastal Act, the re-review of the information and the impact of the preferential parking districts should be by the Commission through the permit process. Therefore, the Commission finds it necessary to limit the time the parking program is authorized for to five years. The Commission, therefore, finds that, only as

conditioned, will the proposed project be consistent with Sections 30210, 30211, 30212.5, 30213, 30214, 30223, and 30252(4) of the Coastal Act of 1976.

F. Unpermitted Development

In 1989 the City approved an ordinance creating the residential preferential parking zone. According to the City the restrictions for the zone became effective and enforced by the City the same year. The boundaries were expanded in 1990. There are no records of permits issued for this development. Although unpermitted development has taken place on the property prior to submission of this permit application, consideration of the application by the Commission has been based solely upon the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. Action by the Commission on the permit does not constitute a waiver of any legal action with regard to the alleged violation nor does it constitute an admission as to the legality of any development undertaken on the subject site without a Coastal permit.

G. Local Coastal Program

Section 30604(a) of the Coastal Act states that:

Prior to certification of the Local Coastal Program, a Coastal Development Permit shall be issued if the issuing agency, or the Commission on appeal, finds that the proposed development is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200) of this division and that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a Local Coastal Program that is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200).

In August 1992, the Commission certified, with suggested modifications, the land use plan portion of the City of Santa Monica's Local Coastal Program, excluding the area west of Ocean Avenue and Neilson Way (Beach Overlay District), and the Santa Monica Pier. On September 15, 1992, the City of Santa Monica accepted the LUP with suggested modifications.

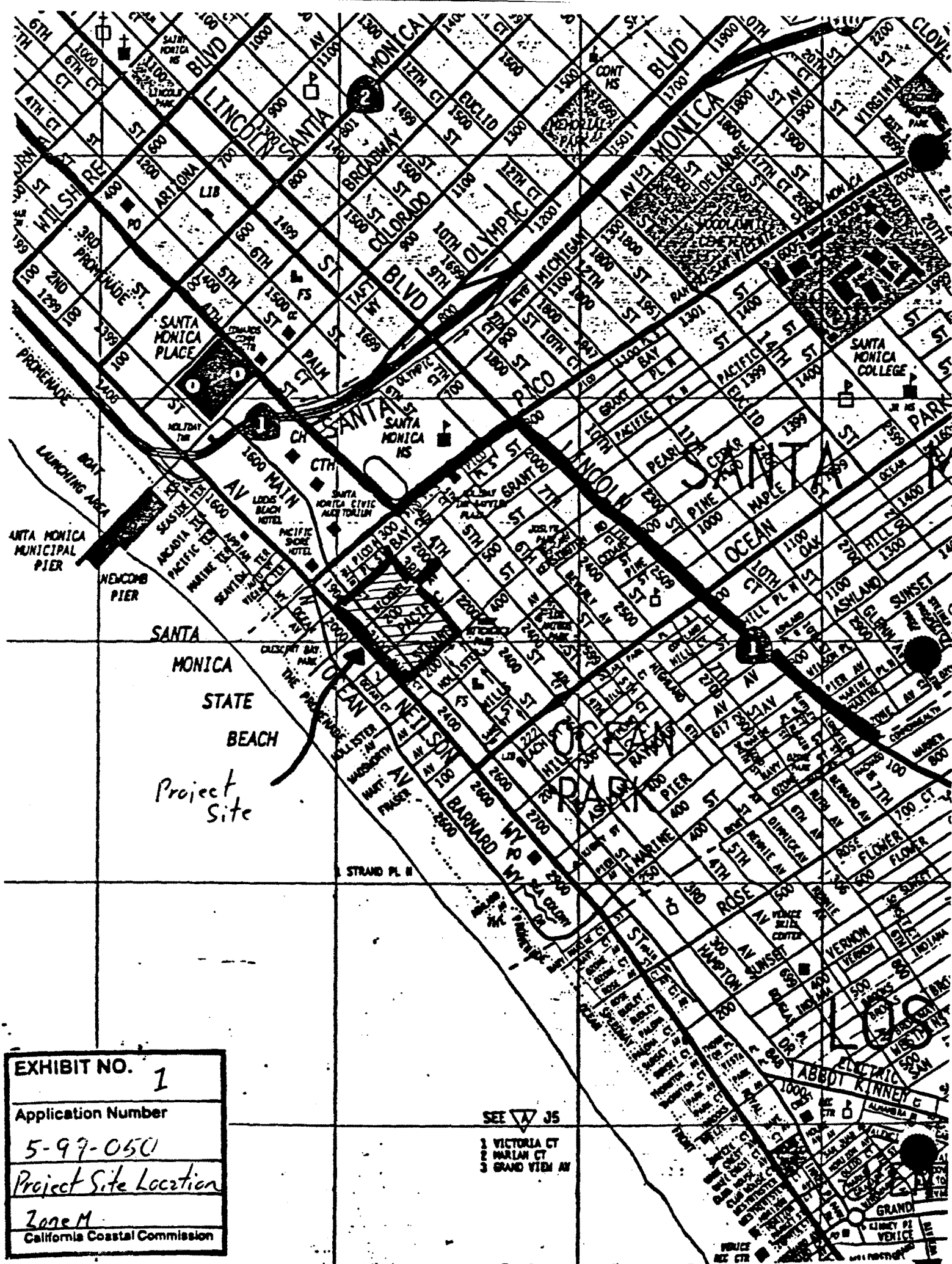
The area within the Beach Overlay District was excluded from certification after the voters approved Proposition S which discourages certain types of visitor-serving uses along the beach. In deferring this area the Commission found that, although Proposition S and its limitations on development were a result of a voters initiative, the policies of the LUP were inadequate to achieve the basic Coastal Act goal of maximizing public access and recreation to the State beach and did not ensure that development would not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea.

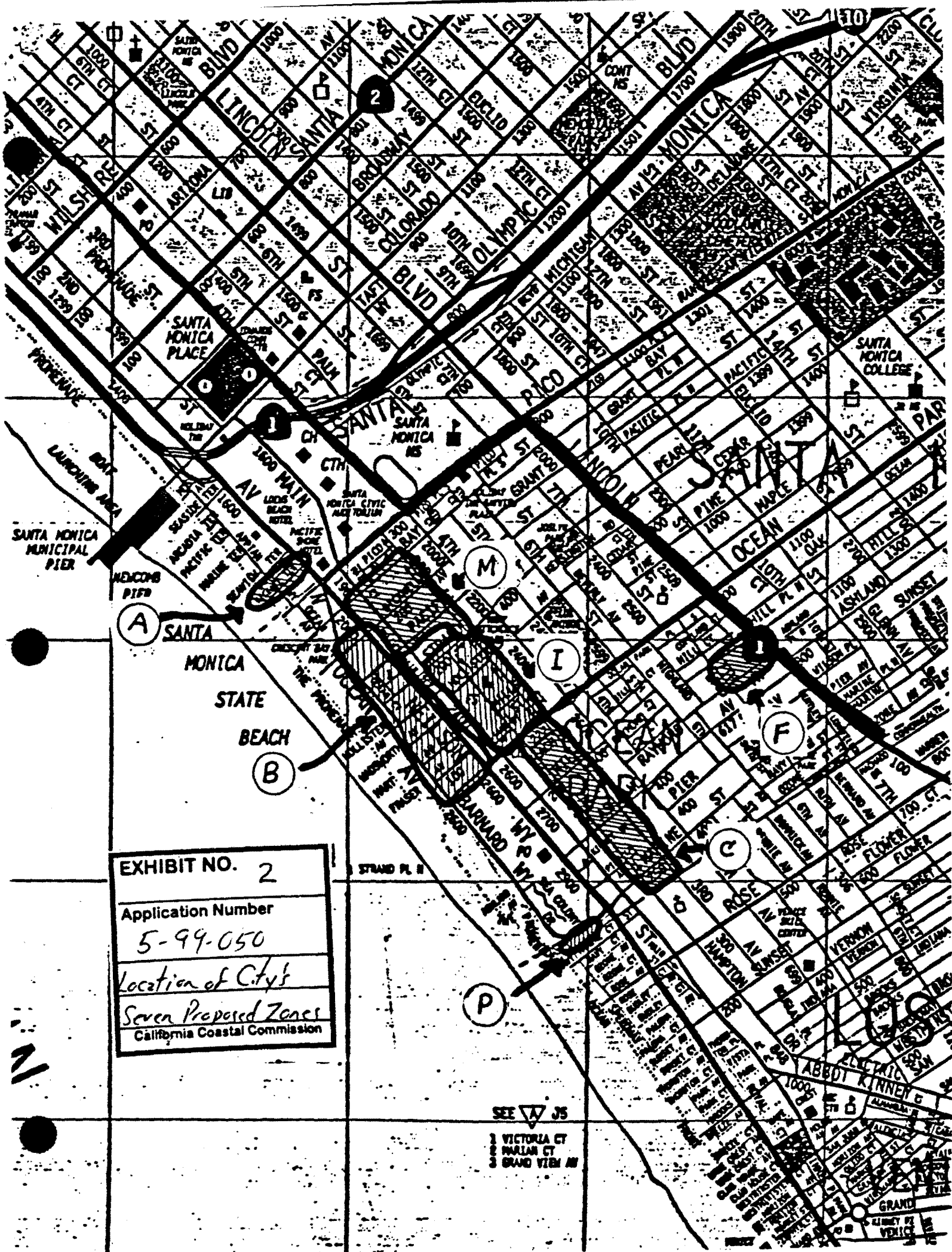
Therefore, the subject site is not included within a certified LCP and the coastal development permit must be issued by the Commission. As conditioned the project will not adversely impact coastal resources or access. The Commission, therefore, finds that the project, as conditioned, will be consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act and will not prejudice the ability of the City to prepare a Land Use Plan and implementation program consistent with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act as required by Section 30604(a).

H. California Environmental Quality Act.

Section 13096 of the Commission's administrative regulations requires Commission approval of Coastal Development Permit applications to be supported by a finding showing the application, as conditioned by any conditions of approval, 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, as conditioned, is consistent with the applicable policies of the Coastal Act. There are no feasible alternatives or mitigation measures available, which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact, which the activity may have on the environment. Therefore, the proposed project is found consistent with CEQA and the policies of the Coastal Act.







City of
Santa Monica

Suzanne Frick
Director
Planning & Community
Development Department
1685 Main Street
PO Box 2200
Santa Monica, California 90407-2200

EXHIBIT NO. 3
Application Number 5-99-050
<i>City's Submittal</i>
<i>Letter</i>
California Coastal Commission

January 26, 1999

Al Padilla
California Coastal Commission
South Coast Area Office
200 Oceangate, Suite 1000
Long Beach, CA 90802-4416

5-99-048

RE: Notice of Violation File No. V-5-98-019

Dear Mr. Padilla:

Pursuant to our letter of January 8, 1999, enclosed is our re-application for an after-the-fact permit for the seven preferential parking zones established within the Ocean Park neighborhood of Santa Monica between 1983 and 1989. We understand that you have kept the background information from our previous application on file and, as such, we have not included such detail with this re-application. We will provide you with notification envelopes and addresses closer to the expected time of the Coastal Commission hearing on this matter.

To assist you in your review of our application, we wanted to provide you with some background information regarding the preferential parking zones.

1. Preferential Parking in Santa Monica does not Restrict Coastal Access

We believe that preferential parking in Santa Monica does not restrict public access to the coast. Santa Monica possesses a strong commitment to coastal access. Santa Monica is unique among California cities in this commitment. We provide more than 5,500 public beach parking spaces, including 3,000 spaces which are south of the Santa Monica Pier and closer to the coast than the preferential parking zones in question. Our most recent summer parking counts, taken on Sunday, August 30, 1998, showed significant availability of parking in the two primary beach parking lots south of the Pier. The parking lot at 2030 Barnard Way showed a 4:00 p.m. peak of 65 percent utilization, while 2600 Barnard Way reached its peak at 3:30 p.m. with a 50 percent utilization, leaving more than 975 coast-adjacent spaces available during the peak of the summer season, almost 5 times the number of spaces affected by the preferential parking zones.

Outside of the extensive parking available immediately adjacent to the beach, there is a wide range of additional publicly available parking facilities in the Coastal Zone of Santa Monica. These parking options range from limited-term on-street metered spaces to all-day flat-fee parking structure spaces. To accommodate short-term parking demand south of the Pier, this inventory of public parking includes more than 550 on-street metered spaces and an additional 330 metered spaces in public parking lots. Combined these metered spaces are 4 times the spaces affected by the preferential parking zones.

In addition to the generous provision of public parking within the Coastal Zone, the City of Santa Monica has taken extensive measures to promote coastal access and improvements. These measures include the 1997 establishment of a free summer beach shuttle linking the south beach lots with the Santa Monica Pier, the 1993 establishment of the year-round Tide Shuttle linking several prominent destinations in the Coastal Zone, and an excellent and extensive public transit system which brings bus riders, from as far away as downtown Los Angeles, directly to the beach with the lowest transit fares in the region. The City of Santa Monica has invested more than \$25.9 million in beach improvements over the last 14 years, and has recently implemented a directional signage program in the Coastal Zone which is designed to direct visitors to the beach parking lots with the greatest availability of parking. Even with all of these public improvement, the City's beach lot parking rates have not increased since 1992 despite inflation, and are significantly lower than neighboring communities.

2. Santa Monica has Balanced the Needs of Beach Visitors and Residents

The City's provision of beach lots, on-street public parking, and preferential parking provides a balance among the needs of beach visitors, commercial employees and patrons, and residents. This balanced approach provides parking adjacent to the coast for beach visitors, parking in commercial areas for commercial visitors, and parking in neighborhoods for residents. Abandoning this balanced approach would likely create an unsafe and inefficient scenario where beach visitors, employees, customers and residents rove through the streets of Santa Monica competing for the next available parking space.

The neighborhoods that are served by the preferential parking zones primarily consist of residential units that were built before modern on-site parking requirements. Many of these units do not have any on-site parking. Without preferential parking, residents of these units would not have anywhere to park their cars. The preferential parking zones help ensure that there is a reasonable supply of parking for residents within a practical distance of their homes.

3. Limiting Preferential Parking Would Not Enhance Coastal Access

Restricting or limiting the existing preferential parking zones in Santa Monica would be unlikely to significantly increase parking availability for coastal visitors. As these parking zones were created with the intent of limiting parking by employees and patrons of area businesses, limiting preferential parking would likely return this constituency to the neighborhoods and limit the availability of parking to both residents and beach visitors.

We understand that Coastal Commission staff is concerned about the availability of low-cost short-term parking adjacent to the coast. We feel that opening residential streets to meet this perceived need would not further the goals of the Coastal Commission or the City. However, as part of our Coastal Parking and Circulation Study, we are analyzing parking term and pricing strategies in the beach lots to better meet the needs of beach visitors. We believe that the recommendations from the study, as well as the many measures that Santa Monica has already put in place, will convince the Coastal Commission that the preferential parking zones can be maintained while public access to the coast is unobstructed. All of these zones have been in place at least 10 years, yet the Santa Monica coast has continued to be one of the most accessible beach areas in California.

4. Reservation of Legal Rights

The City is filing this Application under protest, with full reservation of the City's legal rights and without waiving the City of Santa Monica's right to bring or defend a legal challenge, should that prove necessary. As you know, the City maintains that the Coastal Commission's regulatory authority does not extend to preferential parking zones within the coastal zone of Santa Monica. The City's position in this matter is based on three primary factors: (1) the creation of preferential parking zones does not require Coastal Commission approval; (2) in 1983 when the zones were first created, the Coastal Commission confirmed that such zones were not subject to Commission approval; and (3) the City has exclusive authority to establish preferential parking zones.

(A) Coastal Commission Approval Not Required

The establishment of a preferential parking zone is not a "development" under Public Resource Code § 30106 and therefore does not require a coastal development permit. The position that the placement of a preferential parking zone sign implicates the Coastal Act is not supportable by the statutory definition of development, which applies to structures such as "buildings," "roads" and "electrical power lines." Interpreting "development" in this manner would substantially expand the Commission's authority to include the installation of parking and traffic control devices and regulatory signage. Under such a broad definition, the Coastal Commission would be asserting authority over the installation of a wide range of parking and traffic control measures such as traffic signals, stop signs, speed limit signs, etc. Surely the Commission does not intend to review the installation of every sign or the placement of minor traffic improvements in the Coastal Zone. This is far beyond the intent of the Coastal Act.

(B) The Coastal Commission has Waived its Right to Require a Permit

Prior to establishing the first preferential parking zone in the coastal zone in 1983, the Santa Monica City Attorney researched the issue of Coastal Commission permitting of these parking zones. Although the City Attorney independently concluded that the California Coastal Act does not require Commission approval of preferential parking zones, the Commission's legal staff advised the City Attorney that such approval would not be required. Thus, the City's

actions have been consistent with the advice received from the Commission and the Commission has been on notice since 1983 that the City was establishing preferential parking zones in the Coastal Zone. Since that time, the City is unaware of any judgments or legislative amendments to the California Coastal Act which have expanded the Commission's authority over preferential parking zones.

(C) Exclusive Municipal Authority in Establishing Preferential Parking Zones

Vehicle Code § 22507 grants exclusive authority to cities to create preferential parking on designated public streets. In *Friedman v. City of Beverly Hills*, 47 Cal.App. 4th 436, 54 Cal.Rptr.d. 882, 885 (1996), the court found that "section 22507 broadly empowers localities to regulate parking within their own districts" and that "the State does not desire to micromanage local parking circumstances." Because the State has expressly granted this parking authority to cities, without exception as to whether the streets are located in the coastal zone, these preferential parking zones should remain under the exclusive authority of the City of Santa Monica.

We look forward to working with you to resolve this issue. If you have any questions in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at 310-458-2275.

Sincerely,



Andy Agle
Deputy Director

attachment

c: John Jalili, City Manager
Suzanne Frick, Director of Planning and Community Development
Joseph Lawrence, Assistant City Attorney
Kate Vernez, Assistant to the City Manager

INFORMAL OPINION NUMBER 83-115

DATE: September 3, 1983
TO: Kenyon Webster, Program and Policy Development
FROM: Robert M. Myers, City Attorney
SUBJECT: Whether or Not a Coastal Development Permit Is
Required to Establish a Preferential Parking
Zone Within the California Coastal Zone


By memorandum dated August 19, 1983, you requested an opinion from this office concerning whether or not the City was required to obtain a coastal development permit to establish a preferential parking zone on Vicente Terrace. In our opinion, a coastal development permit is not required.

The City of Santa Monica has previously established two preferential parking zones within the California Coastal Zone. Prior to the establishment of the first zone, this office contacted a staff attorney for the California Coastal Commission and was advised that no coastal development permit was required. Our independent review of the California Coastal Act of 1976 resulted in the same conclusion.

If the California Coastal Commission can assert jurisdiction over establishment of preferential parking zones, it can also assert jurisdiction over raising parking lot charges, changing parking meter rates, changing street speed limits, and other parking and traffic regulations. (Regulations of this type are clearly distinguishable from the 4th Street modifications, which will change the intensity of on-street parking by the substantial addition of new spaces.) Jurisdiction over these subjects should be resisted in the absence of clear judicial determinations to the contrary.

RMM:r

cc: John H. Alschuler, Jr., City Manager
Stan Scholl, Director of General Services
Ray Davis, Parking and Traffic Engineer

EXHIBIT NO. 4
APPLICATION NO. 5-99-050
City's Memo Regarding Preferential Parking
 California Coastal Commission

State of California, George Deukmejian, Governor

California Coastal Commission
631 Howard Street, 4th Floor
San Francisco, California 94105
(415) 543-8555

EXHIBIT NO. 5
Application Number 5-99-050
Commission Staff Letter to Santa Barbara California Coastal Commission

December 19, 1983

Jim Kahan
Office of the City Attorney
Santa Barbara, CA 93012

Dear Mr. Kahan,

You have asked for the Commission's staff counsel opinion as to whether or not the preferential parking program proposed for implementation in the West Beach area of the City of Santa Barbara requires a coastal development permit. We have concluded that a permit is required.

You have described the project to consist of establishing "resident only" parking on one side of each designated block and 90 minute parking with permit holders exempt from the time limitation on the other side of those blocks. The project includes the erection of signs to identify the restricted areas. The restrictions are to be in effect on weekends and holidays.

The intended effect of this proposal is to provide additional street parking to residents; in turn this will limit the number of parking spaces available to the public on weekends and holidays, thus limiting public access to the ocean. The Transportation Engineer's report on the permit parking program states the program is expected to mitigate the effects on residents of the displacement of beach goers into residential neighborhoods from the waterfront lots. The waterfront lots are now administered by the City in accordance with a parking program approved by the Coastal Commission in Application Number 4-83-81. According to the Traffic Engineer's report, on-street occupancy of the parking spaces in the project area exceeds capacity during Sunday afternoons. Sunday afternoons have been identified as the period of highest use of the beach and related recreational facilities and capacity has been defined as more than 85% occupancy. Beach goers presently using on-street parking in the West Beach area will be displaced when the parking program is implemented as the program will eliminate existing public parking spaces and restrict the remaining public spaces.

"Development" as defined in the Coastal Act includes "...on land...the placement or erection of any solid material or structure ..." and "...the change in access to water...". The development proposed by the City will have a cumulative effect on public access to the ocean, as discussed above. Various local governments have expressed interest in resident-only parking programs on public streets. If allowed to take place without review for conformity with the Coastal Act, implementation of a preferential parking program would set a precedent which would significantly reduce public access to the ocean. While the Commission, like other government agencies, encourages alternative modes of transportation, it is recognized that most users of the beach arrive by car.

In addition, the erection of signs to identify the newly restricted area is development. Repair or maintenance activities, including the installation, modification or removal of regulatory, warning or informational signs, does not require a permit if it is intended to allow continuation of existing programs and activities which began before the effective date of the Coastal Act. In this instance, the City intends to establish a new program that alters the previous use of the public streets.

Therefore we conclude that the project is development as defined in Section 30106 of the Coastal Act of 1976, and that a coastal development permit is required. This conclusion is consistent with our conclusion in several other matters where preferential parking programs were proposed by local governments.

Our conclusion of the need for a coastal permit does not imply that a permit must necessarily be denied. We note that the Land Use Plan, as certified by the Coastal Commission, contains policies that address on-street parking in the West Beach area. Policy 11.9 states in part that the "City shall investigate the posting of time limits or the imposition of parking fees for on-street parking". Policy 11.10 states in part that the "City shall investigate developing a residential parking sticker program for the West Beach and East Beach residential neighborhoods to guarantee parking for residents and discourage long-term parking by non-residents". As the Coastal Commission has approved the Land Use Plan, it has found the concept of a preferential parking program in the West Beach area to be in conformity with the Coastal Act. When the Coastal Commission approved the waterfront parking program it found that some reconfiguration of public use patterns with inconvenience to the users is consistent with the Coastal Act so long as the program does not prohibit or discourage public access to the beach in the City. The Coastal Commission staff has already begun the analysis necessary to determine if the implementation mechanism proposed for the West Beach area is consistent with the Coastal Act and the Commission's past actions. In recognition of the City's desire to implement the program prior to the period of highest beach use, the Commission staff intends to review an application for the development in an expeditious fashion.

Even if you continue to believe that a permit is not required, the City of Santa Barbara may apply for the permit and reserve the issue of jurisdiction. This approach has been satisfactorily used in other cases where the likelihood of agreement on the merits of a project was greater than the likelihood of agreement on the issue of jurisdiction. If the preferential parking program is implemented without benefit of a coastal development permit the staff will refer this matter to the Office of the Attorney General for enforcement as a violation of the Coastal Act of 1976.

Very truly yours,

Cynthia K. Long
Cynthia K. Long
Staff Counsel

cc: Office of the Attorney General:
N. Gregory Taylor, Assistant Attorney General
Steven H. Kaufmann, Deputy Attorney General
South Central District

State of California, George Deukmejian, Governor

California Coastal Commission
631 Howard Street, 4th Floor
San Francisco, California 94105
(415) 543-8555

EXHIBIT NO. 6

Application Number

5-99-050

Commission Staff Letter
to City of Santa Cruz
California Coastal Commission

September 29, 1983

Matt Farrell
Public Works Department
City of Santa Cruz
809 Center St. Room 201
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Beach Flats Residential Parking Program

Dear Mr. Farrell:

I have recently reviewed a copy of the staff recommendation and accompanying documents describing the Santa Cruz City Beach Flats Residential Parking Program. Rick Hyman of our Central Coast office forwarded your correspondence to me. My conclusion is that a coastal development permit must be issued to authorize the implementation of this program.

The definition of "development" which triggers the requirement for a coastal development permit is quite broad. Section 30106 of the Coastal Act states:

Development means ...change in the intensity of use of water, or of access thereto; ...

The City's proposal would establish a preferential parking program in the Beach Flats Area. According to a very thorough study by your departmental staff, there is competition between residents and beach-going visitors for on-street parking in the area bounded by the boardwalk, the San Lorenzo River and Riverside Avenue. A program has been proposed to protect the residents' ability to park at or near their homes, consisting of shorter parking meter times and a residential parking permit system. We agree with the Director of Public Works that this will discourage all day parking in the Beach Flats area. This in turn may diminish beach access opportunities for non-residential beach-goers.

Because of the program's foreseeable impact on access to the sea, a coastal development permit should be sought soon after the program is approved by the Public Works Department. The permit must be obtained before the plan may be implemented.

The issue of preferential parking is common in many coastal communities where public access to the beach may inconvenience residents. Examples where coastal permits have been required include Hermosa Beach, Santa Monica, and the City of Santa Barbara. In each case the Commission reviewed the proposals to ensure that parking priorities were consistent with the access policies of the Coastal Act.

Please submit an application for a coastal development permit as soon as possible.

Matt Farrell
September 29, 1983
Page 2

(1) to avoid inconvenience to the City's residents and visitors. Rick Hyman in our Central Coast office will gladly assist if need be.

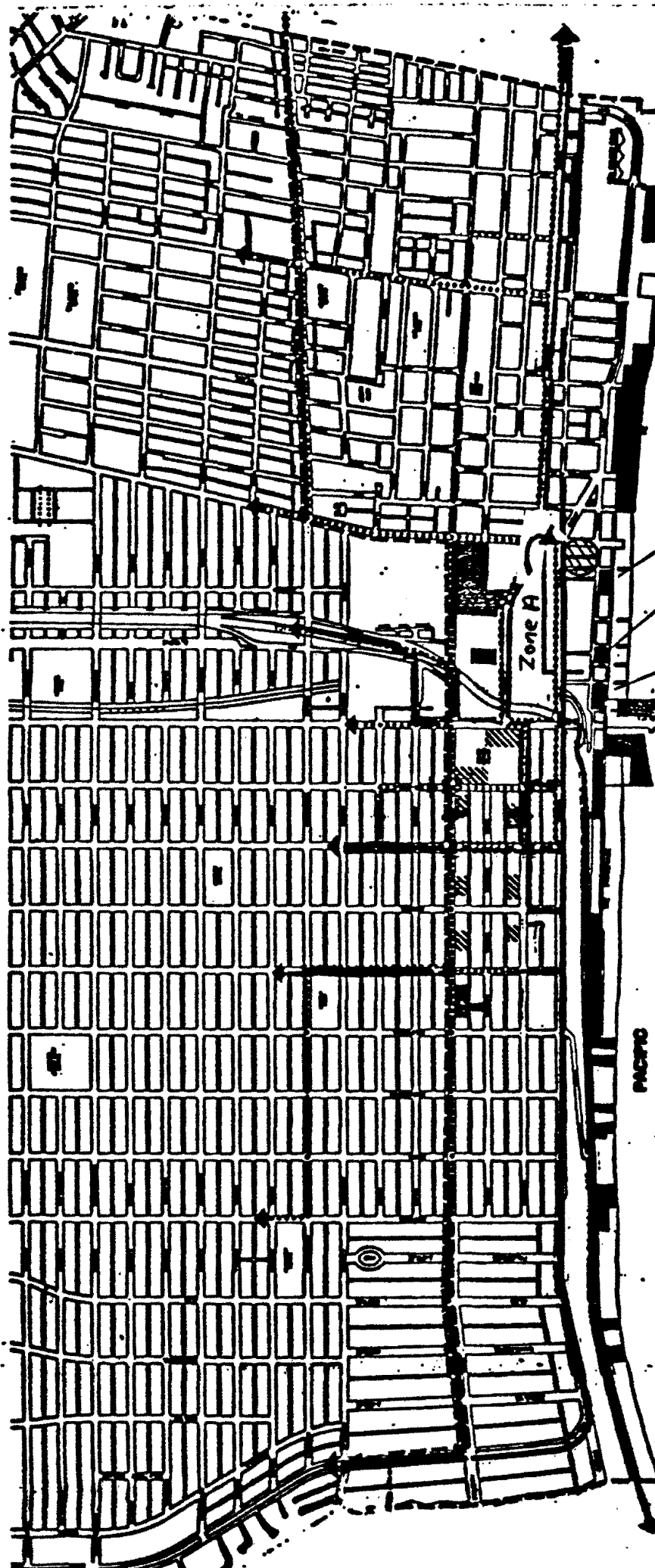
Very truly yours,



Evelyn C. Lee
Staff Counsel

ECL/np

cc: Neal Anderson, city attorney
Les Strnad



Legend





-  Solid Bus Routes
-  Santa Monica Bus Routes
-  Public Parking Lots
-  Downtown Parking Structures

EXHIBIT NO. 7

Application Number

5-99-050

Public Beach Lots

South of Pier

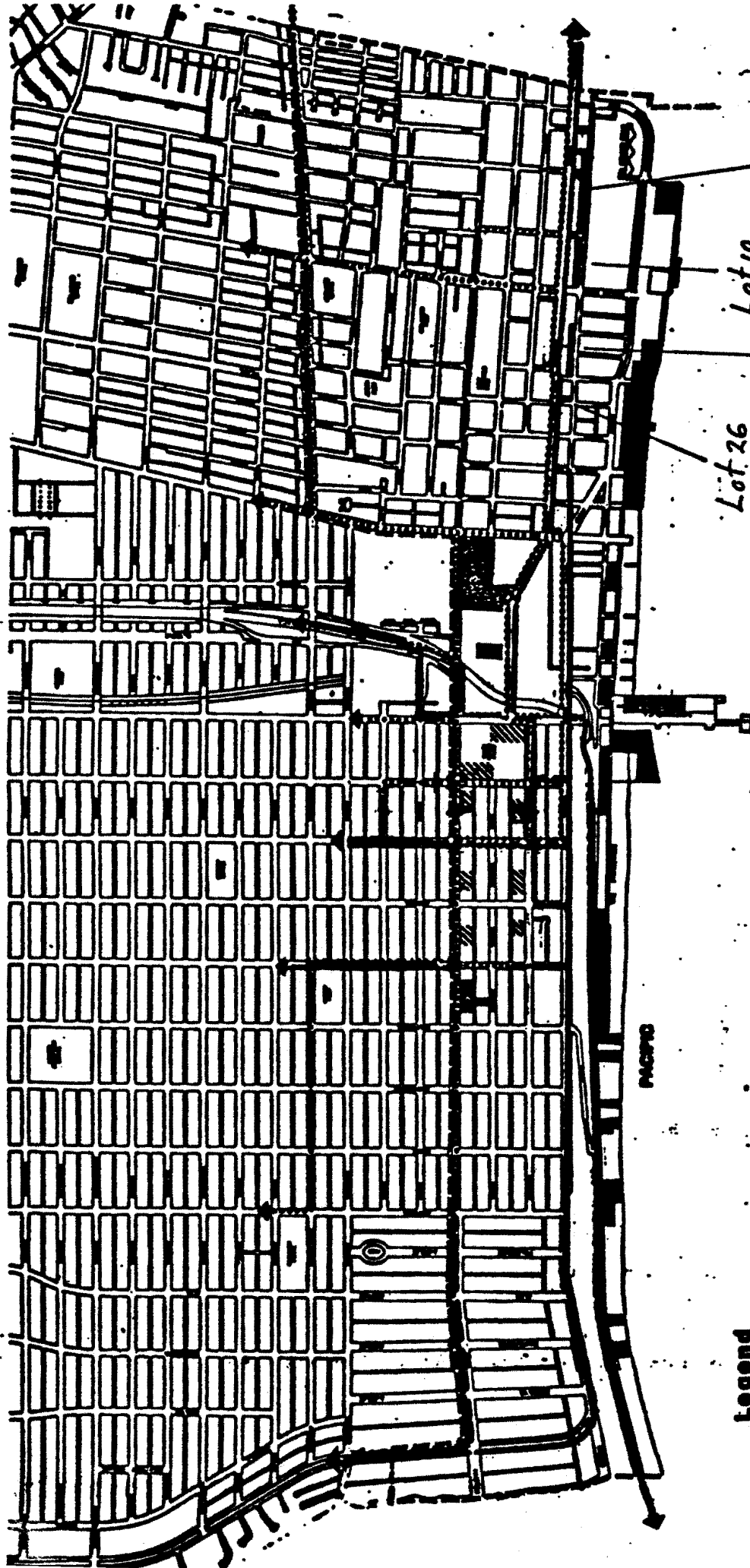
California Coastal Commission

MAP 6

Public Transit and Parking

SANTA MONICA LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM





Legend



- SCOTT BUS ROUTES
- SANTA MONICA BUS ROUTES
- PUBLIC PARKING LOTS
- DOWNTOWN PARKING STRUCTURES

EXHIBIT NO. 8

Application Number

5-99-050

Neilsen Way Parking

Lots

California Coastal Commission

Number of
Public Spaces = 361

Lot 26

Lot 10

Lot 11

Lot 9

MAP 1

Public Transit and Parking

SANTA MONICA LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM



Ride the **FREE** Santa Monica Pier/Beach Shuttle and beat the traffic!

ROUTE: A loop between
Santa Monica Pier &
the 2030 Barnard Way
Beach Parking Lot

COST: **FREE!**
Plus, \$2 rebate off
\$7 parking fee with
shuttle validation

FREQUENCY: All Summer - every 10 minutes!
Fridays 6 p.m. - Midnight
Saturdays Noon - Midnight
Sundays Noon - 10 p.m.

Plus, Thursdays, July 1 thru September 2
6 p.m. - Midnight

PARKING RATES DURING SHUTTLE HOURS
(2030 Barnard Way parking lot only)
Saturdays & Sundays \$7 All day (rebate applies)
Evenings after 6 p.m. \$3 Flat rate

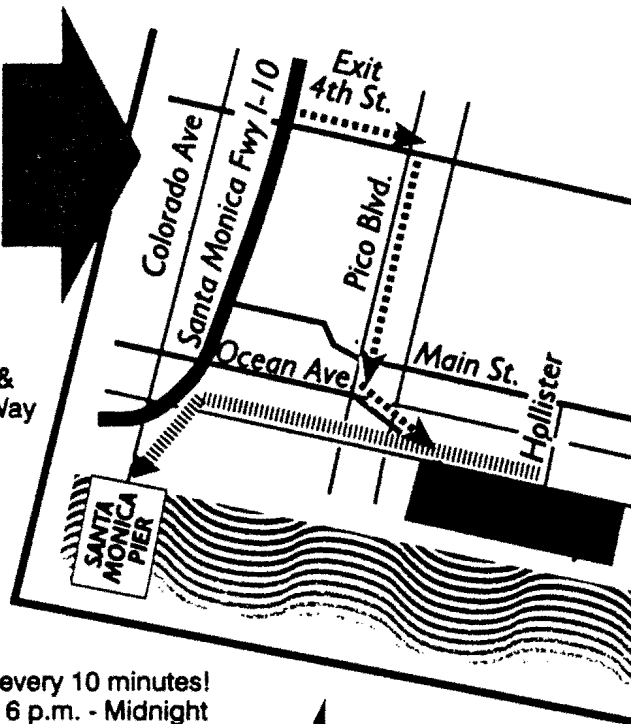


EXHIBIT NO. 9

APPLICATION NO.

5-99-050

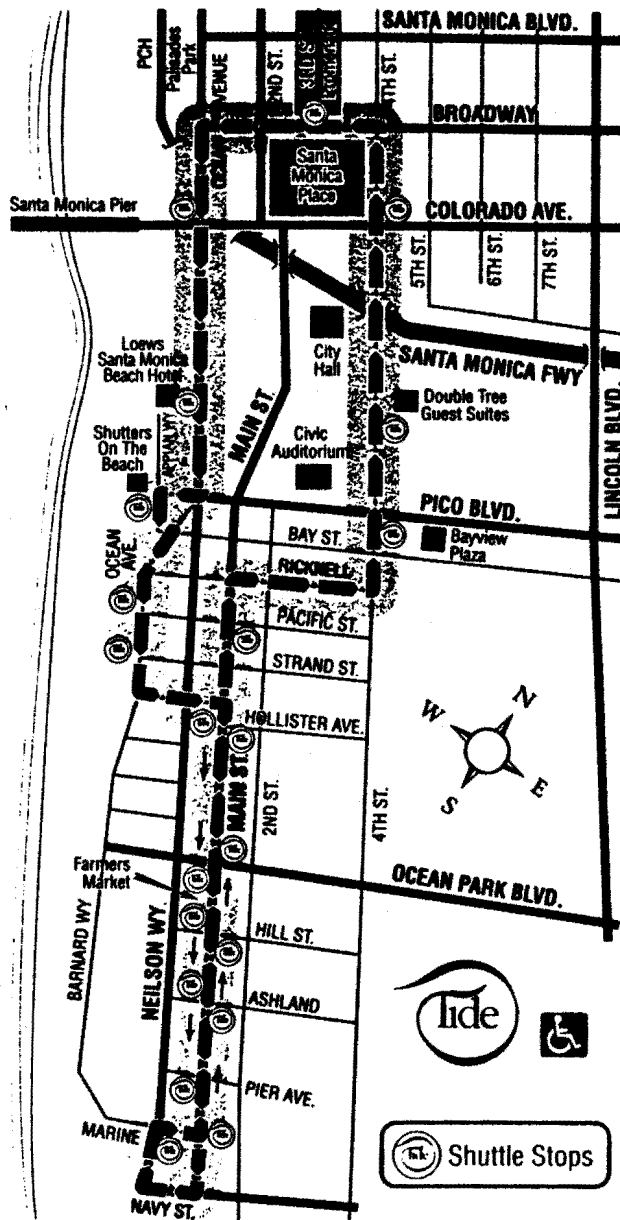
Pier/Beach Shuttle

Schedule / Route
California Coastal Commission

There's no easier way
to get around
Santa Monica...

...than using the electric Tide Shuttle. This service, provided through a unique public/private sector partnership between the City of Santa Monica and the Bayview Plaza, DoubleTree Guest Suites, Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, and Shuttles On The Beach, is designed to help reduce traffic congestion, pollution and eliminate parking hassles for Santa Monica visitors, residents and those who work within the City.

Riding the electric Tide Shuttle to shopping, dining and entertainment at the Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica Place, the beach, the Pier and Main Street, and to business appointments in the downtown and Civic Center areas is simple and convenient. Since you are using a non-polluting vehicle to make your trip, it will help clean the air, too.



Tide Shuttle Runs Every 15 minutes
Fare: 25¢, 10¢ (Seniors/Disabled/Medicare)

WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Saturday: 9:30 a.m. – Midnight
Sunday: 9:30 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

Mon – Thurs: Noon – 10:00 p.m.
Friday: Noon – Midnight

♻️ printed on recycled paper

Main Street & Third Street Promenade



*It's Convenient,
It's Electric,
It's The Way to Go...*

TIDE SUMMER SCHEDULE
May 29 – September 5, 1999

Sponsored by
The City of Santa Monica, Bayview Plaza, DoubleTree Guest Suites, Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, and Shuttles On The Beach

EXHIBIT NO.	10
Application Number	5-99-050
Tide Shuttle	
Schedule / Route	
California Coastal Commission	

operates seven days
a year. Consult the
Tide Shuttle for schedules.
Tide Shuttle stop nearest
please refer to the
panel.