

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

SAN DIEGO AREA
 3111 CAMINO DEL RIO NORTH, SUITE 200
 SAN DIEGO, CA 92108-1725
 619-21-8036

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 Staff Report: 5/9/00
 Hearing Date: 6/13-16/00

REGULAR CALENDAR
STAFF REPORT AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION

Application No.: 6-00-12

Applicant: City of San Diego

Agent: Walter Gefrom

Description: Construction of a modified 70-ft. diameter turnaround at the western terminus of Ventura Place including installation of new concrete benches, bike racks, bollards and landscaping and removal and replacement of public parking.

Site: Western terminus of Ventura Place, Mission Beach, San Diego, San Diego County. No APN.

Substantive File Documents: Certified Mission Beach Precise Plan and Planned District Ordinances; Certified City of San Diego LCP Implementing Ordinances.

STAFF NOTES:

Summary of Staff's Preliminary Recommendation:

Staff is recommending approval of the proposed project subject to a special condition addressing timing of construction to avoid adverse impacts to public access. The proposal to install a turnaround is proposed to facilitate vehicular movement and reduce the potential for traffic congestion. However, to install the turnaround, several existing public parking spaces will be removed. While public parking is a concern at this popular beach parking lot, staff has determined that adequate on-site parking will continue to be provided through the applicant's proposal to replace the displaced parking (including a net increase in parking) in the immediate vicinity.

I. PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends the Commission adopt the following resolution:

MOTION: *I move that the Commission approve Coastal Development Permit No. 6-00-12 pursuant to the staff recommendation.*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL:

Staff recommends a YES vote. Passage of this motion will result in approval of the permit as conditioned and adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PERMIT:

The Commission hereby approves a coastal development permit for the proposed development and adopts the findings set forth below on grounds that the development as conditioned will be in conformity with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and 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. Approval of the permit complies with the California Environmental Quality Act because either 1) feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives have been incorporated to substantially lessen any significant adverse effects of the development on the environment, or 2) there are no further feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.

II. Standard Conditions.

See attached page.

III. Special Conditions.

The permit is subject to the following conditions:

1. Timing of Construction. PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall submit to the Executive Director for review and written approval, a final construction schedule, which shall be incorporated into construction bid documents. The schedule and construction documents shall specify that no construction will take place between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day of any year. Notes on the schedule and documents shall state that access corridors and staging areas shall be located in a manner that has the least impact on public access via the maintenance of existing public parking areas and traffic flow on coastal access routes (no use of public parking as staging areas or storage of equipment).

The permittee shall undertake the development in accordance with the approved plans. Any proposed changes to the approved plans shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the plans shall occur without a Coastal Commission approved amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.

2. Final Plans. PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall submit to the Executive Director for review and written approval, final plans for the proposed development. Said plans shall be in substantial conformance with the plans submitted with this application by the City of San Diego Engineering Department dated 12/28/99, except that they shall be revised to reflect the following:

- a. The note on the plans for the north parking lot demarcating eight public parking spaces as "valet parking" shall be deleted.

The permittee shall undertake the development in accordance with the approved plans. Any proposed changes to the approved plans shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the plans shall occur without a Coastal Commission approved amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.

IV. Findings and Declarations.

The Commission finds and declares as follows:

1. Detailed Project Description. Proposed are street improvements consisting of construction of a modified 70 ft. diameter turnaround at the west terminus of Ventura Place including the installation of a curb and gutter at the streetend. The City largely proposes these improvements in order to facilitate vehicular movement and to alleviate traffic congestion. The proposal also includes the removal of nine existing lifeguard parking spaces and two public parking spaces (for a total of 11 spaces) that are located in a large public parking lot north of Belmont Park Amusement Park on the south side of Ventura Place. The City proposes to replace the parking in another public parking lot immediately south of Belmont Park and add an additional seven parking spaces and parking space for a tour bus. Also proposed is the installation of removable concrete bollards and bicycle racks at the street end. In the area north of an existing comfort station and where the lifeguard parking spaces are proposed to be removed, concrete benches and a sidewalk are proposed. In addition, ten existing concrete planters will be removed from this area. These planters do not presently contain plants or vegetation. The City proposes to install some type of art work at this location in the future but at this time, it is not known what the art work will consist of. At the end of Ventura Place, two existing dead fan palm trees will be removed. The City proposes to replace the two trees in kind and to plant one additional fan palm tree at the streetend. A decorative pavement/sidewalk (stamped concrete) is also proposed on the north side of Ventura Place (i.e., light tan shade). In addition, three portions along the sidewalk south of Ventura Place will be replaced. However, these latter improvements to the sidewalk on the south side of the street do not require a coastal development permit as they will be replaced in-kind and in the same location and therefore are considered exempt repair and maintenance.

As noted above, the parking that will be eliminated in the north lot will be replaced in the south lot. A total of 18 new parking spaces will be provided in the public parking lot which is located south of Belmont Park including a parking space for handicapped. In addition, a parking area will also be provided for tour buses. One planter will be displaced as a result of the creation of the new parking but it will be replaced in the general vicinity of the new parking spaces.

Ventura Place, which terminates at the public boardwalk, is located in the community of Mission Beach just north of Belmont Park. Belmont Park is an amusement park and commercial/retail center on land owned by the City of San Diego and includes amusement rides such as the roller coaster, which is a well-noted landmark for visitors at the northwest corner of Mission Boulevard and Ventura Place. Ventura Place is bounded by commercial development to the immediate north, the public boardwalk and ocean to the west, and Belmont Park to the south. To the east is other commercial development and public parkland.

The subject site is located within an area of the Commission's original jurisdiction. As such, the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act are the standard of review, with the certified LCP used as guidance.

2. Public Access/Traffic Circulation/Parking. The following Coastal Act policies address the issue of public access to the shoreline:

Section 30210

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

Section 30212

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

(1) it is inconsistent with public safety, military security needs, or the protection of fragile coastal resources,

(2) adequate access exists nearby, or,

Section 30252

The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast by (1) facilitating the provision or extension of transit

service, (2) providing commercial facilities within or adjoining residential development or in other areas that will minimize the use of coastal access roads, (3) providing nonautomobile circulation within the development, (4) providing adequate parking facilities....

The subject site lies southwest of Strandway, the first coastal roadway in this area and therefore is located between the first public road and the sea. The subject site is located at the western terminus of Ventura Place, west of Mission Boulevard and immediately abuts Ocean Front Walk, the public boardwalk, to the west. Ventura Place is a major public access route. On the east side of Mission Boulevard, this street is named West Mission Bay Drive and it is the primary coastal access route into the this beach community where the site is located. Immediately to the south is Belmont Park, which includes an amusement park with retail shops. There are also two public parking lots north of Belmont Park. The largest fronts on Ventura Place and contains 269 parking spaces. The smaller lot fronts on Mission Boulevard and contains 71 spaces for a total of 298 spaces "north" of Belmont Park. These parking lots are heavily used by both patrons of Belmont Park as well as beach visitors and other members of the public. Another larger public parking lot (known as the "south lot"), situated south of Belmont Park includes both a large public parking lot as well as an improved grassy picnic area with tables. The south lot contains 433 parking spaces. Other uses adjacent to and west of, the north parking lot include a lifeguard tower and public restrooms.

The area surrounding the streetend of Ventura Place is very popular because it is adjacent to the boardwalk, public beach, the ocean and Belmont Park and several retail shops and restaurants. As such, the north parking lot is heavily utilized by members of the public and patrons of surrounding retail/restaurant establishments. Traffic congestion and competition for public parking spaces is a common problem in this area. The City has indicated that the purpose of the proposed turnaround is to help alleviate traffic congestion and pedestrian safety in this area. Presently, Ventura Place ends at the boardwalk and vehicles use the north parking lot adjacent to Belmont Park as a turnaround area which greatly adds to the congested traffic in this area. Furthermore, vehicles that don't use the north parking lot as a turnaround, but instead drive west to the end of Ventura Place, make a three-point turn which creates more congestion and poses a significant pedestrian hazard, as well. The westerly end of Ventura Place is a transitional area before entering the boardwalk since there is no clear separation between the streetend and the boardwalk. The proposed turnaround would provide a distinct separation of street and boardwalk by the addition of a new curb and gutter as well as removable bollards at the end of the street.

Although there is adequate public access in the area which includes the existing improved lateral public access along the oceanfront boardwalk and vertical access at the western ends of all the east-west courts and streets, the amount of public parking spaces limits the public's ability to use the public access areas. These spaces are in high demand, and fill up very fast. Installation of the proposed turnaround will result in the removal of nine parking spaces that are located immediately to the north of the public parking lot near an

existing public comfort station. These spaces are primarily used by lifeguards and City park personnel/maintenance vehicles. Although these spaces are not public, the loss of these spaces will force City personnel to park in the public spaces. Therefore, the loss of these nine spaces will effectively result in a loss of nine public parking spaces. In addition, two public parking spaces will be eliminated as a result of the creation of the turnaround area at the streetend of Ventura Place (reference Exhibit No. 2). Because the turnaround will result in a loss of eleven public parking spaces for beach visitors, the City proposes to create new parking spaces in the south parking lot. A total of 18 parking spaces will be created in the south parking lot including one handicap parking space and a parking area for a tour bus. This will result in a net gain of seven parking spaces. Although the south lot is already at capacity, the City proposes to provide the replacement parking through the striping of 18 new parking spaces in a 25-foot concrete walkway in the parking lot. There are two 25-foot wide concrete walkways that run in a north/south direction which are spaced at equal intervals in the parking lot that provide pedestrian access through the parking lot to and from Belmont Park and the boardwalk. The walkway contains a curb at its western end. Ten feet of the western portion of the walkway will remain available for pedestrian access (reference Exhibit No. 3).

There is already a competing demand for this parking, especially during the peak summer season, when recreational use of the nearshore area at Mission Beach is most heavily used. Thus, the loss of nine parking spaces that will result from installation of the turnaround will adversely impact public access. However, the proposal to replace the lost parking spaces by installing new parking spaces in the south lot ensures that the project will not have adverse impacts on coastal access through loss of public parking for beach visitors. The Commission finds that the proposed project is consistent with the public access and recreation policies of the Coastal Act because the project will reduce traffic congestion thereby improving access to the beach, and because the loss of public parking spaces will be mitigated by creation of new parking spaces in the immediate vicinity. The project is consistent with Chapter 3 policies only if the adverse impacts on public access are mitigated as proposed.

It should also be noted that as shown on Exhibit No. 2, there is a note adjacent to a parking area that is identified as "valet parking". However, the applicant asserts that valet parking is not proposed with the subject permit application. The City has indicated that a developer at Belmont Park is proposing valet parking in the future in association with a separate development proposal unrelated to the subject project. Since the valet parking is shown on the plans submitted with this application, there is a potential for future confusion over whether such parking was approved as part of this proposed project. For this reason, Special Condition #2 has been attached which requires submittal of final plans that omit the reference to valet parking in the north parking lot.

In addition, because the site is used so heavily, particularly in the summer months, construction activity that impedes use of the boardwalk would have a significant adverse impact on public access and recreation. In prior approval of other projects that involve construction at or near the beach, the Commission has restricted work in public

recreational areas to outside the summer season, to avoid impacts to the public during the time of highest demand for recreation and public beach access. The City has indicated that they intend to commence construction of the proposed project in February, 2001 and the project construction is expected to last for a maximum of approximately 2 ½ months—which will be before Memorial weekend, 2001. Construction of the project will require temporarily closure of the western portion of Ventura Place for the duration of the construction. The City has assured that the eastern portion of this street will remain open at all times and that the public will still be able to gain access to the north parking lot north of Belmont Park and the boardwalk will not be affected. However, even though the eastern part of the street will remain open, closure of the western portion of the street could significantly disrupt public use of this area during the summer, when public use of this area is very high. For example, if construction work were to occur at the streetend, since it is essentially contiguous with the public boardwalk, it may be necessary to close portions of the public boardwalk to the public.

The boardwalk and adjacent streetend is used heavily by the public during the summer. In particular, those using the boardwalk include pedestrians, bicyclists, skate-boarders and roller-bladers and it is quite congested during the summer months. Closure of any portion of the boardwalk and/or streetend to construct the proposed improvements during the summer months would result in a significant impediment to public access and public recreation. Also, there are numerous vehicles in the area during the summer that use the streetend as a turnaround, which is why the City proposes to enhance the turnaround such that it will facilitate vehicular movement and decrease traffic congestion at this location. However, since construction will occur prior to Memorial Day weekend, and since the eastern portion of the street will remain open, the temporary closure of a portion of the western portion of the street should not pose any significant adverse impact on coastal access or recreation.

Thus, the Commission finds that the project is consistent with the public access and recreation policies of the Coastal Act, provided that construction does not occur during the summer. Therefore, Special Condition #1 requires notes on the construction bid documents notifying the contractor that no work may occur during the summer peak season between Memorial Weekend and Labor Day. In addition, the condition further requires that access corridors and staging areas shall be located in a manner that has the least impact on public access and public parking spaces (no use of parking parking). As conditioned, no short or long-term impacts to coastal resources are anticipated. In summary, the proposed project is necessary to improve vehicular access and reduce traffic congestion in this very popular beachfront area. While public parking spaces will be removed with the development, they will be replaced and additional spaces provided. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed development, as conditioned, is consistent with the public access policies of the Coastal Act.

2. Visual Resources/Community Character. Section 30251 of the Act states the following:

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

The proposed development is located in a well-established commercial neighborhood including a variety of retail and restaurant leaseholds. Residential development is located nearby just inland of the public boardwalk to the north and south of Belmont Park. The proposed street improvements will be compatible with the character of the surrounding development in this community. In addition, public views will continue to be preserved along this east-west access corridor and no view blockages of regional or statewide significance will occur.

As noted previously, the subject site immediately abuts Ocean Front Walk, the boardwalk adjacent to the beach in this area. As such, the site is highly visible by pedestrians, bicyclists and others that use the boardwalk. In addition, the subject street itself (Ventura Place) is highly used by the public for gaining public access to this area. However, the proposed turnaround which also includes hardscape improvements such as stamped concrete including the replacement of existing landscaping that will be displaced as a result of the turnaround, the visual amenities and visual quality of this coastal area will be preserved and enhanced. The Commission therefore finds project approval, as conditioned, consistent with Section 30251 of the Act.

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

The proposed improvements are consistent with the certified Mission Beach Community Plan which states, "Physical upgrading is of extreme importance within the Ventura commercial district because this district is a highly visible entrance to Mission Beach." In addition, under the plan recommendations it is also stated, "The ends of Places...be developed into landscaped mini-parks if and when possible; and the establishments of pedestrian linkages between the ocean and the bay at the Places be initiated when and where feasible." As such, the proposed street improvements are within keeping of the policies in the certified community plan and with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

The subject site is in an area of original jurisdiction, where the Commission retains permanent permit authority. The site is zoned Commercial-South (C-S) and designated for Public Utilities. The proposed street improvements are consistent with this designation. The project is consistent with the certified Mission Beach Precise Plan and

all applicable Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. Therefore, the Commission finds that approval of the proposed development, as conditioned, will not prejudice the ability of the City of San Diego to implement its certified LCP for the Mission Beach community.

5. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 13096 of the Commission's Code of Regulations requires Commission approval of Coastal Development Permits to be supported by a finding showing the permit, as conditioned, to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A) 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 effect which the activity may have on the environment.

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

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 on which the Commission voted on the application. 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 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 development during construction, subject to 24-hour advance notice.

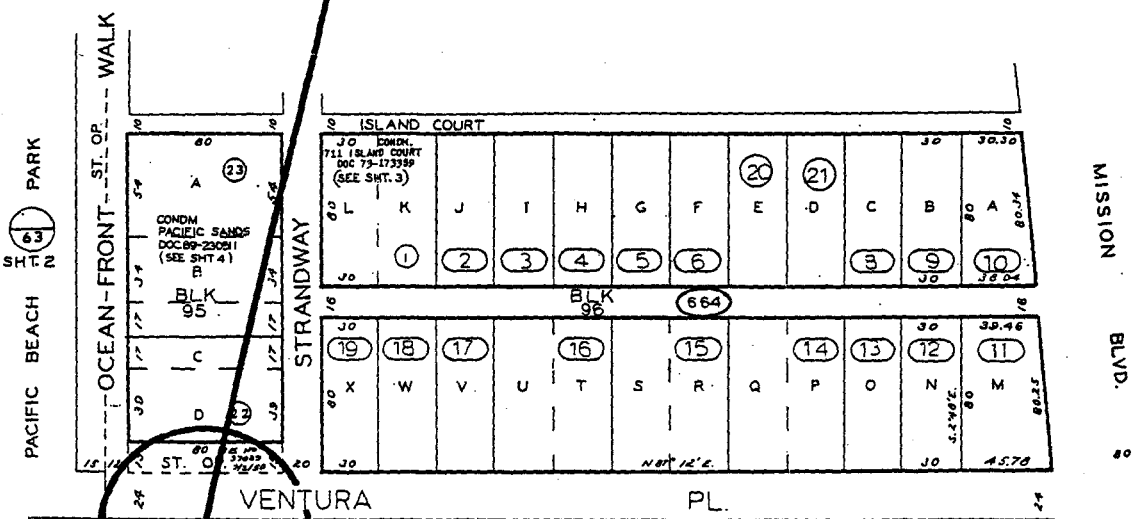
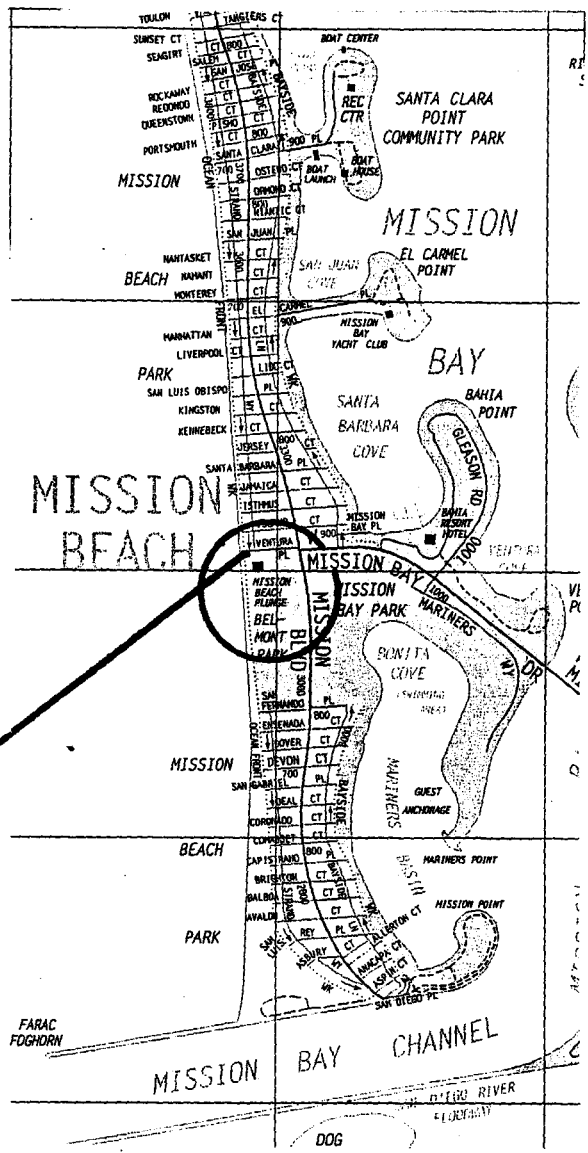
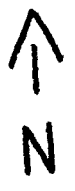
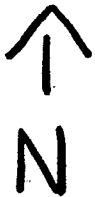


EXHIBIT NO. 1
 APPLICATION NO.
 6-00-12
 Location Map

California Coastal Commission



NEW PUBLIC ADDRESS SPEAKER

PROP BOLLARDS (FLEXIBLE)

PROP PEDESTRIAN RAMP

EXISTING LIFEGUARD PARKING TO BE REMOVED

PROP BIKE RACKS

TO BE DETERMINED (65' X 55')

423-664-2301

423-664-22

STRANDWAY

VENTURA PL

MISSION BL

NEW SIDEWALK
MOTORCYCLE PARKING

REPLACE SIDEWALK


RELOCATED LIFEGUARD PARKING

PROP CURB & FENCING

VALET PARKING

PROP TRASH RECEPTACLES WITH PALM TREE

BELMONT ROLLER COASTER

 California Coastal Commission	Site Plan
	Ventura Place
	Entryway/North
	Parking Lot
EXHIBIT NO. 2	
APPLICATION NO.	
6-00-12	

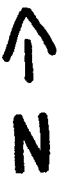
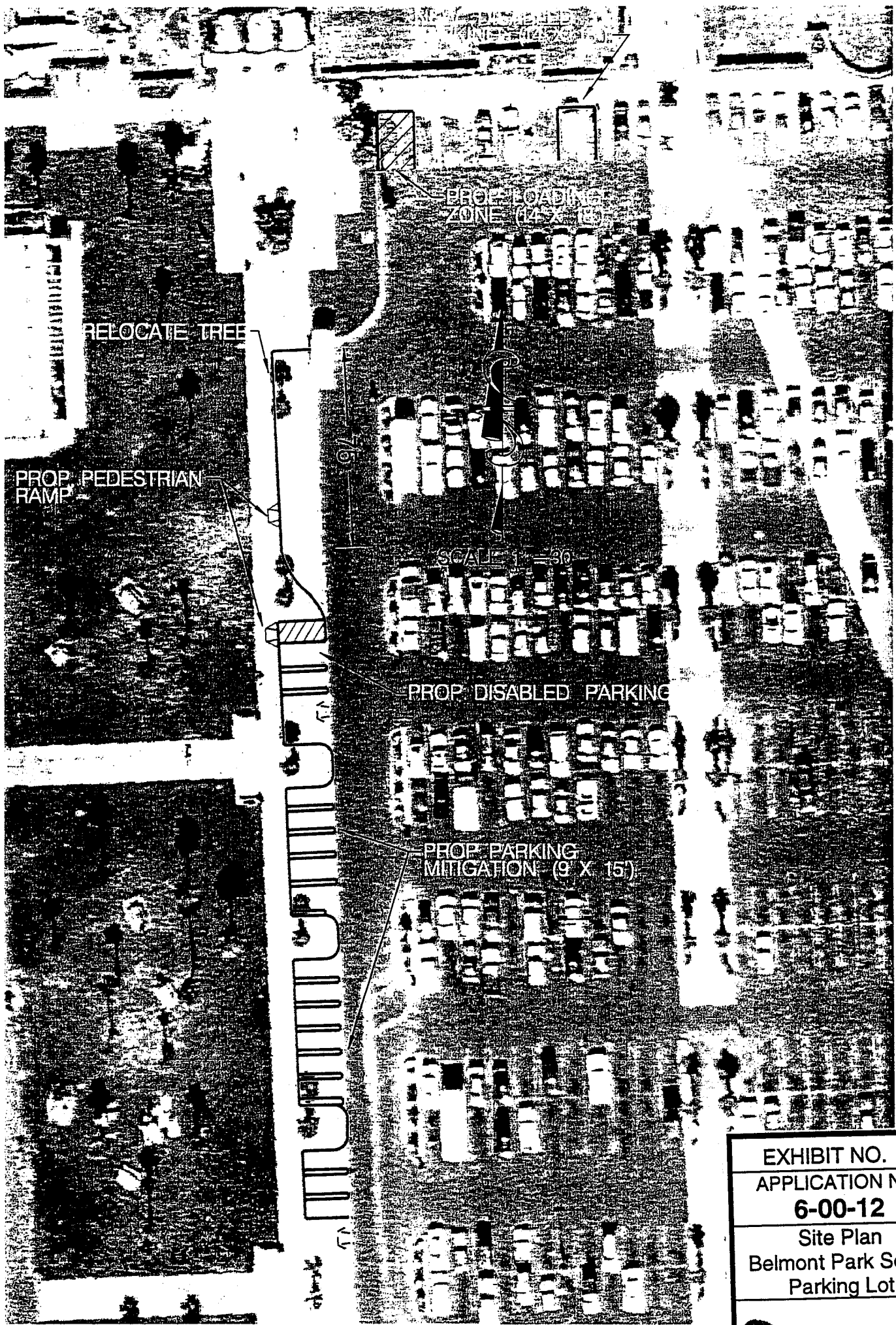



EXHIBIT NO. 3
APPLICATION NO. 6-00-12
Site Plan Belmont Park South Parking Lot
 California Coastal Commission