

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

NORTH CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT  
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Staff: TAE-SF  
 Staff Report: March 22, 2001  
 Hearing on  
 Revised Findings: April 11, 2001  
 Commission Action  
 on Revised Findings:

## STAFF REPORT: REVISED FINDINGS

**APPEAL NO.:** A-2-HMB-00-044

**APPLICANT:** California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT:** City of Half Moon Bay

**LOCAL DECISION:** Approval with Conditions

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Intersection of Highway 1 and Coronado Street in northern Half Moon Bay adjacent to the unincorporated community of El Granada, Half Moon Bay (San Mateo County).

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Various improvements to the intersection of Coronado Street and Mirada Road with Highway 1, including installation of traffic signals, provision of turn lanes, and intersection lighting.

**APPELLANTS:** Commissioners Christina Desser and Dave Potter, California Coastal Commission

**COMMISSIONERS ON THE PREVAILING SIDE (DE NOVO REVIEW):** Commissioners Desser, Dettloff, Hart, Kruer, Lee, McCoy, Orr, Potter, Reilly, Wooley, and Chairman Wan.

**SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS:** City of Half Moon Bay, Notice of Final Local Action PDP-80-00

## STAFF NOTES

### 1. Procedure

The Commission held a public hearing and acted on this appeal at its meeting on February 16, 2001. The Commission found the appeal raised a substantial issue with respect to the grounds on which the appeal was filed and went immediately into a de novo hearing. At the conclusion of the de novo hearing, the Commission conditionally granted a coastal development permit for the project. The Commission made several changes to the special conditions recommended by staff, most notably was the requirement to close Mirada Road at the intersection of Coronado Street and Mirada Road with Highway 1. Other changes included the incorporation of some of the special conditions required by the City of Half Moon Bay in its original approval of the project.

As the Commission's action differed from the written staff recommendation, the following revised findings have been prepared for the Commission's consideration as the needed findings to support its action. These findings reflect the action taken by the Commission at its meeting of February 16, 2001 on the de novo portion of the hearing. As the Commission found that a substantial issue had been raised by the appeal consistent with staff's written recommendation dated January 26, 2001, and made no revisions to those recommended findings, the Substantial Issue portion of the January 26, 2001 report is not attached, but incorporated by reference.

### 2. Hearing on revised findings

The Commission will hold a public hearing and vote on the revised findings at its April, 2001 meeting. The purpose of the hearing is to consider whether the revised findings accurately reflect the Commission's previous action rather than to reconsider whether the appeal raised a substantial issue or to reconsider the merits of the project or the appropriateness of the adopted conditions. Public testimony will be limited accordingly.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following revised findings in support of the Commission's action on February 16, 2001 to approve the project with conditions. The proper motion is:

### MOTION

*I move that the Commission adopt the revised findings in support of the Commission's action on February 16, 2001 concerning the approval with conditions of coastal development permit No. A-2-HMB-00-044.*

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL:

Staff recommends a YES vote on the motion. Passage of this motion will result in the adoption of revised findings as set forth in this staff report. The motion requires a majority vote of the members from the prevailing side present at the February 16, 2001 hearing, with at least three of

AM consistent with the terms of the proposed project description. Construction operations shall be prohibited on Sunday and any national holiday.

**3. Review and Approval of Erosion Control Plan.**

**PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT**, the applicant shall prepare and submit to the City Planning Department and the Executive Director of the Commission, an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan detailing all proposed measures to prevent erosion and stormwater pollution of the adjacent wetland and other drainages. The plan shall employ Best Management Practices [BMP] for managing stormwater runoff. Measures may include, but are not limited to: limitation of grading and soil disturbing activities to the dry months, temporary and permanent revegetation of exposed soil, temporary check dams, temporary sediment basins and traps, and temporary silt fences.

**4. Plan for Construction Staging Area.**

**PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT**, a plan for any construction staging area, including equipment and materials storage, shall be submitted to the City Planning Department and the Executive Director of the Commission. Any construction staging area shall be located on the inland side of Highway 1. The contractor shall obtain all necessary permits and approvals that are required by various state, regional, and local agencies for the staging area. Plans for any staging area shall include standards that address dust and other types of air pollution, noise, erosion, sedimentation and other water quality issues, and protection of any biotic resources such as wetlands.

**5. Discovery of Archaeological Materials.** If buried cultural resources or human remains are encountered during construction, work in that area shall be halted until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find and recommend appropriate methods of treatment or disposition.

**6. Stormwater Management and Erosion Control** To avoid potential impacts to the adjacent wetland and drainage ways, during construction the applicant shall:

- a. Stabilize any areas that have been stripped of vegetation and maintain erosion control measures continuously between October 1 and May 1.
- b. Use silt fence barriers, straw bale barriers, sand bags, brush or rock filter, or other appropriate measures as necessary to minimize the quantity of sediment-laden runoff from the project site.
- c. Remove spoils promptly and avoid stockpiling of excavated or fill materials when rain is forecast. If rain threatens, any stockpiled materials shall be covered with a tarp or other waterproof materials during rainy weather to control runoff.
- d. Manage, handle, and dispose of construction materials and wastes so as to avoid their entry into the storm drain system or any drainage channel or water body.
- e. Avoid cleaning, fueling, or maintaining vehicles on site, except in the designated construction staging area.
- f. Monitor the site for effectiveness of erosion and sediment control every 24 hours during and after every storm event.

## **4.0 FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS**

The Commission hereby incorporates by reference the Substantial Issue Findings above as if set forth in full. The Commission hereby finds and declares as follows:

### **4.1 Project Location and Revised Description**

As noted in the Project Location and Site Description section of the Substantial Issue portion of this report (which is hereby incorporated by reference), the project is located on Highway 1 at the intersection with Mirada road within the jurisdictional limits of the City of Half Moon Bay (Figures 1 & 2). Seaward of the project site, between the highway and the bluff-top parking area, is an undeveloped parcel which contains a small environmentally sensitive area and wetland (Figures 3 & 4). As noted in Section 4.2 below, the project will not encroach into this wetland area. Since the filing of the appeal to the local government's decision, Caltrans has revised the scope of the project. At the request of SamTrans, Caltrans will no longer construct the bus pads and associated pedestrian access facilities at the intersection. All construction shall be performed per Caltrans standards.

### **4.2 Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas**

**All work will be within the existing right-of-way and over existing pavement, and conditioned to avoid potential adverse impacts. Therefore, the Commission finds that, as conditioned, the proposed development conforms with the LCP policies concerning the protection of environmentally sensitive habitat areas.**

#### **4.2.1 Standard of Review**

Policy 3-3 of the City's certified LUP prohibits development which would have a significant adverse impact on sensitive habitat areas. Section 18.38.080 of the City's certified Zoning Code establishes a 100-foot buffer zone around wetlands and, in combination with Section 18.38.075, defines certain development standards and permitted uses within the buffer zone. The full text of these policies can be found in Appendix A.

#### **4.2.2 Discussion**

As explained in Section 4.1 above, the project is adjacent to a wetland on the bluff seaward of Highway 1. Highway 1 and Caltrans' right-of-way in the project site is located within the 100-foot wetland buffer zone. Thus, any construction activity within the existing right-of-way will also be in the established buffer zone. However, all proposed work will be done on the already paved surface of the roadway and will not increase the paved surface or encroach farther into the buffer area. Section 10.38.075 B.5 identifies improvement, repair, and maintenance of roadways as permitted uses in the buffer zone established in Section 10.38.080, when no other feasible alternative exists. The proposed project is motivated by the need to improve safety conditions at the Coronado Street/Mirada Road intersection with Highway 1, where a higher than average rate of traffic accidents has been documented. No other feasible alternative for the proposed location

closure of Mirada Road at the intersection with Highway 1 to eliminate bluff-top parking. In addition LUP Policy 2-13 states that the coastal trail shown on the City's Access Improvements Map shall not be prohibited and suggests that an improved public pedestrian access would be appropriate should public parking be provided in the vicinity of the project site. The full text of these policies can be found in Appendix A.

#### **4.3.2 Discussion**

This project is a traffic operational and safety improvement in a popular coastal destination. The small portion of Mirada Road that connects to Highway 1, provides access to an informal bluff-top parking area. Erosion of the bluff is occurring at a rapid rate, perhaps as much as 3 feet per year (City of Half Moon Bay, pers. comm.).

Special Condition 1 requires that the project include the closure of Mirada Road within City boundaries consistent with Policy 2-13 of the City of Half Moon Bay's certified LUP. Closure of this portion of Mirada Road will prevent bluff-top parking, eliminating this source of erosion to the bluff. Caltrans has recently completed a portion of a pedestrian/bicycle trail from Pillar Point Harbor to just north of the subject intersection. Although the road closure will result in a loss of public parking for shoreline access, closing the road to vehicular traffic will facilitate the southward extension of this trail as indicated in the City's Access Improvements Map (Exhibit 1). In addition, Special Condition 17 encourages Caltrans to collaborate with the County of San Mateo in the development of additional public access trails.

In order to minimize the impact to public access during construction, Special Conditions 2 and 8 prohibit any construction related activities on the bluff top and establish a work schedule for construction activities. Furthermore, to ensure that the public is aware of any changes to public access during construction, Special Condition 11 requires that the applicant install temporary signage to indicate location and duration of closures and detours.

#### **4.3.3 Conclusion**

The Commission finds that the project, as conditioned, is consistent with the public access policies of the Coastal Act and the coastal access and recreation policies of the certified LCP because the project, as conditioned, implements a specific LCP policy and facilitates the extension of a public trail along this portion of the coast.

### **4.4 Archaeological Resources**

**As conditioned, the Commission finds that the project is consistent with the archaeological resources protection policies of the City's certified LUP because no construction is allowed in archeological sites and because all construction will cease if archaeological objects are found during excavation.**

#### **4.4.1 Standard of Review**

Policy 6-4 of the city's certified LUP states:

*As part of any project to construct new roads, trails, sewer or water lines, or other public projects involving substantial excavation which could destroy archaeological*

prohibits the use of fluorescent orange or green signs. Special Conditions 15 and 16 establish certain design guidelines for lighting at the intersection. Consequently, as conditioned, the proposed project is consistent with the visual resources policies of the City's certified LUP.

#### **4.5.3 Conclusion**

As conditioned, the Commission finds that the project is consistent with policies concerning visual resources of the city's certified LUP.

#### **4.6 Hazards**

**As conditioned, the Commission finds that the project is consistent with hazards policies of the city's certified LUP.**

##### **4.6.1 Standard of Review**

The City of Half Moon Bay's certified LUP incorporates Section 30253 of the Coastal Act. Section 30253 of the Coastal Act states in part:

*New development shall:*

- (1) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard.*
- (2) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.*

##### **4.6.2 Discussion**

Although the proposed project will limit construction to already existing paved surfaces, the installation of traffic signals at the intersection will require excavation in the proximity of utilities and the installation of new utilities such as power lines for intersection lighting and traffic lights. These activities could potentially disrupt essential services to the surrounding community. Special Condition 9 requires the applicant to use underground utility alert services to avoid utility disruption during construction. In addition, as a result of the traffic signal, emergency vehicle access to the community could potentially be delayed. Special Condition 12 requires that the applicant install and maintain an "Opticom" detector for control of the traffic signal. Furthermore, to increase the safety of young pedestrians, Special Condition 14 requires that, if warranted, the crosswalks should be marked in yellow.

##### **4.6.3 Conclusion**

The Commission finds that, as conditioned, the project is consistent with the policies of the city's certified LUP concerning hazards.

**APPENDIX A**

## Cited Policies of the California Coastal Act

### PUBLIC ACCESS

#### 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.

(Amended by Ch. 1075, Stats. 1978.)

### DEVELOPMENT

#### Section 30251.

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.



5. Necessary water supply projects.
6. Restoration of riparian vegetation.

**B. No Alternative Permitted Uses.** The following are permitted uses where no feasible or practical alternative exists.

1. Stream-dependent aquaculture provided that non-stream-dependent facilities locate outside of corridor.
2. Flood control projects where no other method for protecting existing structures in the flood plain is feasible and where such protection is necessary for public safety or to protect existing development.
3. Bridges when supports are not in significant conflict with corridor resources.
4. Pipelines and storm water runoff facilities.
5. Improvement, repair, or maintenance of roadways or road crossings.
6. Agricultural uses, provided no existing riparian vegetation is removed, and no soil is allowed to enter stream channels.

**C. Standards.** Development shall be designed and constructed so as to ensure that:

1. removal of vegetation is minimized;
2. land exposure during construction is minimized and that temporary vegetation or mulching is used to protect critical areas;
3. erosion, sedimentation, and runoff is minimized by appropriately grading and replanting modified areas;
4. only adapted native or non-invasive exotic plant species are used for replanting;
5. sufficient passage is provided for native and anadromous fish as specified by the State Department of Fish and Game;
6. any adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment are minimized;
7. any depletion of groundwater supplies and substantial interference with surface and subsurface water flows are prevented;
8. waste water reclamation is encouraged;

4. native and non-invasive exotic vegetation is used for re-planting, where appropriate;
5. any discharge of toxic substances, such as fertilizers and pesticides, into the riparian corridor is prevented;
6. vegetation in or adjacent to man-made agricultural ponds is removed if the life of the pond is endangered; and
7. dredging in or adjacent to man-made ponds is allowed if the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District, or any similar or successor agency or entity, certifies that siltation imperils continued use of the pond for agricultural water storage and supply.

**H. Findings for Development within Riparian Buffer Zones.** The following Findings shall be supported by the contents of the required Biological Report that:

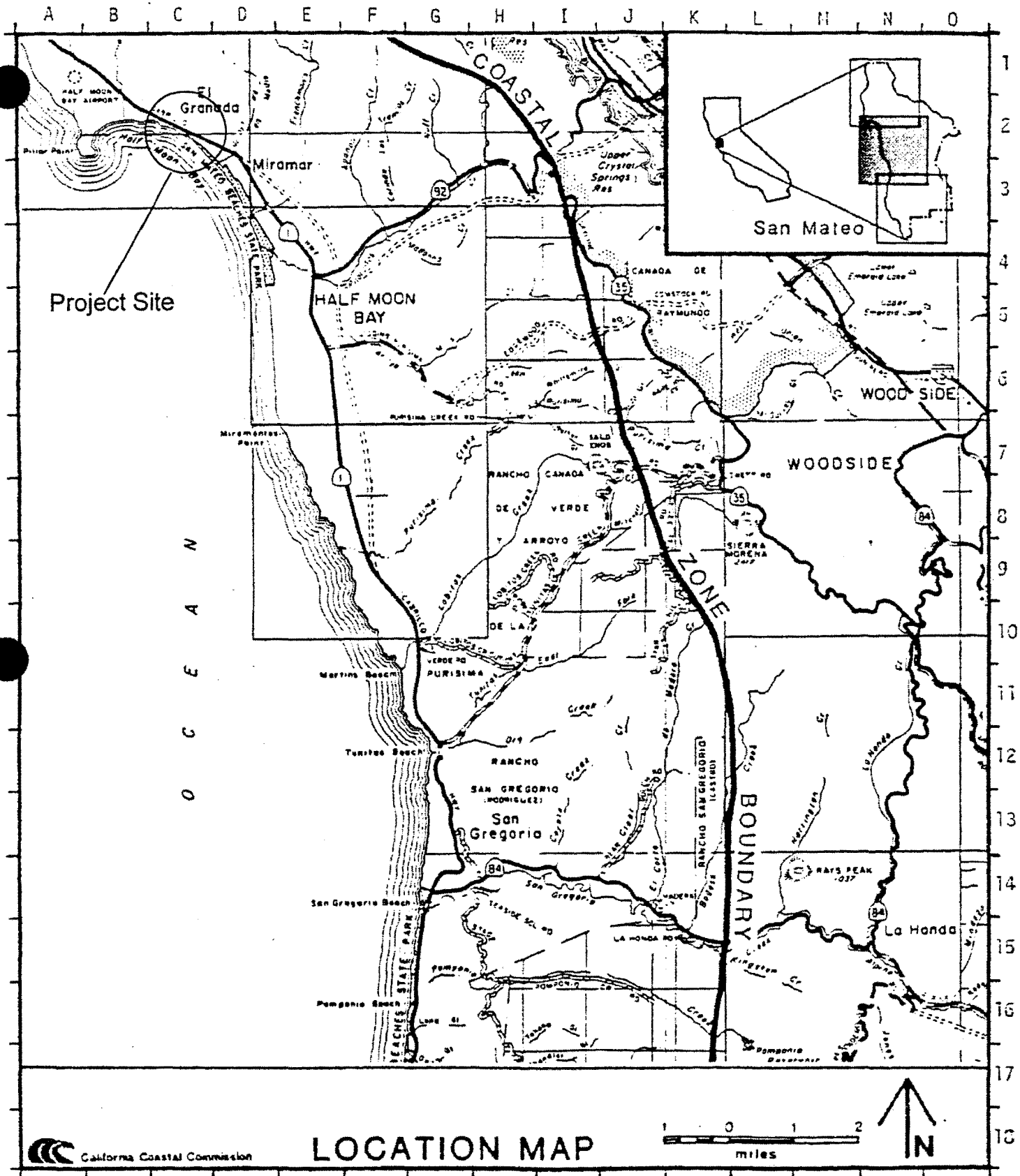
1. there are special circumstances or conditions affecting the property;
2. the project is necessary for the proper design and function of some permitted or existing activity on the property;
3. the project will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other property downstream or in the area in which the project is located;
4. the project will not significantly reduce or adversely impact the sensitive habitat, or there is no feasible alternative which would be less damaging to the environment;
5. the project is in accordance with the purpose of this Chapter and with the objectives of the L.C.P. Land Use Plan; and
6. development on a property which has its only building site located in the buffer area maintains a 20-foot buffer from the limit of riparian vegetation, or if no vegetation exists, a 20-foot buffer from the bank of a perennial stream and a 20-foot buffer from the midpoint of an intermittent stream.

**ZC 18.38.080 Wetlands.**

**A. Permitted Uses.**

1. Education and research.
2. Passive recreation such as bird-watching.
3. Fish and wildlife management activities.

**FIGURES**



California Coastal Commission

LOCATION MAP



County of San Mateo

FIGURE NO. 1  
 APPLICATION NO.  
 A-2-HMB-00-044 Caltrans  
 Regional Location Map

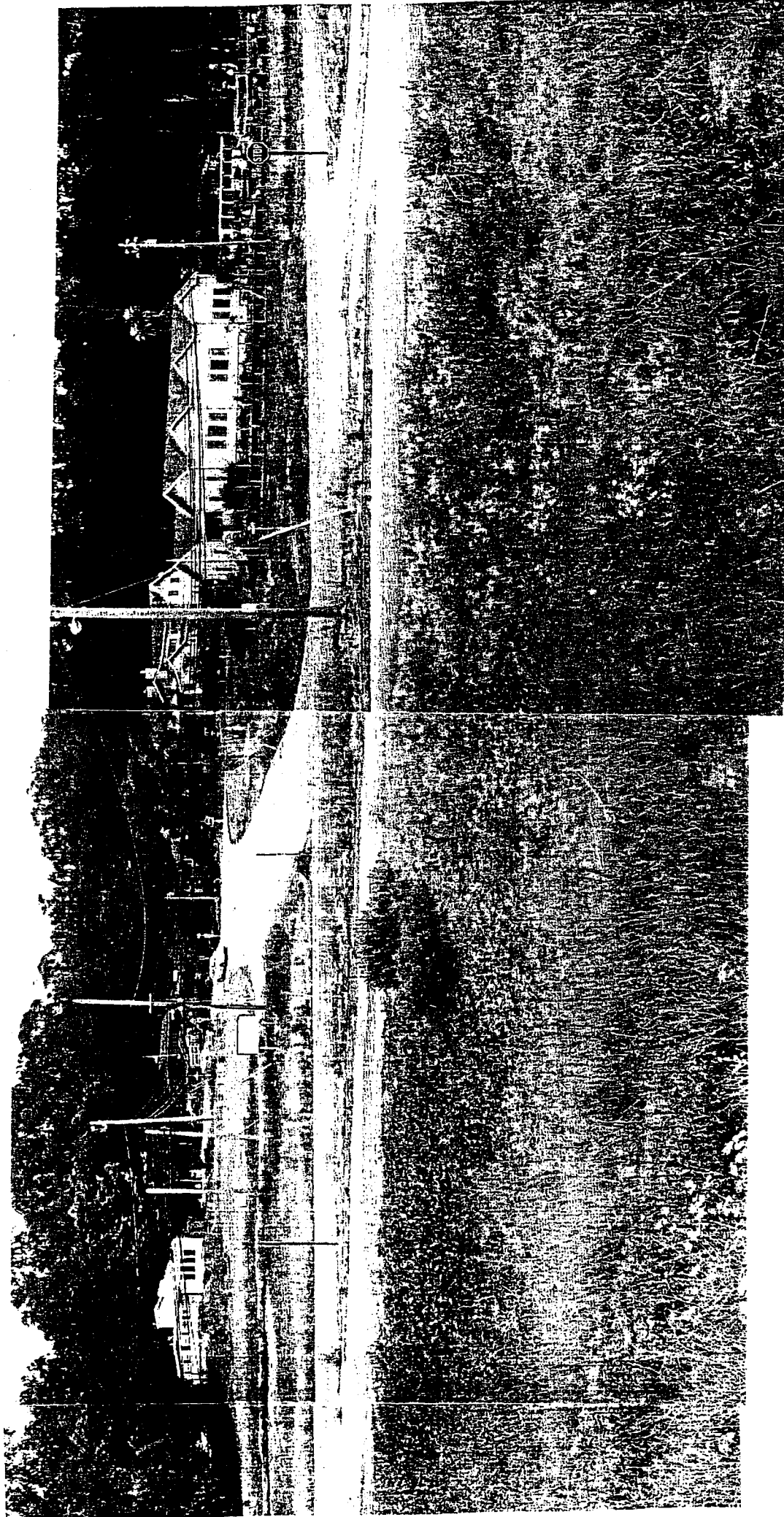
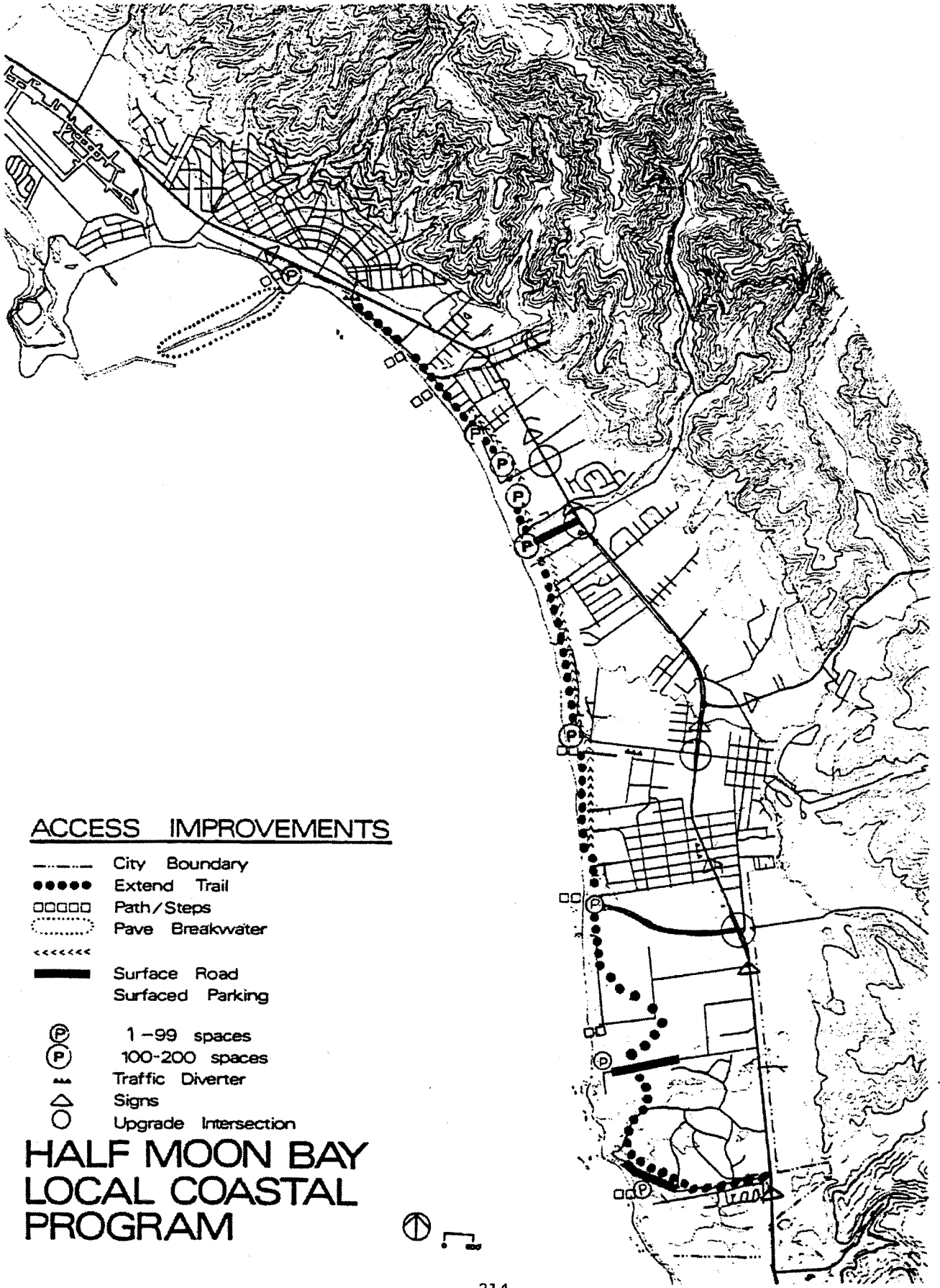


FIGURE NO. 3
APPLICATION NO.
A-2-HMB-00-044 Caltrans
Landward view at the intersection.

**EXHIBITS**



**ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS**

- City Boundary
- Extend Trail
- Path/Steps
- ⋯⋯⋯ Pave Breakwater
- <<<<<<< Surface Road
- ▬ Surface Road
- ▬ Surfaced Parking
- Ⓟ 1-99 spaces
- Ⓟ 100-200 spaces
- ▲ Traffic Diverter
- ▲ Signs
- Upgrade Intersection

**HALF MOON BAY  
LOCAL COASTAL  
PROGRAM**



<b>EXHIBIT NO. 1</b>
<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>
A-2-HMB-00-044 Caltrans
Half Moon Bay LCP,
Access Improvements Plan