CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION
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Staff: EL-SD
Staff Report: July 26, 2001
Hearing Date: August 6-10, 2001

AMENDMENT REQUEST
STAFF REPORT AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION

Application No.: 6-90-123-A1

Applicant: California Department of Transportation

Agent: Bruce April

Original Description: Construction of several interrelated highway improvements and their associated mitigation; the major project components include demolition of several existing structures, widening of portions of I-5 and I-805, construction of the western segment of SR 56 and creation of the Carmel Valley Resource Enhancement Project (CVREP); project construction is phased over many years.

Proposed Amendment: Minor realignment of the previously-approved project footprint in several areas of freeway improvements, due to errors in initial calculations, accommodation of aerial maintenance easements and design refinements, increasing the overall project footprint by approximately 8.5 acres. These changes result in an increase in wetland impacts by approximately 4 acres (0.3 acres of permanently impacted riparian wetlands). Project details are found in the Project History/Proposed Amendment finding beginning on Page 4.

Site: Original project extended from south of the I-5/I-805 merge to north of Del Mar Heights Road, and inland two miles along the Carmel Creek corridor. Proposed modifications would occur primarily along I-5 in the areas of Carmel Valley Road and Carmel Mountain Road and at the Los Penasquitos Creek overcrossing (I-5/I-805 merge), North City, San Diego, San Diego County.

STAFF NOTES:

Summary of Staff's Preliminary Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendment with several special conditions. The proposed amendment is necessary to address project revisions required as a result of final engineering and design of the already approved freeway expansion project. While the subject amendment request does not propose to increase the number of travel lanes, it will result in a slight increase in the overall project footprint. The amendment raises

issues related to impacts on biological resources, water quality, visual resources and public access. With the proposed mitigation measures and the proposed special conditions, Commission staff is assured that potential impacts on coastal resources have been eliminated or reduced to the maximum extent feasible, consistent with Coastal Act policies.

Substantive File Documents: City of San Diego LCP; Environmental Reevaluation/ Addendum, April, 2001

I. PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends the Commission adopt the following resolution:

MOTION: ***I move that the Commission approve the proposed amendment to Coastal Development Permit No. 6-90-123-A1 pursuant to the staff recommendation.***

STAFF RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL:

Staff recommends a **YES** vote. Passage of this motion will result in approval of the amendment 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 A PERMIT AMENDMENT:

The Commission hereby approves the coastal development permit amendment on the ground that the development as amended and subject to conditions, 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 amendment 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 amended development on the environment, or 2) there are no feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts of the amended development on the environment.

II. Special Conditions.

The permit is subject to the following conditions:

1. Final Plans. PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AMENDMENT, the applicant shall submit to the Executive Director for review and written approval, final plans for the amendment. At a minimum, the plans shall include the final design for the mitigation and monitoring program, final

plans for the visual buffering of all proposed hardscape (i.e., retaining walls, maintenance pullouts, slope paving, etc.) and a final site plan confirming the location of all safety features, including the changeable message signs within the coastal zone. Some of these requirements are further explained in subsequent conditions.

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

2. Revised/Augmented Mitigation/Monitoring Plan. PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AMENDMENT, the applicant shall submit to the Executive Director for review and written approval, either a revised version of the Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Proposal for Interstate 5 Widening and Interchange Improvements Stage 3 (dated May, 2001), or an additional plan addressing the following project components:

a) Stone Retaining Walls.

1. All walls shall be finished in colors and materials compatible with the surrounding area.

2. Landscaping shall be provided for all retaining walls visible from public streets, highways or recreational areas:
   - Only native or drought-tolerant, fire-resistant, non-invasive species shall be utilized.
   - Only temporary irrigation for plant establishment is allowed.
   - Avoid or minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides.
   - All plantings shall be monitored and maintained in good growing condition for the life of the walls.

b) Plantable Geosynthetically Reinforced Wall.

1. The wall shall be colored in earthtones compatible with nearby natural hillsides.

2. The entire wall shall be landscaped with native coastal sage scrub species:
   - Only temporary irrigation for plant establishment is allowed.
   - Avoid or minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides.
   - All plantings shall be monitored and maintained in good growing condition for the life of the wall.
   - The vegetation shall be monitored regularly for a minimum of five years, with an annual monitoring report submitted in conjunction with the required wetland monitoring reports.

- Four permanent photo stations along the wall shall be identified in the monitoring plan and annual monitoring reports shall include photographs taken at each of these locations.

c) Maintenance Pullouts and Gore Paving.

1. These facilities shall be screened by landscaping to the degree possible.
   - Only native or drought-tolerant, fire-resistant, non-invasive species shall be utilized.
   - Only temporary irrigation for plant establishment is allowed.
   - Avoid or minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides.
   - All plantings shall be monitored and maintained in good growing condition for the life of the facilities.

d) Changeable Message Signs.

1. Landscaping shall screen the concrete bases and lower part of the poles:
   - Only native or drought-tolerant, fire-resistant, non-invasive species shall be utilized.
   - Only temporary irrigation for plant establishment is allowed.
   - Avoid or minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides.
   - All plantings shall be monitored and maintained in good growing condition for the life of the signs.

e) Closed Circuit TV Equipment.

1. All equipment shall be painted in dark tones to reduce visibility.

2. Landscaping shall screen the equipment cabinets and lower part of the poles:
   - Only native or drought-tolerant, fire-resistant, non-invasive species shall be utilized.
   - Only temporary irrigation for plant establishment is allowed.
   - Avoid or minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides.
   - All plantings shall be monitored and maintained in good growing condition for the life of the equipment.

The permittee shall undertake monitoring and maintenance in accordance with the approved final plans. Any proposed changes to the approved final plans shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final plans shall occur without further amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no additional amendment is required.

III. Findings and Declarations.

The Commission finds and declares as follows:

1. Project History/Amendment Description. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is requesting an amendment, which includes a number of components, to a permit approved in September, 1990 for construction of several interrelated highway improvements and their associated mitigation program. The major project components include demolition of several existing structures, widening of portions of I-5 and I-805 to build several additional lanes, including HOV lanes, construction of the western segment of SR 56 and creation of the Carmel Valley Resource Enhancement Plan (CVREP). Construction has been ongoing for several years, with the SR 56 segment, CVREP and the HOV lanes on I-5 completed and a number of other components currently underway. The overall project resulted in between 25 and 26 acres of impacts to various wetland communities; these were mitigated in the CVREP, which comprises a 110-acre wetland and upland habitat system. In 1990, the Commission was not involved in mitigation for coastal sage impacts.

The original project extended from south of the I-5/I-805 merge to north of Del Mar Heights Road, and extended inland approximately two miles along the Carmel Creek corridor for the SR 56 and CVREP components. The proposed modifications occupy only a portion of that area, and would occur primarily along I-5 in the areas of Carmel Valley Road and Carmel Mountain Road and at the Los Penasquitos Creek crossing (I-5/I-805 merge).

The proposed amendment of the previously-approved project footprint would modify the alignment at several locations of the overall freeway improvements, in response to errors in initial calculations, accommodation of aerial maintenance easements and design refinements. Altogether, the amendments increase the overall project footprint by approximately nine acres. These changes result in an increase in wetland impacts by approximately 4 acres (0.3 acres of permanently impacted riparian wetlands, and 3.7 acres of temporary impacts to riparian and freshwater marsh wetlands). Other project modifications include installation of a 4-foot-high concrete barrier on the west side of the existing southbound I-5 main lanes, installation of a 1-foot extension to the existing 3-foot concrete barrier on the westbound SR-56/ southbound I-5 connector, and installation of a 4-foot barrier on the future southbound truck connector structure to help reduce freeway noise in the adjacent Los Penasquitos Lagoon and wildlife corridor.

The amendments would also result in an overall increase in the height of retaining walls of various sizes, including a 67-foot plantable geosynthetically reinforced (PGR) wall, which is proposed to replace the 40-foot retaining wall that was approved previously. This wall would be located on the west side of I-5, between the freeway and an existing industrial park south of Carmel Mountain Road. There would also be an increase in the length of the retaining walls from 15,000 linear feet to 18,333 linear feet, as walls are now proposed in several areas that were originally approved to have massive fill slopes.

The original approved project would have impacted coastal sage habitat, but this has been avoided by replacing the slopes with retaining walls where it is engineeringly feasible.

The proposed amended project also includes replacement of 1,328 feet of existing concrete lined channel with 1,256 feet of bioswale and 72 feet of plantable RSP, construction of a detention basin at the merge and widening of the existing concrete channels paralleling I-805 just south of the merge. Also, the proposal includes construction of 14 maintenance vehicle pull-outs, two new and one relocated ramp meters, two changeable message signs, six closed-circuit TV cameras with associated equipment, and slope paving in six locations. Finally, the applicant requests after-the-fact approval of a desiltation basin installed previously without a coastal development permit. This is an experimental facility located south of Carmel Valley Road, between I-5 and Sorrento Valley Road, and was not part of the project in 1990.

2. Wetlands and Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA). The following Coastal Act policies are most applicable to the proposed development, and state, in part:

Section 30233.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(7) Restoration purposes.

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

Section 30240

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

(b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.

The subject amendment request makes a number of modifications to a project reviewed and approved by the Coastal Commission nearly eleven years ago. The original project included impacts on many types of wetland habitat, including salt marsh, freshwater marsh, brackish marsh, alkaline marsh and riparian habitats, and was extensively reviewed through the EIR/EIS process. In all, between 25 and 26 acres of wetlands were permanently impacted by the project, which included construction of approximately two miles of new highway (SR56), and significant widening of two existing highways (I-5 & I-805). Mitigation for the project came in the form of the Carmel Valley Resource Enhancement Plan (CVREP), which restored and enhanced the Carmel Creek floodplain, which runs parallel to SR56 and empties into Los Penasquitos Lagoon west of I-5. A 110-acre riparian and buffer system was constructed; approximately 69 acres consisted of actual riparian and freshwater marsh wetlands with the remainder being uplands.

This system was designed to handle 100-year floodflows, trap sediments with drop structures and vegetation, and provide habitat for wildlife. In addition, unpaved public pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle trails and viewing benches were included in the upper half of the buffer on the south side of the corridor. There has been extensive development along this corridor, much of it outside the coastal zone, which has led to large amounts of sediments being trapped in the old culverts under I-5 and Sorrento Valley Road or washed out into the lagoon damaging the resources. Thus, at the western end of the CVREP, a desiltation basin was built and the culverts under I-5 were removed and replaced with a bridge structure. There is still ongoing work in this general area, and some of the project changes will occur here, but no new wetland impacts are involved in this location.

There are, however, additional wetland impacts, both temporary and permanent, associated with other project modifications proposed herein. According to the applicant, the original environmental review and approved project plans failed to identify the need for some of the temporary construction access, and its associated impacts, and primarily just identified impacts in the areas of permanent improvements. Thus, the original EIR/EIS identified impacts to freshwater marsh directly under the bridge structures crossing Los Penasquitos Creek, where I-5 and I-805 merge, but did not identify or analyze temporary impacts resulting from the provision of construction roads and falsework required to actually construct the bridges. As a result, there will be 1.1 acres more of temporary freshwater marsh impacts than was previously analyzed and mitigated. In this same general area (around Los Penasquitos Creek), there will be an additional temporary impact to 0.31 acres of riparian resources (mulefat scrub and southern willow scrub) and 2.22 acres of new temporary impact to unvegetated waters.

To the north of this location, approaching the crossing over Carmel Mountain Road, will be the only newly identified permanent impact to wetland resources. Here, there is a long slope on the west side of I-5, with an existing concrete culvert at its base. The elevational difference between the freeway and the culvert and adjacent industrial park is approximately 70 feet. At the bottom of the slope, just above the wall of the concrete channel, there are three isolated patches of willows. The project has been revised to minimize impacts to the extent possible, but there will still be permanent impacts to two of these patches, totaling .3 acres of riparian habitat. This impact is caused by construction of a retaining wall to support the freeway widening at the top of the slope. As mitigation for this permanent loss, the applicant is proposing to create one acre of new riparian habitat adjacent to the existing CVREP in Carmel Valley.

As cited above, under the Coastal Act, disturbance and/or fill of wetlands is severely constrained. Coastal Act Section 30233(a) sets forth a three-part test for all projects involving the fill of coastal waters and wetlands. These are:

1) That the project is limited to one of the eight stated allowable uses;
2) That the project has no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative; and,
3) That adequate mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects.

Most of the identified impacts are temporary, with the only permanent wetland impact being to .3 acres of willows in two separate clumps above a concrete drain. The existing freeway slope drops immediately away from the road and goes steeply downhill to the culvert. In order to add the previously-approved truck lane to the west side of the existing freeway, at the same elevation as the rest of the freeway, the slope will be eliminated and a 67-foot high retaining wall will be built in its place. This has been designed as a tiered, plantable geosynthetically reinforced wall, which will be planted with native upland species. Caltrans looked at several alternatives to the chosen design, including building a grade-separated truck lane at a lower elevation, but this was not

feasible from safety and operational perspectives, due to the potential grades of such a lane. Moreover, a retaining wall would still be needed between the existing freeway and proposed truck lane. Also considered was use of a viaduct, but this would require massive stone columns/footings, which would still disturb the lower slope area where the riparian resources exist. Finally, the only other option to a retaining wall would be a 2:1 slope; this would extend much further westward requiring acquisition of all or portions of several blocks of developed industrial properties. More importantly from a Section 30233 perspective, such a slope would also remove the willows.

The applicant is proposing to mitigate for these permanent impacts at a slightly higher than 3:1 ratio by creating one acre of new riparian habitat adjacent to the existing CVREP just south of SR56 in Carmel Valley. The creation will require grading of a manufactured slope to a lower elevation to support wetland species. In addition to creating an additional acre of riparian habitat, the mitigation will also slightly widen the floodplain, providing a small amount of additional storage area for flood events. The submitted mitigation/monitoring plan includes a minimum of five years of maintenance and monitoring, with annual reports going to all the resource agencies, including the California Coastal Commission. The project includes performance standards to be met annually and provides for remediation if all, or portions, of the mitigation fail. Therefore, the design of the project represents the least environmentally-damaging alternative, and adequate mitigation is proposed.

The Commission cannot, however, find that the proposed development is a permitted use in wetlands, pursuant to Section 30233 of the Act, for the following reasons:

1) The amendments represent final details of a major expansion of existing freeway facilities, which included construction of a new freeway system (SR56) as well as significant additions to existing highways; also, the project was proposed to address future growth, not only to accommodate existing development.

2) The proposed amendments are not "incidental" to the project as a whole, since the completion of the original project is dependent on these modifications. The new wetland impacts result from project changes brought about by errors in the original EIR/EIS (no provision for construction access and reliance on preliminary plans), but do not change the underlying major project.

3) The only restoration component of the proposed amendments is to mitigate for the impacts proposed herein.

This amendment request includes new permanent wetland impacts of .3 acres, which represents a relatively small change to a very large project that initially resulted in impacts to between 25 and 26 acres of wetlands. It is possible that the Commission today might not approve all the project components that were permitted in 1990, or might require more or different mitigation. The findings for the Commission's 1990 action relied on several factors:

1) The road improvements were viewed, at least partially, as being part of an overall restoration plan, CVREP, which certainly would not have been built without the road improvements.

2) The Commission balanced the wetland impacts against the public benefits of improving this transportation corridor, which, in addition to being used heavily by commuters, is also the major north-south coastal access route for the San Diego region. Also, SR56 provided an important east-west access link from inland communities.

3) The Commission, in its 1985 and 1990 certifications of the North City Land Use Plan, provided for the future construction of SR56 if a resource enhancement program for Carmel Valley was implemented, and design elements such as piers and pilings and provisions for alternative transit were used to minimize impacts. These features were all part of the development proposed and approved in 1990.

In any event, the 1990 permit was issued and vested and can, in theory, continue to be implemented whether or not these amendments are approved. In reality, since the initial approval did not take into consideration construction needs, it is likely the approved development cannot be fully completed without at least some of the amendments requested herein. While abandoning portions of the previously-approved development would avoid the permanent wetland impacts identified in the amendment proposal, there would be offsetting project benefits that would then not occur.

It appears that the proposed amendments will result in a biologically-better project overall than was permitted in 1990 for a number of reasons:

1) Existing isolated willows, which do not function as habitat due to their proximity to existing development (freeway to east and industrial structures to west) and lack of riparian understory, would be mitigated with high quality riparian species located immediately adjacent to like vegetation already functioning as habitat. In fact, the proposed mitigation site would expand the original area of mitigation.

2) The applicant proposes to remove 1,328 feet of existing concrete drainage channels and replace them with 1,256 feet of bioswale and 72 feet of plantable RSP. This will significantly reduce existing impervious surfaces, which will in turn reduce the total amount of runoff from the site.

3) The amendment proposal includes construction of two desiltation basins, one already existing without a permit, which will reduce the amount of sediments entering Los Penasquitos Lagoon.

4) The project includes construction of four-foot concrete barriers to reduce freeway noise in the adjacent lagoon. These features would be located in the general area of the I-5/SR56 interchange, where Carmel Creek passes under I-5 and empties into the lagoon. They were requested by the USFWS due to concerns over nesting clapper

rails, which have moved closer to the freeway in recent years but are still very few in number. The Caltrans biologist also suggests that these walls will help maintain the viability of one of only two remaining wildlife corridors between the lagoon and inland open space areas (i.e., Carmel Creek). The Commission's staff biologist agrees with these opinions and supports placement of the walls.

However, these factors cannot make the project consistent with Section 30233. Although all these things would provide a greater biological benefit than retention of the scattered willows, the fill proposed under the subject amendment proposal still does not fit within any of the above cited eight allowed uses in wetlands.

Aside from the wetland impacts, the proposed amendments will also result in temporary impacts to approximately 0.2 acres of identified coastal sage scrub habitat on a small south-facing slope east of I-5, north of Los Penasquitos Creek. This vegetative community is usually considered Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) within the meaning of Section 30240 of the Coastal Act. This type of habitat was not addressed by the Commission in 1990 the same way it is addressed today, as concern over the loss of this vegetative community has greatly increased in recent years. In this particular case, based on biological reports, photographs and site visits, the coastal sage vegetation proposed for temporary impact is not considered ESHA. The site is very small and consists mostly of non-native grasses, ruderal vegetation and bare dirt, with a few scattered coastal sage plants. It does not connect with any other habitat, as all but this one hillside, or portion of a hillside, has been cleared and graded for either highway projects or residential development. Even the northfacing side of the subject slope has been cleared and graded. Thus, the Commission finds that this small representation of scattered coastal sage vegetation does not constitute ESHA, under the meaning of Section 30240 of the Act.

The existing areas that would be temporarily impacted for construction purposes would be replanted with coastal sage species upon completion of the project, such that there would be higher value sage scrub after the project than at present. In addition, mitigation for coastal sage impacts was required in 1990 by other permitting agencies and has already taken place in the form of acquisition of high quality coastal sage habitat in Poway, which is well outside the coastal zone, that supports gnatcatchers. The proposed modifications to the project footprint actually reduce the coastal sage impacts in other areas of the project by 0.5 acres. Thus, the mitigation reserved for those impacts which will now not occur, serves to offset the currently-proposed temporary impacts by an approximately 3.5:1 ratio, in satisfaction of other permitting agencies requirements.

The Commission typically requires mitigation for coastal impacts to occur within the coastal zone and would not accept the land acquisition outside the coastal zone as appropriate mitigation for impacts to ESHA within the coastal zone. Since the Commission has determined that the area in question is not ESHA, it is not requiring any mitigation beyond the proposed restoration of the on-site coastal sage scrub when construction is complete. Thus, there will be no net loss of vegetative cover on-site after

restoration, and the quality of that vegetation will be superior to the mainly exotic plants existing on the site at this time.

In summary, the Commission finds that the proposed project elements resulting in wetland impacts are inconsistent with Section 30233 of the Act. No less environmentally-damaging alternatives are known and adequate mitigation is proposed, but the cause of the impacts is not an allowed use in wetlands. However, the current amendment is a relatively minor modification of a previously approved project, and can be justified under the Commission's original rationale, when it approved the main project. This was achieved by utilizing the balancing provisions of the Coastal Act; this will be discussed at length in Finding #6. Some amendment features will improve the current situation by reducing and filtering site runoff, by protecting an existing wildlife corridor and by reducing noise in areas where endangered species nest. Moreover, denial of the proposed amendments would fail to achieve the main purpose of the overall project, which is to alleviate extreme traffic conditions in this segment of the only coastal north-south transportation corridor between San Diego and Los Angeles. The area where I-5 and I-805 merge operates at gridlock during peak commuter hours, which creates its own environmental impacts in the form of adverse effects on air and water quality from the idling vehicles, in addition to restricting public access to the coast. Thus, although the Commission cannot find the project consistent with all cited Coastal Act policies, it does find, as discussed in Finding #6 below, that, on balance, approval of the proposed project amendments, as conditioned, provides sufficient benefits to coastal resources to outweigh the minor habitat loss incurred herein.

3. Water Quality. The project site is primarily the I-5 corridor, which is near the western end of the Los Penasquitos Lagoon watershed. Portions of the proposed amendments will also be adjacent to Carmel Creek and/or to other creeks or streams which ultimately feed into the lagoon. Potential runoff both during and post-construction raises concerns over the degradation of water quality. Such runoff can carry significant amounts of both sediments and urban pollutants and deposit these materials in downstream sensitive receiving waters. The following Coastal Act policy is most applicable to this issue:

Section 30231

> The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

In California, the Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) are generally responsible for administering the water pollution control permit programs set up under

the state Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act and the federal Clean Water Act. Locally, the *Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin* has established water quality objectives necessary for achieving its identified beneficial uses for surface waters. Caltrans has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit under which it constructs and operates development. This permit requires that all discharges to surface waters meet the standards established in the *Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin*; the NPDES permits identify the Best Management Practices (BMPs) that can be used to meet these standards.

The proposed project changes include additional BMPs beyond what was proposed in the initial project application in 1990. Caltrans proposes to remove 1,328 feet of existing concrete drainage channels along I-5 and I-805 and replace them with 1,256 feet of bioswale and 72 feet of plantable RSP, designed for a 25-year storm event. Two existing channels will also be widened a bit, to address engineering concerns and design refinements, which will increase their detention capacity slightly. The proposal also includes construction of a new desiltation basin, just south of the crossings over Los Penasquitos Creek, and a request for after-the-fact approval for a desiltation basin constructed several years ago that was not shown on the original plans. Also, one retaining wall that had previously been approved as a solid wall will now be constructed of plantable geosynthetically reinforced materials and landscaped with coastal sage species. With the exception of this wall and the after-the-fact basin, all the new drainage improvements will be located in the general area of Los Penasquitos Creek. The plantable retaining wall will be between that creek and Carmel Mountain Road, and the after-the-fact desiltation basin is located west of I-5, just south of Carmel Creek.

The original EIR/EIS review identified approximately 15,000 linear feet of retaining walls, with a maximum height of 40 feet, for the project overall, but detailed plans for those facilities were not available at that time. Now that such detailed planning has occurred, it has been determined that several of the walls will be longer and/or taller than originally estimated, with a total of 18,333 linear feet and maximum height of 67 feet (this height applies only to the plantable wall addressed above; no other proposed wall is more than half that tall). This project element will thus increase the amount of impervious surfaces by the factor of 3,333 linear feet times the depth of the walls over what was envisioned in 1990. Impervious surfaces will also be increased through construction of the proposed maintenance vehicle pullouts, a new safety feature which Caltrans is incorporating into all new projects and amendments to existing projects. This amendment includes 14 pullouts (one is outside the coastal zone), and they are typically 85 feet long and 11 feet wide, resulting in 13,090 sq.ft. of additional impervious surfaces.

Resources downstream of the various amendment components include the western end of Carmel Creek, a significant reach of Los Penasquitos Creek and Los Penasquitos Lagoon, which has been declared an impaired water body due to sedimentation from upstream developments. When the original permit was approved, CVREP was the mitigation component for the entire I-5/SR-56 project. It was intended primarily to allow 100-year flood flows in Carmel Creek at non-erosive velocities and establish a healthy riparian corridor through the valley. In addition to flood control function, the CVREP was

designed to trap sediment, thereby reducing sediment loads in Carmel Creek and ultimately Los Penasquitos Lagoon. CVREP consists of a significantly widened channel for historic Carmel Creek (ranging from 100 to 300 feet in width), a series of drop structures along the streambed, a detention basin at the western end of the improvements and an intense riparian revegetation program; it occupies the area of Carmel Valley between I-5 on the west and Carmel Country Road on the east. CVREP has been in place now for several years, and the detention basin at its western end has been cleaned out once, at the behest of the RWQCB; approximately 5,000 cu.yds. of sediments were removed.

Other than temporary runoff control measures for construction, CVREP is the only BMP for the original development. The Commission and other resource agencies were not addressing water quality in the same manner as today and did not generally require the types of drainage facilities and BMP programs that are now commonplace. Approximately two and a half years ago, in response to these heightened concerns over the quality of stormwater runoff, Caltrans constructed a desiltation basin west of I-5, south of Carmel Creek. This is an experimental facility, with the understanding that the design would be incorporated into other proposed (and possibly existing) highway developments should it prove successful; monitoring of the results is still ongoing. The basin was designed to accommodate a one-year storm with a bypass for larger events. It handles 4.5 acres of I-5/SR56 runoff and runoff from some nearby slopes and can detain water for 35 hours.

The Commission finds that while sediment is a primary pollutant of concern in this watershed, other pollutants such as petroleum hydrocarbons and heavy metals are associated with highway runoff. These pollutants can have adverse cumulative impacts on coastal resources. Bioswales have been proven an effective percolation and treatment BMP in these situations; they not only reduce the amount of water that reaches downstream resources, they provide natural treatment to improve the quality of the water that does go through.

In addition to identifying permanent BMPs, Caltrans has submitted plans for all temporary runoff control measures proposed. These plans apply not only to the project amendments requested herein, but to the entire scope of work previously permitted. Temporary (construction) BMPs proposed include, but are not limited to, fiber rolls, check dams, temporary concrete washouts and temporary construction entrances. The applicant also proposes to schedule construction activities in conjunction with installation of the proposed temporary BMPs.

In summary, the Commission finds that the proposed amendments could have significant adverse effects on downstream water quality, both because of the construction impacts of grading and landform alteration not previously addressed in the 1990 approval, and through the increase in impervious surfaces caused by increases in the size of some approved retaining walls and construction of the 14 new maintenance vehicle pullouts. The applicant's permanent drainage improvements (desiltation basins and bioswales), temporary runoff control measures and the already completed CVREP, adequately

address these potential impacts. Therefore, the Commission finds that the requested amendments, as conditioned to address other issues, are consistent with the water quality protection policies of Chapter 3.

4. Visual Resources. The following policy of the Coastal Act addresses visual resources, and states, in part:

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....

The project site is well inland from the actual shoreline, but some of the amendment requests involve locations adjacent to Los Penasquitos Lagoon and its tributary creeks. Moreover, I-5 is itself a designated scenic corridor. The amendments involving surface changes to the originally approved highway design will not be especially prominent, nor significantly different than what was previously reviewed and what already exists along this transportation corridor. Several of the proposed safety features do, however, raise significant visual concerns.

One retaining wall, the 67-foot one, is within the viewshed from lookout areas along North Torrey Pines Road and perhaps from some vantage points within Torrey Pines State Reserve. It is a distant view but, due to the height and length of this wall, and the fact that most structures between it and the lagoon are single-story buildings, the wall will still be visible. This wall is proposed to be planted. Special Condition #2 will assure that planting succeeds and is maintained. The special condition also provides for coloring the wall in earth tones to minimize its visual impacts until the planting matures and covers the wall. It is not clear whether, or how many, other of the proposed retaining walls may be visible from various public venues, but the special condition places similar requirements on any publicly visible wall.

The maintenance pullouts and slope (gore) paving will be visible to all travelers on I-5. Since the maintenance pullouts are at ground level and have the general appearance of long driveways, they are not anticipated to result in significant visual impacts. Likewise, the slope/gore paving will occur in six places, all beneath bridges or highway connectors. Thus, visual impacts from these are not anticipated to be significant. Nonetheless, because of their location along a scenic highway, Special Condition #2 addresses these features also and requires the use of screening landscaping to buffer views from the highway wherever possible. Special Condition #2 dictates the details of color and materials, landscaping, irrigation, maintenance and monitoring for all these project components.

Another project feature that has the potential for adverse impacts on visual resources are the proposed four-foot concrete barriers in the vicinity of the I-5 crossing of Carmel Creek. They have been included in the project at the request of USFWS, to minimize freeway noise in the adjacent lagoon, particularly as it might affect nesting clapper rails. The existing Carmel Creek bridge and completed flyover from westbound SR56 to southbound I-5 already have three-foot safety barriers along their west sides; the applicant proposes to raise these one foot higher. In addition, the applicant proposes to install four-foot barriers on the west side of the as-yet unconstructed truck bypass lane, approved in 1990, and on the I-5 main lanes just north and south of the Carmel Creek bridge, where no barrier currently exists. The locations for the four-foot concrete barriers are shown on Exhibit #5.

An extensive visual analysis was prepared to address this concern; the viewsheds studied were those along southbound I-5, along the westbound to southbound connector between I-5 and SR56, and from existing development northwest of the site. The conclusion, with which the Commission concurs, is that the barriers will not result in significant visual impacts. The main view from the existing development is of the existing flyover, which already has a three-foot barrier; the addition of one more foot will not be discernable from the location of the homes, which is a considerable distance. More critical from a public viewshed perspective is the affect the proposed walls may have on highway travelers. Drivers and passengers on the flyover connection have a view of trees and open area. Since there is already a three-foot barrier on the flyover, the affect of adding an additional foot is negligible and for most people would not even be noticed. Moreover, when the approved truck bypass lane, which is located west of the flyover at roughly the same height, is completed, this structure will have an equal, or greater visual impact to travelers on the flyover. With respect to the truck bypass lane, people in trucks will be seated high enough to see over the four-foot barrier, so their views will not be affected.

The greatest concern, however, is for travelers on southbound I-5, where the change will not be from a three-foot wall to a four-foot one, but rather from nothing to a four-foot wall, except along the Carmel Creek bridge itself, where there is already a three-foot barrier (see Exhibits 5 and I). For these people, there is a view of parts of trees and some open area, although there are no water views, and no panoramic views, available from here. Whether the view is significant is somewhat subjective, but it should be noted that the view includes only the middles of trees, as the tops are hidden behind the flyover, which is very prominent in this viewshed. Moreover, what view there is only lasts a couple seconds, as this is a very short stretch of highway and people are travelling at high speeds.

Conversely, Sorrento Valley Road, which is located between I-5 and the lagoon, has now been permanently closed to vehicular traffic. Future plans are expected to provide an improved pedestrian and bicycle pathway, replacement of existing culverts with a bridge and removal and restoration of some or all of the old roadbed. Thus, another view to consider is the future view of persons using this recreational facility (see Exhibits J, K and L). From that perspective, the less visible (and less audible) the freeway is, the more

enjoyable the recreational experience; the proposed concrete barriers will help with that goal.

Finally, there are two types of proposed safety features that will also be visible to people travelling on I-5 and I-805; these are changeable message signs and closed circuit camera equipment. The proposed amendment includes two changeable message signs within the coastal zone, one on the east side of northbound I-805 at Mira Mesa Boulevard and one on the west side of southbound I-5 north of Carmel Mountain Road. Neither of these requires trenching and both will be located near developed areas and away from recreational venues or significant open space. By nature of the service they provide (warnings of upcoming traffic conditions), the signs themselves must be visible, but in the proposed locations they will not interfere with any significant public viewsheds, and Special Condition #2 requires landscaping around the bases wherever possible.

Six closed-circuit TV cameras are proposed in the coastal zone; each will be mounted on an approximately forty-foot high pole and will require a separate above-ground equipment cabinet. Camera locations are: east side of northbound I-805 south of Sorrento Valley Boulevard; east side of northbound I-805 at the I-5/I-805 junction; west side of southbound I-5 at the Genesee Avenue off-ramp; east side of northbound I-5 south of the I-5/I-805 junction; east side of northbound I-5 south of Carmel Mountain Road; and west side of southbound I-5 north of Carmel Mountain Road. These facilities will be visible, although they have much the same character as existing utility lines. Special Condition #2 requires the facilities to be colored in dark tones, and also requires that landscape screening be provided for the bases of the poles and the equipment cabinets.

In summary, a number of project elements have the potential to create significant adverse impacts on visual resources. These effects can be reduced, and in some cases eliminated, by careful design of the individual components and strict adherence to the requirements of Special Condition #2. As conditioned, the Commission finds the proposed project amendments consistent with the visual resource policies of the Coastal Act.

5. Public Access/Traffic Circulation. Many policies of the Coastal Act address the provision, protection and enhancement of public access opportunities, particularly access to and along the shoreline. The original highway improvement project was found to have significant benefits to public access, both to the coast and to other significant recreational venues, by enhancing the flow of traffic through the regional road system. The amendment request, although it does not include any new features directly related to public access, is integrally related to the Commission's 1990 approval of the project as a whole; without the requested amendments, the main project cannot be completed. In the subject amendment request, the following policies are most applicable, and state in part:

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 30250

(a) New residential, commercial, or industrial development, except as otherwise provided in this division, shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have a significant adverse effect, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources....

Residents in the northeastern part of San Diego generally commute daily, both for work and recreation. The primary purpose of the highway improvements was to alleviate the severe traffic congestion existing in the I-5/I-805 corridor at that time, which would in turn alleviate traffic on other portions of the regional circulation system and neighborhood streets, particularly during peak commuter hours. In the eleven years that have passed since the project was first approved, the traffic situation has only worsened. Hundreds, if not thousands, of new residences have been constructed in the northern communities of San Diego, and similar growth has been experienced in communities further north and east, which also rely on this same transportation corridor. Whereas in 1990 there was often gridlock at the I-5/I-805 merge, gridlock has now become a daily event.

In 1990, the Commission found the approved highway improvements the minimum expansion necessary to address the traffic problems in this area. Since then the congestion has only worsened. Thus, today, the Commission finds that completion of these improvements remains a very high priority for regional circulation. It is unfortunate that not all project impacts were correctly identified in 1990, particularly the construction impacts. It is also unfortunate that some of these impacts are to wetlands, although nearly all are temporary. However, although this amendment request includes project footprint changes and new water quality and safety features, it does not modify the scope or scale of the original proposal, and, in comparison with the project as a whole, the amendments constitute very little change. Therefore, the Commission finds the proposed amendment, as conditioned to address other issues, consistent with the cited sections of the Act.

6. Conflict between Coastal Act Policies. Section 30007.5 of the Coastal Act provides the Commission with the ability to resolve conflicts between Coastal Act policies. This section provides that:

The Legislature further finds and recognizes that conflicts may occur between one or more policies of the division. The Legislature therefore declares that in carrying out the provisions of this division such conflicts be resolved in a manner that on balance is the most protective of significant coastal resources. In this context, the

Legislature declares that broader policies which, for example, serve to concentrate development in close proximity to urban and employment centers may be more protective, overall, than specific wildlife habitat and other similar resource policies.

A. Conflict. In order for the Commission to utilize the conflict resolution provision of Section 30007.5, the Commission must first establish that a substantial conflict between two statutory directives contained in Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act exists. The fact that a project is consistent with one policy of Chapter 3 and inconsistent with another policy does not necessarily result in a conflict. Rather, the Commission must find that to deny the project based on the inconsistency with one policy will result in coastal zone effects that are inconsistent with another policy.

As an initial matter, the Commission approved the original permit despite the substantial amount of wetland fill that the project entailed because of the overriding benefits the project provided for habitat restoration and public access to the coast. The proposed amendment is necessary in order for the previously approved project to realize the benefits that justified its initial approval.

In this case, as described above, the proposed project is inconsistent with the wetland protection policies of the Coastal Act because the proposed fill of 0.3 acres of riparian wetlands and the proposed temporary impacts to 3.7 acres of riparian and freshwater marsh wetlands are not allowable wetland fill activities as identified by Section 30233(a)(1)-(8). However, to deny the project based on this inconsistency with Section 30233(a)(1)-(8) would result in significant adverse impacts inconsistent with the water quality provisions of Section 30231 and the access provisions of Section 30210. A component of the proposed amendment is to improve existing water quality facilities along this stretch of highway, by replacing over 1,300 linear feet of concrete drainage channel with pervious surfaces (bioswales) The amendment request also incorporates two desilting basins, one constructed 2 ½ years ago without a permit and one not yet constructed. These improvements are designed to filter out both sediments and pollutants from road runoff before it enters the lagoon.

The existing highway improvements, as amended herein are all located upstream of Los Penasquitos Lagoon, which empties into the Pacific Ocean between Torrey Pines State Beach and the beaches of Del Mar. In addition to providing a variety of wetland habitats (riparian as well as freshwater, brackish and salt marshes) utilized by avian and mammal species, the lagoon also serves as nursery area for juvenile fish. Moreover, it provides some public recreation opportunities as people play and swim at the lagoon's mouth; in particular, families with small children tend to gather here, since the waters are shallow, warm and absent large waves. Storm events often result in posting of the area with signs warning people to avoid water contact, due to dangerous levels of contaminants. Los Penasquitos Lagoon is also identified as an impaired water body due to sediments. Installation of the two desiltation basins and bioswales will result in a reduction of both sediments and urban pollutants eventually reaching the lagoon and lagoon mouth, thus enhancing the area for both wildlife and human use.

If the Commission were to deny the project based on the project's inconsistencies with the wetland fill provisions of Section 30233(a)(1)-(8), the water quality impacts from pollutants and sediments would not be reduced through these added features. Moreover, construction of the already-approved highway expansion could not be completed. As discussed previously, there are no feasible alternatives to the proposed additional impacts, which result from prior errors in the EIR/EIS and from design refinements precipitated by conditions in the field. Leaving the project in its current half-built status serves no one and nothing, including wetland resources. The current populations living in the northern part of San Diego, and significant additional growth expected in this general area still call for the project to be completed. Without completion, there will be significant loss of mobility, increased congestion and travel time, greater air emissions and increased noise pollution on local streets. Except for a few small, infill-type projects, these areas of intense residential and commercial growth are all located outside the coastal zone, and thus not subject to any oversight by the Coastal Commission. In addition, the project as amended is environmentally-preferable to the original project.

The proposed project includes wetland fill that is inconsistent with the wetland policies of the Coastal Act. However, this project will provide water quality benefits that will improve the biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters. Better water quality not only enhances biological resources and habitat value, but also means a safer recreational experience for the general public (i.e., water quality improvements are also access improvements). Without the proposed water quality enhancements, sediments and pollutants will continue to enter Los Penasquitos Lagoon at current levels, resulting in degradation of water quality resources and public access in a manner inconsistent with the Coastal Act. In addition, the project provides public access benefits, by enhancing the vehicular access from inland communities to the coast. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project creates a conflict among Coastal Act policies.

B. Conflict Resolution. After establishing a conflict among Coastal Act policies, Section 30007.5 requires the Commission to resolve the conflict in a manner that is on balance most protective of coastal resources. In this case, the proposed project would result in the fill of 0.3 acres of isolated willow riparian vegetation and 3.7 acres of temporary impacts to riparian and freshwater marsh wetlands. The willows are located on a manufactured highway slope adjacent to a concrete drainage channel. There is no riparian understory supporting the willows and creating viable wildlife habitat. Thus, although the roughly third-of-an-acre of willow trees is correctly identified as a wetland, there is serious doubt that it provides true wildlife habitat, since it does not connect to any larger habitat area and is surrounding by urban uses (roads and industrial buildings).

There are important factors in the Commission's use of the conflict resolution provisions of Section 30007.5 that, in this particular case, create a unique situation. The original project, as a whole, has been identified as a critical transportation improvement in regional planning documents since before the Coastal Act was passed and the Coastal Commission created. The original project is also identified in several documents certified by the Coastal Commission, including the North City Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan Addendum, the Carmel Valley Neighborhood 8 Community Plan, and the

North City Future Urbanizing Area Framework Plan. The proposed amendments to the original approval are consistent with those planning documents, as they will allow completion of the project. The resulting reduction in contaminants will enhance the use of downstream resources by wildlife and humans. In addition, the applicant has proposed a monitoring program, which is expanded in Special Condition #2 to include the areas being landscaped to protect existing public views.

The proposed project includes the creation of riparian wetlands as mitigation for the project's impacts. The mitigation site is located in Carmel Valley, immediately adjacent to the existing CVREP site which is part of the City's Multiple Species Conservation Plan MHPA system. Thus, the mitigation site is likely to provide more viable habitat than currently exists in the isolated willow patches being impacted. The Commission therefore finds that the proposed project would have significant resource benefits.

In addition, the major regional public recreational facilities (all county beaches and Mission Bay Park) are located some distance to the west of the rapidly expanding population in the northeastern portion of San Diego. Thus, residents in these communities generally commute daily, both for work and recreation. The completion of these highway improvements, identified in many regional planning documents for decades, will enhance public access to the coast by reducing required travel times from these developing inland communities to the shorelines of Del Mar and Torrey Pines. Without approval of the amendments, which are necessary to complete the project, the mandate of Section 30210 of the Coastal Act to maximize public access to the coast will not be fully realized.

In resolving the identified Coastal Act conflict, the Commission finds that the impacts on coastal resources from not constructing the project will be more significant than the project's wetland habitat impacts. Therefore, the Commission finds that approving the project is, on balance, most protective of coastal resources.

This finding that approving the project is most protective of coastal resources is based, in part, on the assumption that the water pollution control facilities to be constructed will be continually managed and maintained in the designed manner in the future. It is also based on an assumption that the wetland mitigation site will be constructed as proposed and maintained in perpetuity. Should either the constructed water pollution control facilities not be managed and maintained as designed, or the mitigation site not be implemented as proposed, the benefits of the water quality improvements would not be realized to an extent that would outweigh the loss of nearly a third of an acre of wetland habitat. Therefore, the Commission attaches special conditions to ensure that the desired result is achieved; these have been discussed in detail in the previous findings addressing biological resources, visual resources and water quality. The Commission finds that without the special conditions, the proposed project could not be approved pursuant to Section 30007.5 of the Coastal Act.

7. No Waiver of Violation. Although development, in the form of one desiltation basin, has taken place prior to submission of this amendment application, consideration

of the application by the Commission has been based solely upon the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. Approval of the permit does not constitute a waiver of any legal action with regard to this violation of the Coastal Act that may have occurred; nor does it constitute admission as to the legality of any development undertaken on the subject site without a coastal development permit.

8. Local Coastal Planning. Section 30604(a) also requires that a coastal development permit, or permit amendment, 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 for the proposed amendments, as conditioned.

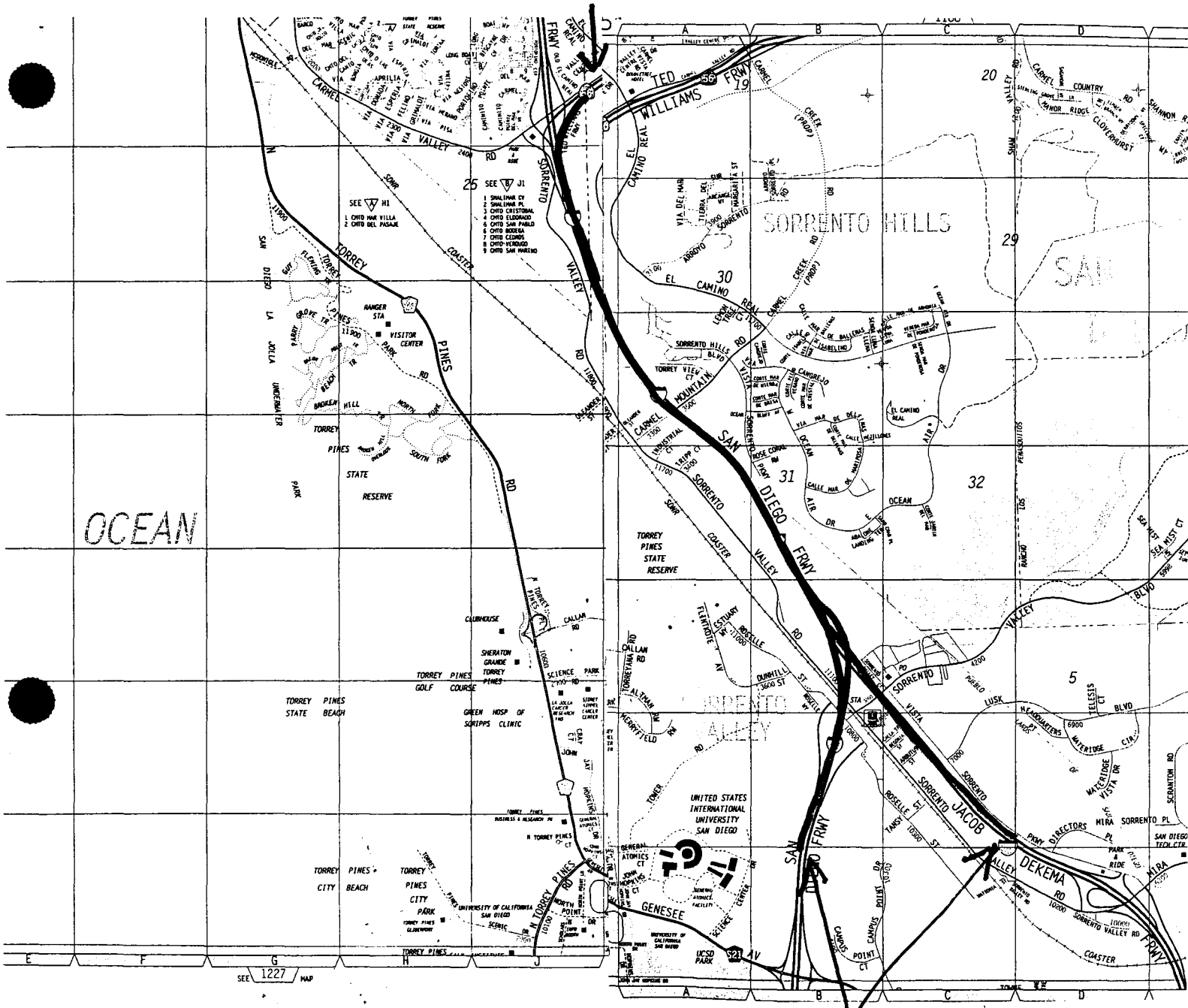
Although Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act is the standard of review for this project amendment, the proposal is consistent with the Commission's past actions on the North City LCP Land Use Plan Addendum and the more recently certified plans for several of the surrounding communities. In addition, as discussed above and with the inclusion of special conditions, the project has been found consistent with all cited policies of the Coastal Act. Therefore, approval of the amendment, as conditioned, will not prejudice the City's ability to continue implementation of its LCP in areas where it has jurisdiction.

9. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 13096 of the Commission's Code of Regulations requires Commission approval of coastal development permit applications to be supported by a finding showing the permit, 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)(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.

As discussed above and incorporated by reference herein, the proposed project, as conditioned, will not cause significant adverse impacts to the environment. Specifically, as conditioned, the project has been found consistent with the biological resources, water quality, visual resources and public access policies of the Coastal Act. Although the proposed amendment does involve some wetland fill that would normally be inconsistent with the wetland protection policies of the Coastal Act, the amount of wetland fill has been minimized to the greatest extent feasible and is necessary in order to accomplish the overriding benefits of improving public access to the coast and enhancing water quality and habitat restoration. There are no feasible alternatives or mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the activity might 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.

Start

6-90-123-A1



Finish

EXHIBIT NO. 1
APPLICATION NO.
6-90-123-A1
Location Map
California Coastal Commission

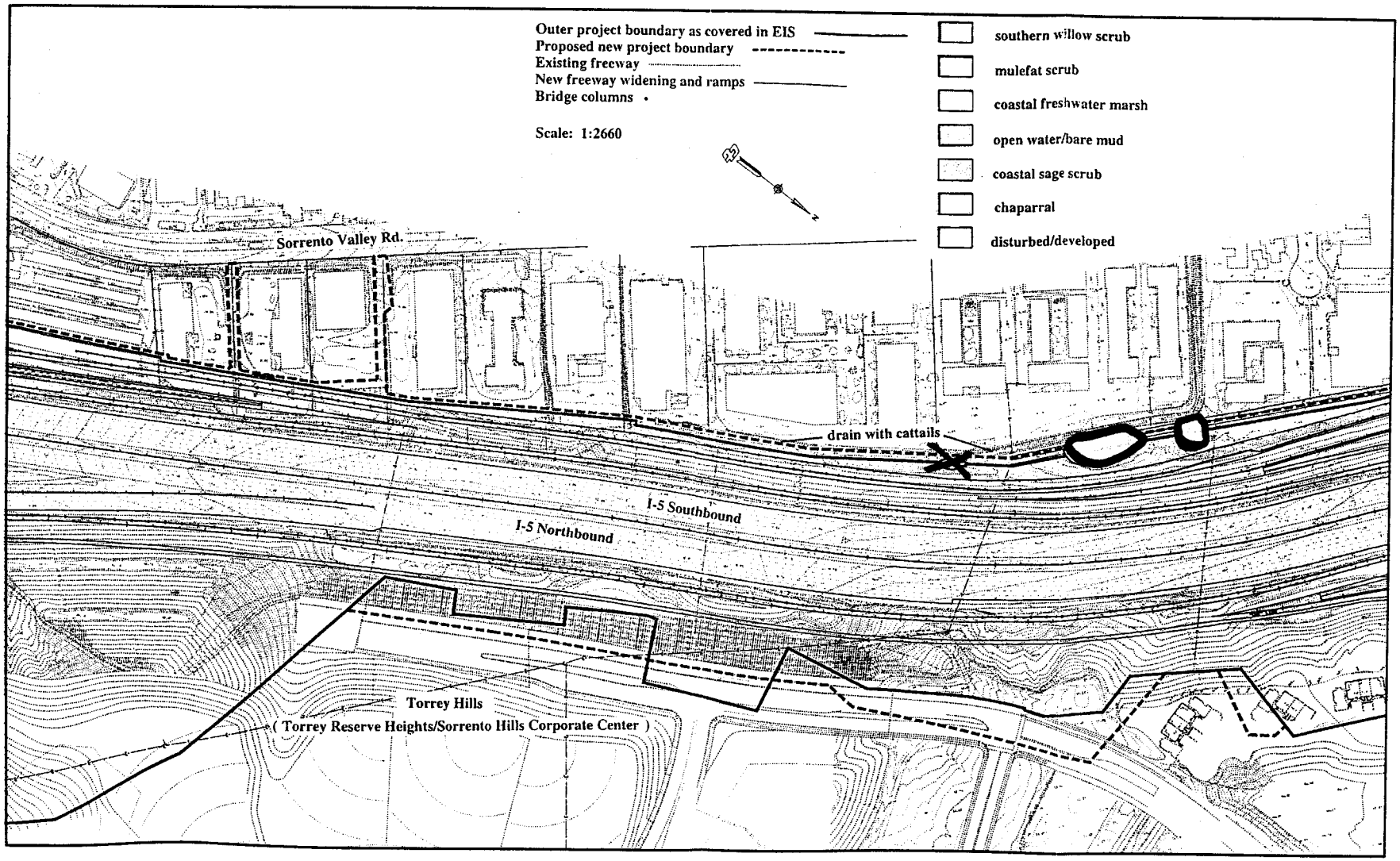
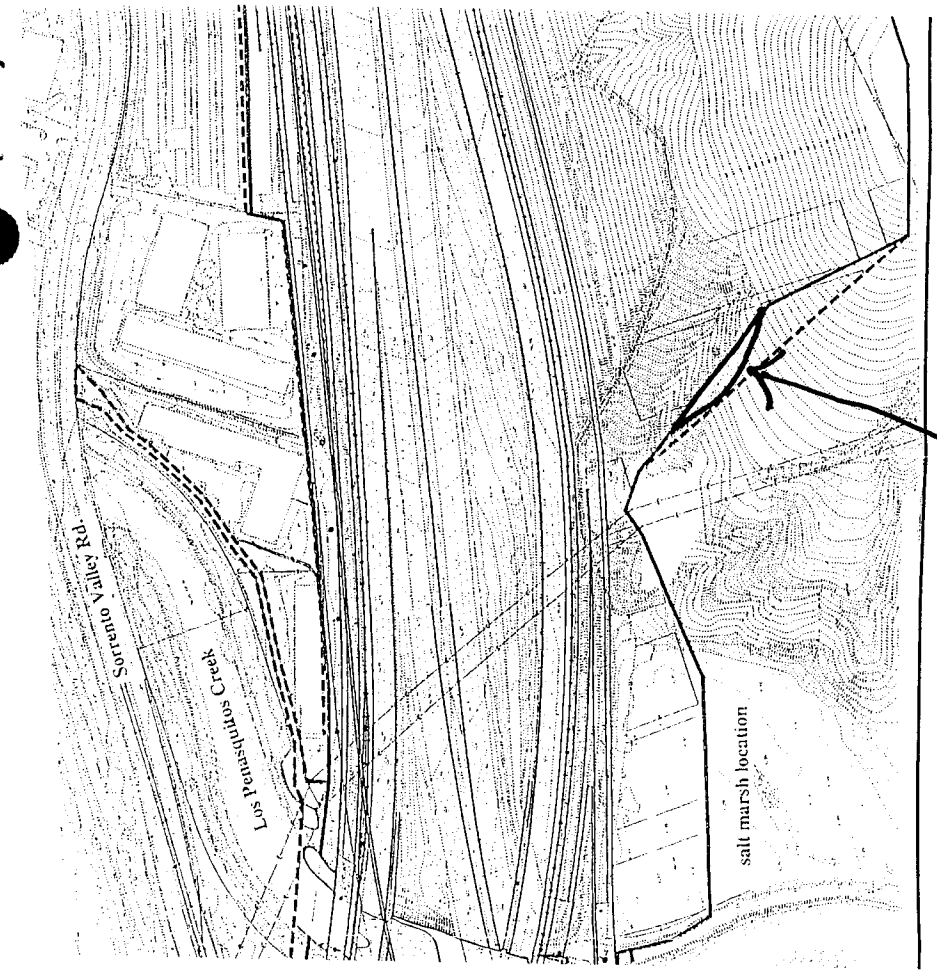
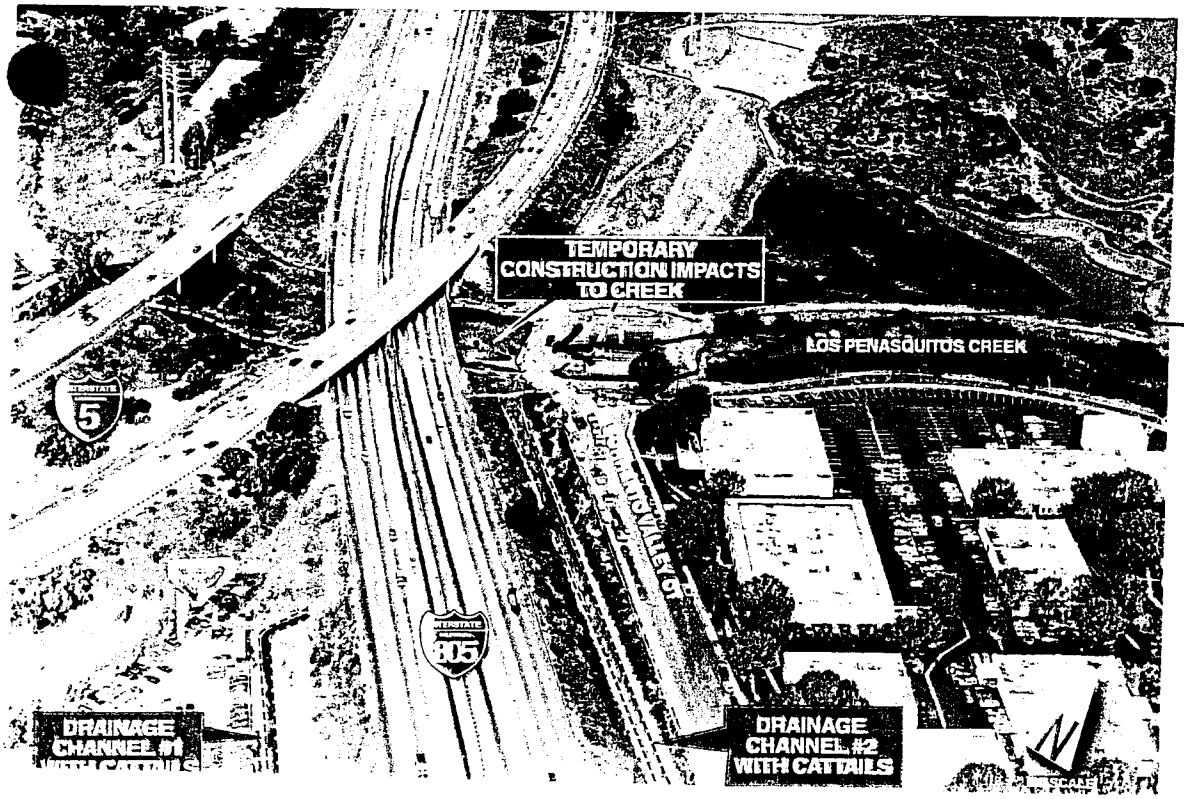


FIGURE 18
WILDLIFE HABITAT IMPACT AREAS

6-90-123-A1



Coastal Sage

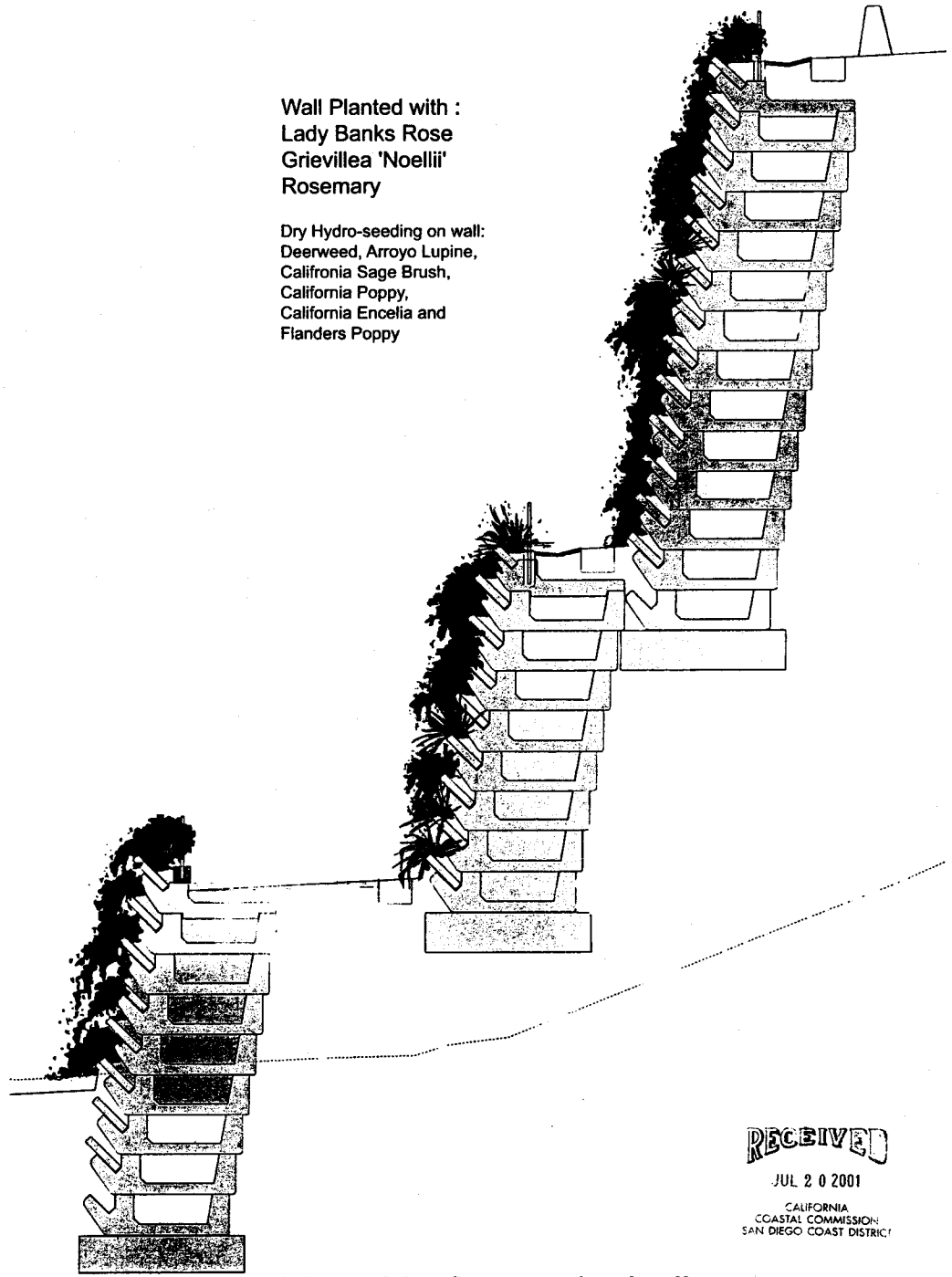


Wetlands (area in dotted line)

EXHIBIT NO. 3
APPLICATION NO. 6-90-123-A1
Temporary Impacts
California Coastal Commission

Wall Planted with :
Lady Banks Rose
Grievillea 'Noellii'
Rosemary

Dry Hydro-seeding on wall:
Deerweed, Arroyo Lupine,
Califronia Sage Brush,
California Poppy,
California Encelia and
Flanders Poppy



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COASTAL COMMISSION
SAN DIEGO COAST DISTRICT

Plantable Geosynthetically Reinforced Wall

EXHIBIT NO. 4
APPLICATION NO.
6-90-123-A1
PSR Wall
California Coastal Commission

6-90-123-A1

6-90-123-A1

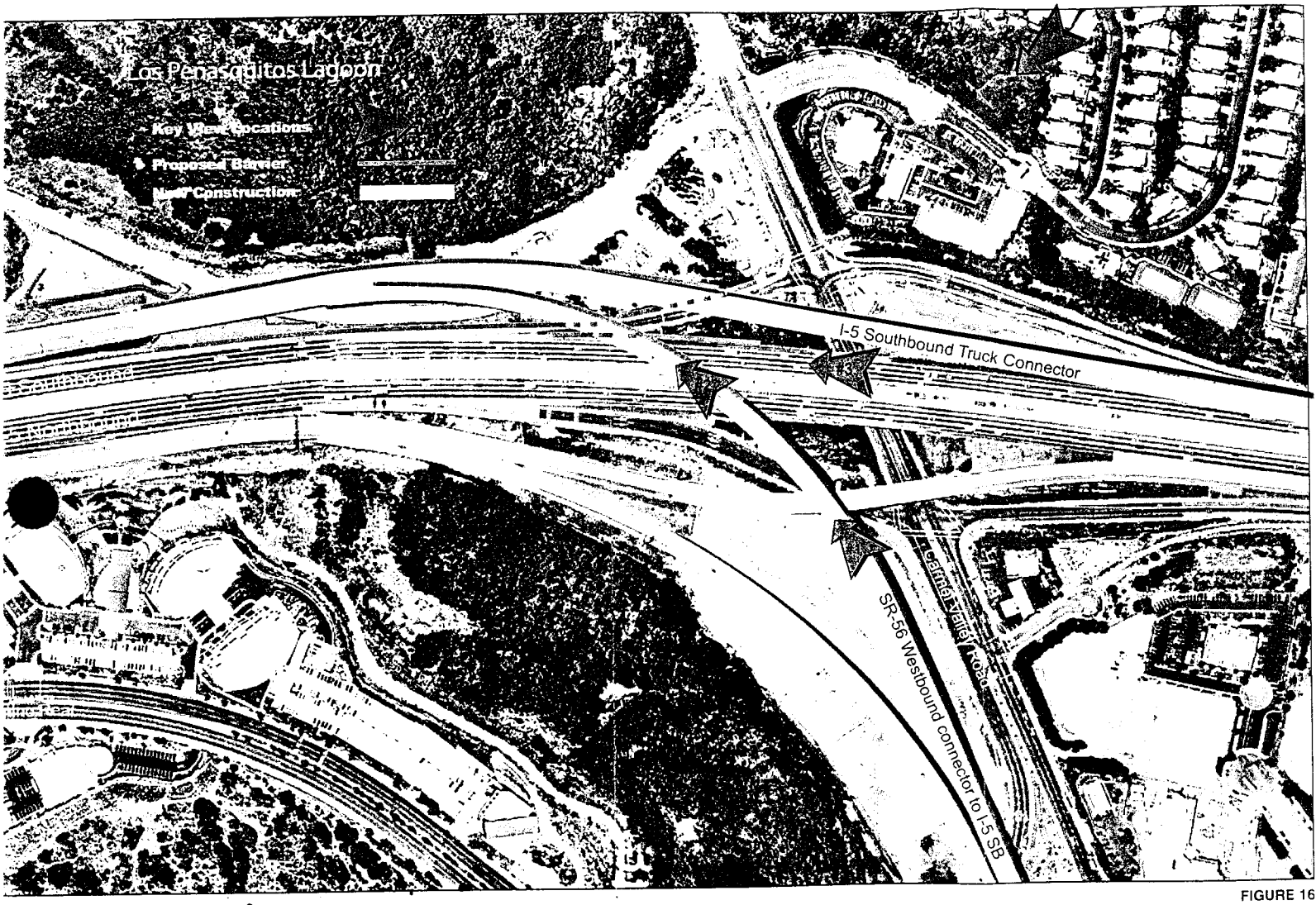
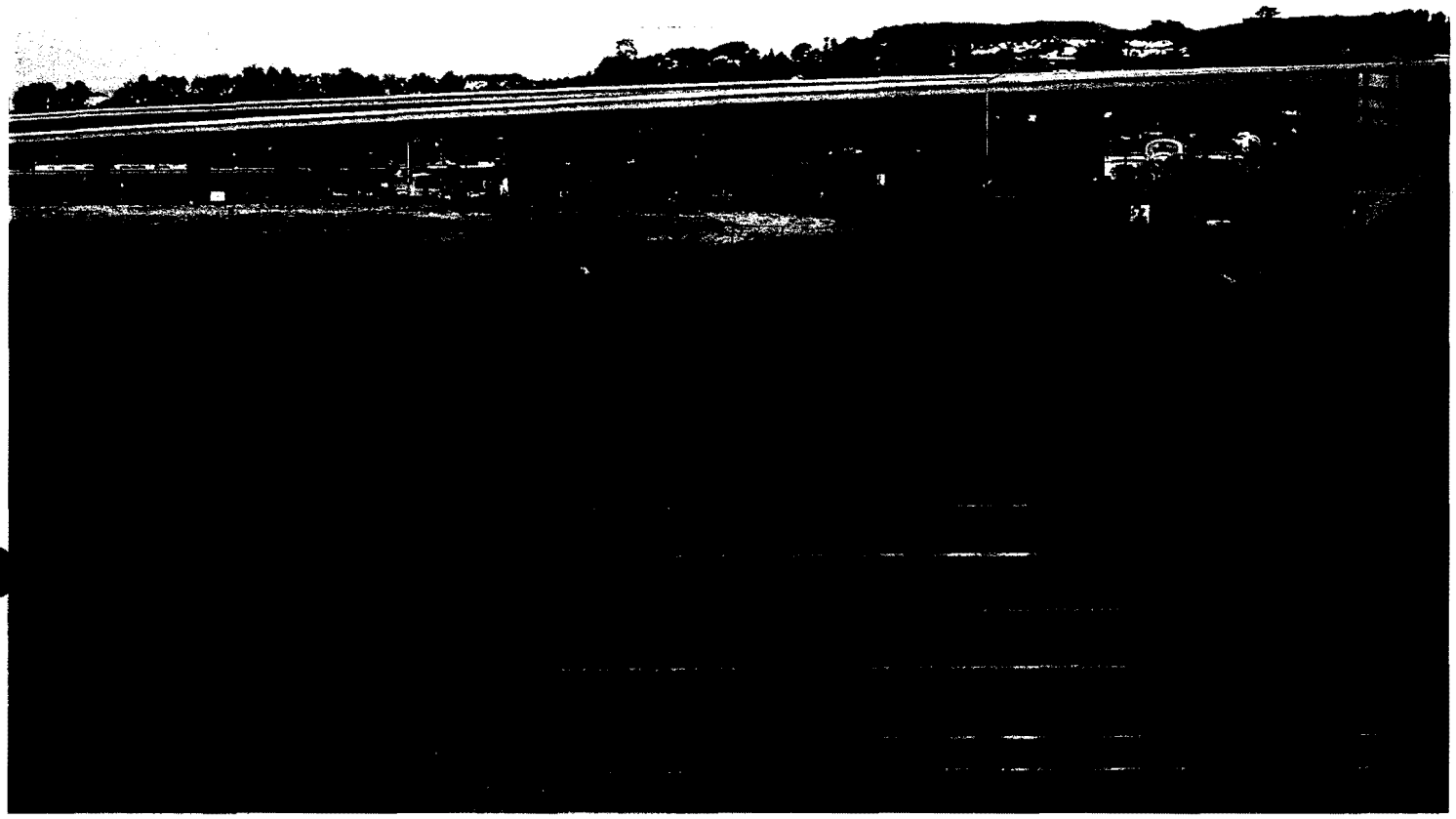


FIGURE 16

EXHIBIT NO. 5
APPLICATION NO.
6-90-123-A1
Concrete Barriers
California Coastal Commission

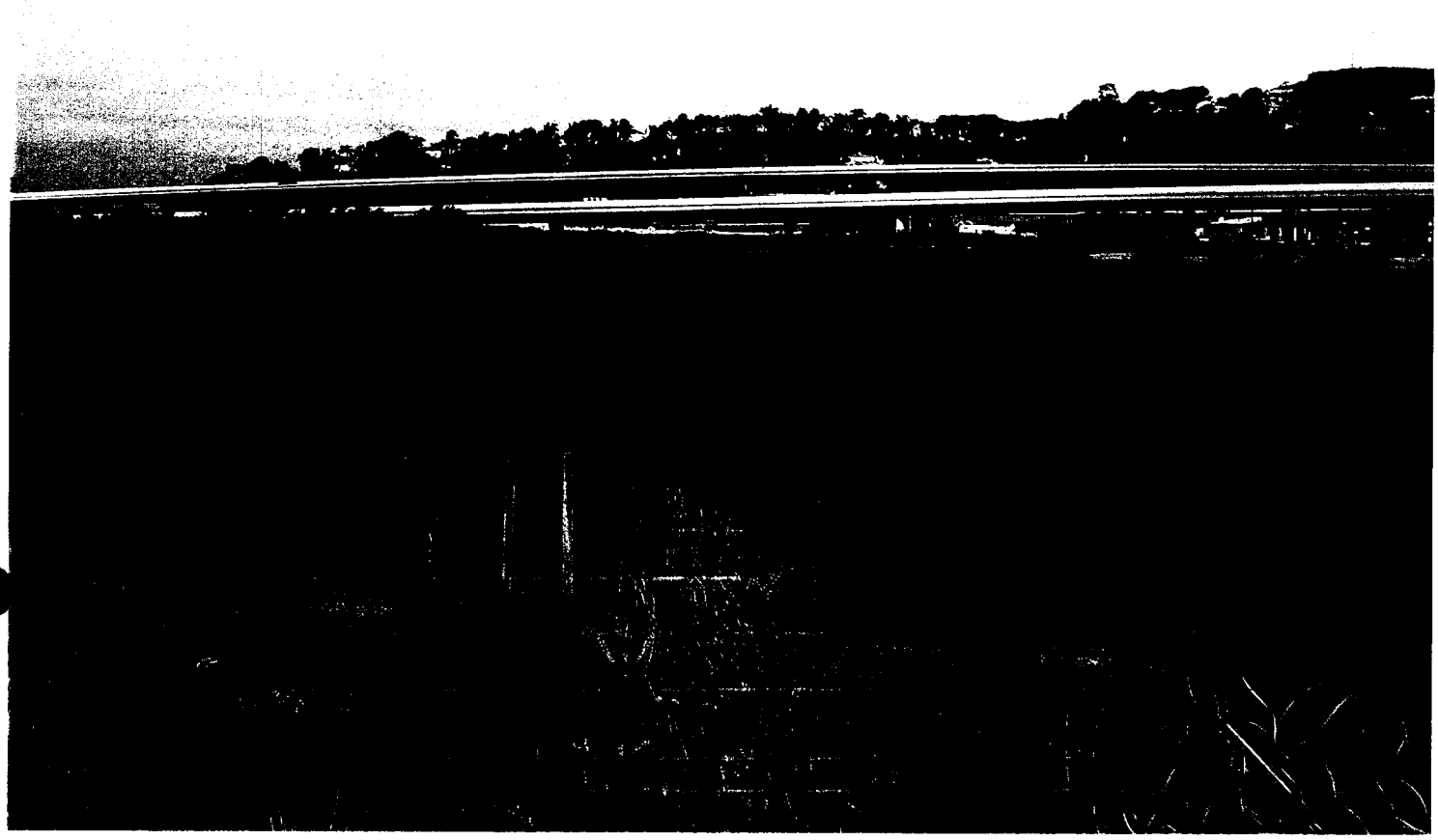
Northern area wetland habitat / willows adjacent to southbound I-5.

Southern area wetland habitat / willows adjacent to southbound I-5.

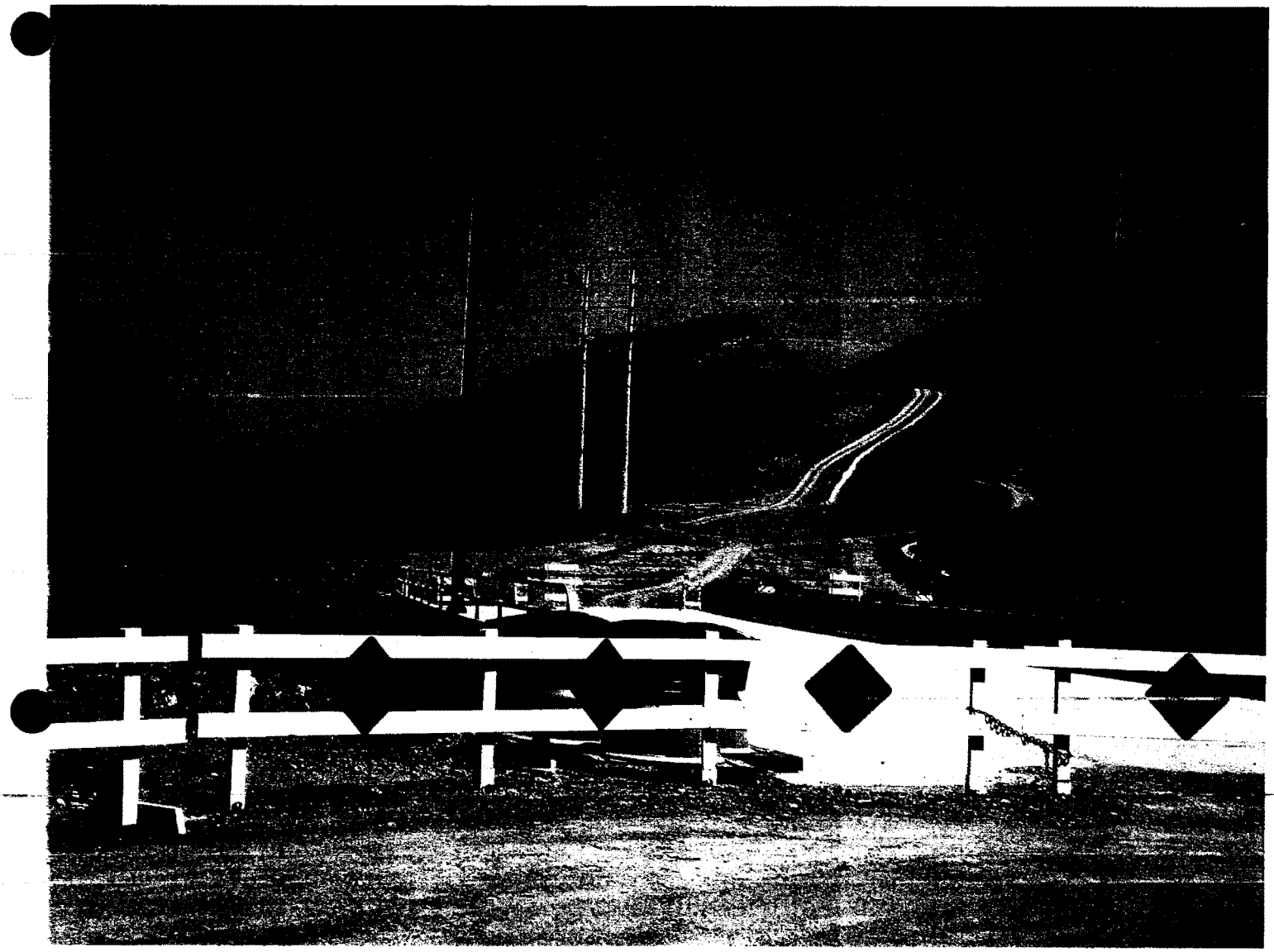


Proposed wetland mitigation site adjacent to I-5 connector to Highway 56.

EXHIBIT C



Existing Caltrans mitigation site in Carmel Creek floodplain (CVREP).



Coastal sage scrub impact area.

Typical temporary impacts to freshwater marsh for construction access.

View of proposed sixty-seven foot retaining wall as seen from eastern shoulder of N. Torrey Pines Road.

View of existing Caltrans retaining wall as seen from eastern shoulder of N. Torrey Pines Road.

Location of proposed right shoulder concrete barrier for wildlife crossing adjacent to Carmel Valley Road on ramp to southbound I-5.

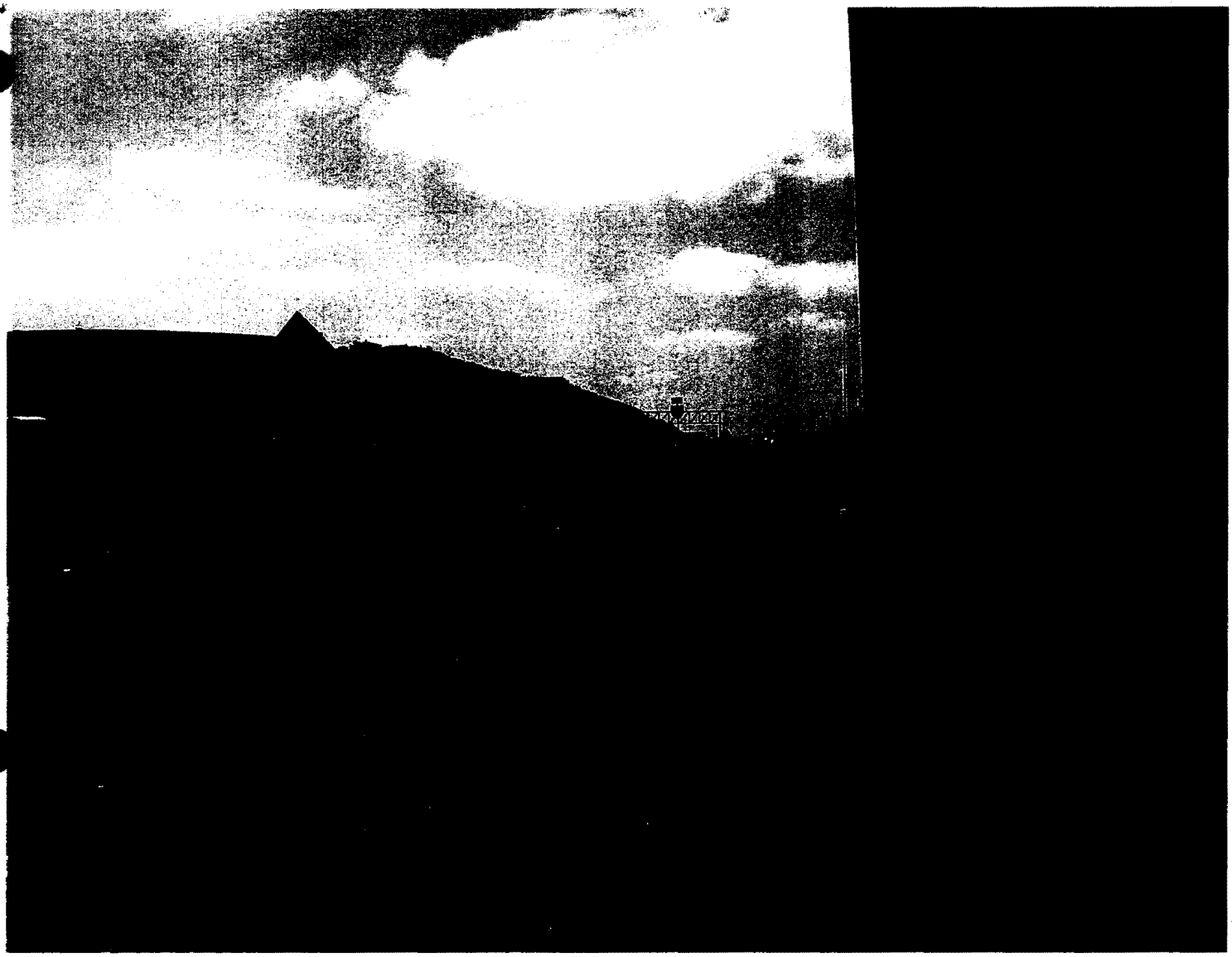
EXHIBIT I

Southbound view from centerline of proposed concrete barrier for wildlife crossing as seen from north end of Carmel Valley Bridge.

EXHIBIT J

View of proposed concrete barrier for wildlife crossing as seen from Sorrento Valley Pathway facing northeast.

EXHIBIT K



View of proposed concrete barrier for wildlife crossing as seen from Sorrento Valley Pathway facing southeast.