

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

SAN DIEGO AREA
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RECORD PACKET COPY

**Tue 23a**

Staff: BP-SD
Staff Report: 9/23/03
Hearing Date: 10/7-10/03

AMENDMENT REQUEST
STAFF REPORT AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION

Application No.: 6-93-133-A1

Applicant: North County Transit District

Agent: Eric Hankinson, Railpros, Inc.

Original Project Construction of a commuter rail and bus station to include two platforms, a six bay bus transfer facility, 235-space parking lot, public restrooms and landscaping on a 4.3-acre lot.

Proposed Amendment Extend the existing platform approximately 100-feet to the north to enable the use of longer passenger trains.

Site: Encinitas Coaster Station, 25 East "D" Street, Encinitas, San Diego County.

Substantive File Documents: Certified City of Encinitas LCP; CCC File #6-99-133

STAFF NOTES:

Summary of Staff's Preliminary Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the amendment, with a special condition addressing the continued effectiveness of the original conditions of approval. The proposed amendment does not raise any coastal resource issues and improves public access by allowing for expanded rail service.

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. 6-99-133-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 the certified Local Coastal Program. 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. Prior Conditions of Approval. All terms and conditions of the original approval of Coastal Development Permit #6-93-133 shall remain in full force and effect.

III. Findings and Declarations.

The Commission finds and declares as follows:

1. Project History/Amendment Description. In 1993, the Coastal Commission approved the construction of a commuter rail and bus station to include two platforms, a six bay bus transfer facility, 235-space parking lot, public restrooms and landscaping on a 4.3-acre lot. Special Conditions #2, #3 and #4 of the original permit required parking restrictions, replacement parking and a monitoring program. The conditions reserved 235 parking spaces for exclusive public use at the transit center, reserved a minimum of 60 free parking spaces for public parking in the project area and required a monitoring program for parking availability during operation of the facility. The project proposes to extend the existing platform at the Encinitas Train Station approximately 100-feet to the north to enable NCTD to operate longer passenger trains. All work is proposed within the railroad right of way. The currently-proposed amendment will not delete or modify any conditions of the original approval and Special Condition #1 of the subject amendment assures that all remaining prior conditions of approval are still in effect.

The City of Encinitas has a certified Local Coastal Program (LCP), however, the applicant is amending a previously-approved permit issued by the Commission prior to certification of the City's LCP and as such, the proposed improvement falls under the Commission's purview. The certified LCP is the standard of review for the amendment.

2. Consistency with the certified LCP.

The certified LCP contains the following goals and policies:

GOAL 1: Encinitas should have a transportation system that is safe, convenient and efficient, and sensitive to and compatible with surrounding character. (Coastal Act/30252)

POLICY 1.15: The City will actively support an integrated transportation program that encourages and provides for mass-transit, bicycle transportation, pedestrians, equestrians, and car-pooling. (Coastal Act/30252)

GOAL 3: The City of Encinitas will promote the use of other modes of transport to reduce the dependence on the personal automobile. (Coastal Act/30252)

POLICY 3.2: Continue to assist in expanding public transportation and emphasize public transportation in future development with preference given to cost-effective alternatives. (Coastal Act/30252)

POLICY 4.14: Where feasible, minimize the dependence on private motor vehicles. (Coastal Act/30252)

POLICY 6.4: The City will support increased public transportation service to shoreline recreational areas designated for increased visitation, including the following: - Supporting existing and increased levels of service where needed by the North County Transit District; - Supporting low-cost transfers between all transit operators in the Coastal Zone; and - Encouraging the provision of safe transit stops and crosswalks at all major beaches. (Coastal Act/30252)

RM Policy 4.8 states that:

[. . .] Development that is allowed within a viewshed area must respond in scale, roof line, materials, color, massing, and location on site to the topography, existing vegetation, and colors of the native environment. . . .

GOAL 1: The City will conserve, protect, and enhance the water resources in the Planning Area. (Coastal Act/30231)

POLICY 1.2: Cooperate with the Federal, State, and County governments and surrounding jurisdictions concerning the maintenance and improvement of water quality from local groundwater sources. (Coastal Act/ 30231)

The proposed project will extend the existing platform at the Encinitas Station to enable NCTD to operate longer passenger trains. The platform is a 11-foot wide concrete area for people to stand on to board trains and will be extended 100' to the north. The

applicant examined two project alternatives: should the existing platform be extended to the south or to the north. An existing at-grade street crossing makes a southerly platform extension infeasible. In addition, extension to the south would require the removal and reconstruction of the accessible mini-high platform at the station. According to the applicant, such work would add approximately \$200,000 to the cost of the project for which funding is not available. There is no existing at-grade street crossing on the north end of the existing platform and a northerly platform extension would not require relocation of the mini-high platform. Therefore, the applicant selected a northerly platform extension because it is feasible and more cost-effective.

The above policies regarding the City's transportation program encourage mass-transit that is accessible to residents in the City and minimizes the dependence on private motor vehicles. The project will enable the applicant to operate longer passenger trains and as such expand non-automobile transit use consistent with the above policies.

Regarding drainage/water quality, it is anticipated that although there will be a small increase in impervious surfaces, the existing pervious gravel and nearby vegetation within the right of way will serve as a filtering medium to negate any adverse affects to water quality the project may have.

The proposed retaining wall will be an extension of the existing 4-foot foot high retaining wall that supports the existing platform. It will be screened by existing taller vegetation located along the fence that parallels the project; thus, the wall will not result in adverse impacts to public views.

The platform extension will be located on a vacant strip of mostly unvegetated land adjacent to the track. Typical ornamental plants in the right of way include non-natives, acacia and myoporum, which occur along the western boundary of the platform. The west edge of the platform will be supported by a retaining wall. No existing vegetation or landscaping will be impacted.

The project would promote public access by promoting non-automobile use and will not adversely affect sensitive resources, public views or water quality. Therefore, the Commission finds the project is consistent with the above LCP provisions.

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

In November of 1994, the Commission approved, with suggested modifications, the City of Encinitas Local Coastal Program (LCP). Subsequently, on May 15, 1995, coastal development permit authority was transferred to the City. The project site is located within the City's permit jurisdiction, therefore, the standard of review is the City's LCP.

As described above, the LCP encourages non-automobile transit and the proposed amendment is consistent with this goal and will have a positive effect on public access. Therefore, the Commission finds that approval of the proposed development will not prejudice the ability of the City of Encinitas to continue to implement its certified LCP.

4. Consistency with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 13096 of the Commission's Code of Regulations requires Commission approval of Coastal Development Permits to be supported by a finding showing the permit, as conditioned, to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect which the activity may have on the environment.

The original project was found consistent with the public access policies of the Coastal Act as noted above. The proposed amendment will not modify those conditions and no additional impacts to public access or coastal resources will result. Thus, no adverse environmental impacts will occur. There are no feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the activity may have on the environment. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project as amended is the least environmentally-damaging feasible alternative and is consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Act to conform to CEQA.

PACIFIC OCEAN

Subject →

ENCINITAS

EXHIBIT NO.

4N

California Coastal Commission

Encinitas Coaster Station

ENCINITAS BOULEVARD

Project limits

VULCAN

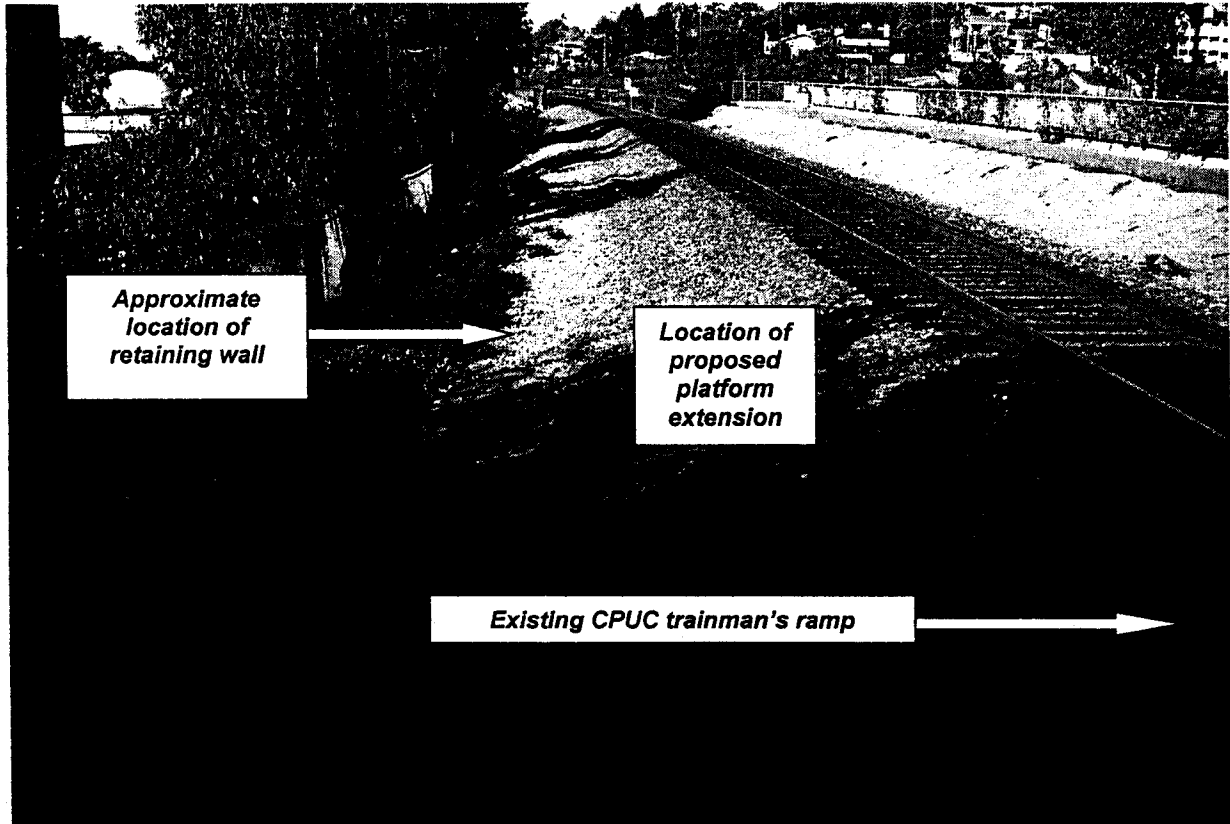
100' platform extension

NCTD ROW

EXHIBIT NO. 2
APPLICATION NO.
6-93-133-A1
Location

ENCINITAS STATION

The proposed platform extension at the Encinitas Station will be located on a vacant strip of land adjacent to the track. The west edge of the platform will be supported by a retaining wall. No existing landscape will be impacted.



View, looking northward, of proposed location of Encinitas Station platform extension

NORTH

STATION 0+00
CORRESPONDS TO
THE NORTH END OF
THE EXISTING
PLATFORM

NCCTD TRACK
CENTERLINE

(N) PLATFORM TO
MATCH ELEVATION,
SLOPE, STRIPING,
AND TACTILE OF
EXISTING PLATFORM
AT STA 0+00

(N) LUMINAIRE
TYP. OF 2

NEW HANDRAIL. SEE SPECIFICATIONS

SUBDRAIN OUTFLOWS.
GRADE TO DRAIN

RETAINING WALL FOOTING NOT SHOWN ON PLAN VIEW

EXISTING FENCELINE

California Coastal Commission

EXHIBIT NO. 4
APPLICATION NO.
6-93-133-A1
Site Plan

DESCRIPTION	BY	APP.

RAILPROS, INC.

216 Technology Drive, Suite K
Irvine, CA 92618
(714) 734-8765

NORTH COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT
PLATFORM EXTENSION PROJECT

ENCINITAS PLATFORM EXTENSION
PROPOSED PLATFORM PLAN

DWG. NO.

ENCIN-S2

SCALE: 1" = 10' SIZE: B SHEET
DESIGNED: BB DRAWN: BB CHECKED: EH DATE: 7/6/03