

**CITY OF NATIONAL CITY
LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM**

HARBOR DISTRICT SPECIFIC AREA PLAN

Certified by California Coastal Commission November 5, 1998
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Appendix 1: Supporting Documents - LCP Processing

Appendix 2: Supporting Documents - Technical Reports

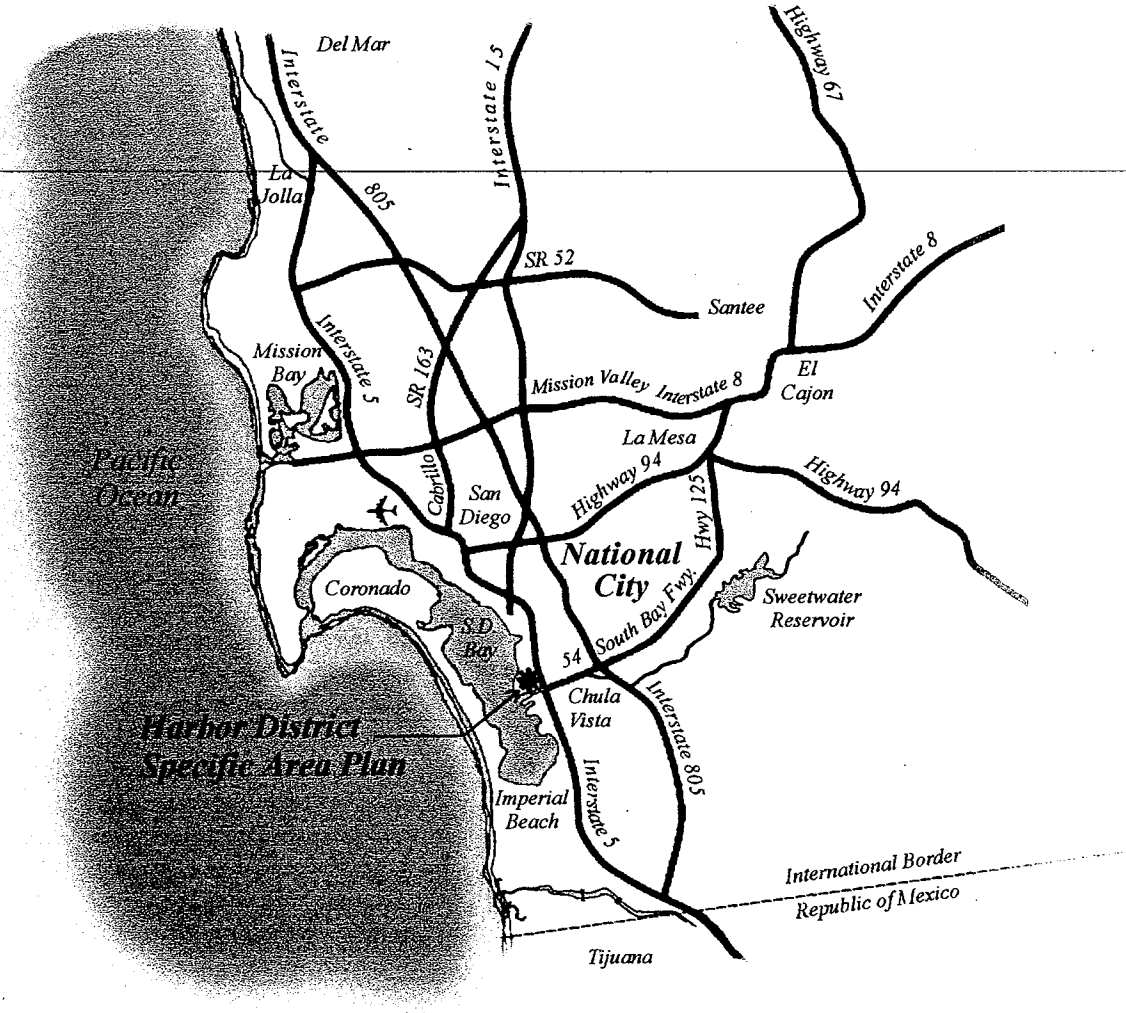


Figure 2.1
Regional Map

**NATIONAL CITY HARBOR DISTRICT
LCP - SPECIFIC AREA PLAN**



CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Community Development Commission of the City of National City ("CDC") has prepared this Specific Area Plan ("Plan") for the City's Harbor District ("Planning Area") to fulfill the requirement of the certified National City Local Coastal Program ("LCP") for a detailed, resource-based, environmental implementation plan to establish site-specific conservation and development standards in the OSR (Open Space Reserve), CT (Tourist Commercial), MM (Medium Industrial), and OS (Open Space) districts.




This Plan constitutes an "implementation action" under the meaning of California Coastal Act §30108.4.¹ No land use plan changes are required for this implementation plan. However, the City is processing a parallel technical amendment to the certified LCP Land Use Plan to recognize federal acquisition of the area of Paradise Marsh and its inclusion in the Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge ("National Wildlife Refuge" or "Refuge"), an incorporation by reference of the San Diego Unified Port District ("Port District" or "Port") Port Master Plan, and other non-substantive clarifying textual and mapping changes or corrections.

The Planning Area location is shown in Figure 1.1, "National Harbor District Regional Map". A "Vicinity" map is provided in Figure 1.2, which shows the location of the Harbor District relative to Interstate Highway 5 ("I-5"), the Paradise Marsh unit of the National Wildlife Refuge, Sweetwater Channel, and the National City Marine Terminal in the Port District.

As shown in Figure 1.3, "Plan Area and Subareas", the Harbor District consists of four subareas, all of which are within the National City Redevelopment Area:

- **Subarea A**, ±8.3 acres, is designated primarily for planned tourist commercial development in the area between W. 24th Street and the fill slope overlooking Paradise Marsh. It also includes the W. 24th Street right-of-way, as well as the State of California right-of-way west of the southbound I-5 travel lanes, north of Paradise Creek. The latter is designated for open space in the certified LCP. (See Figure 1.4 for the illustrative location of the designated land use areas. The City's

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all references to statute are to the California Coastal Act of 1976, as amended (Division 20, Cal. Pub. Resources Code, §§30000-30900).

-  Harbor District Specific Plan Area
-  Trolley Line
-  Railroad Tracks

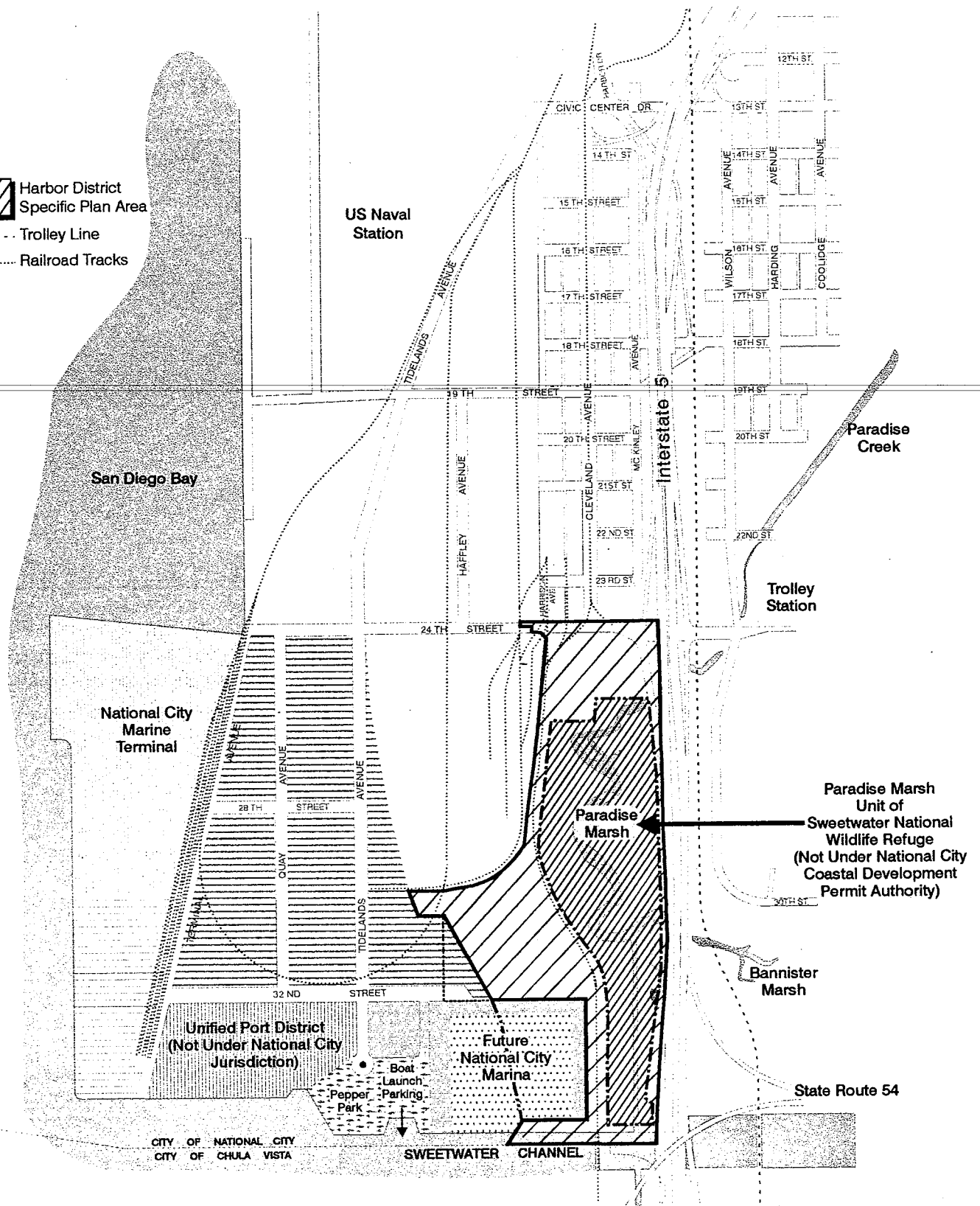


Figure 1.2
Vicinity

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LCP - SPECIFIC AREA PLAN**



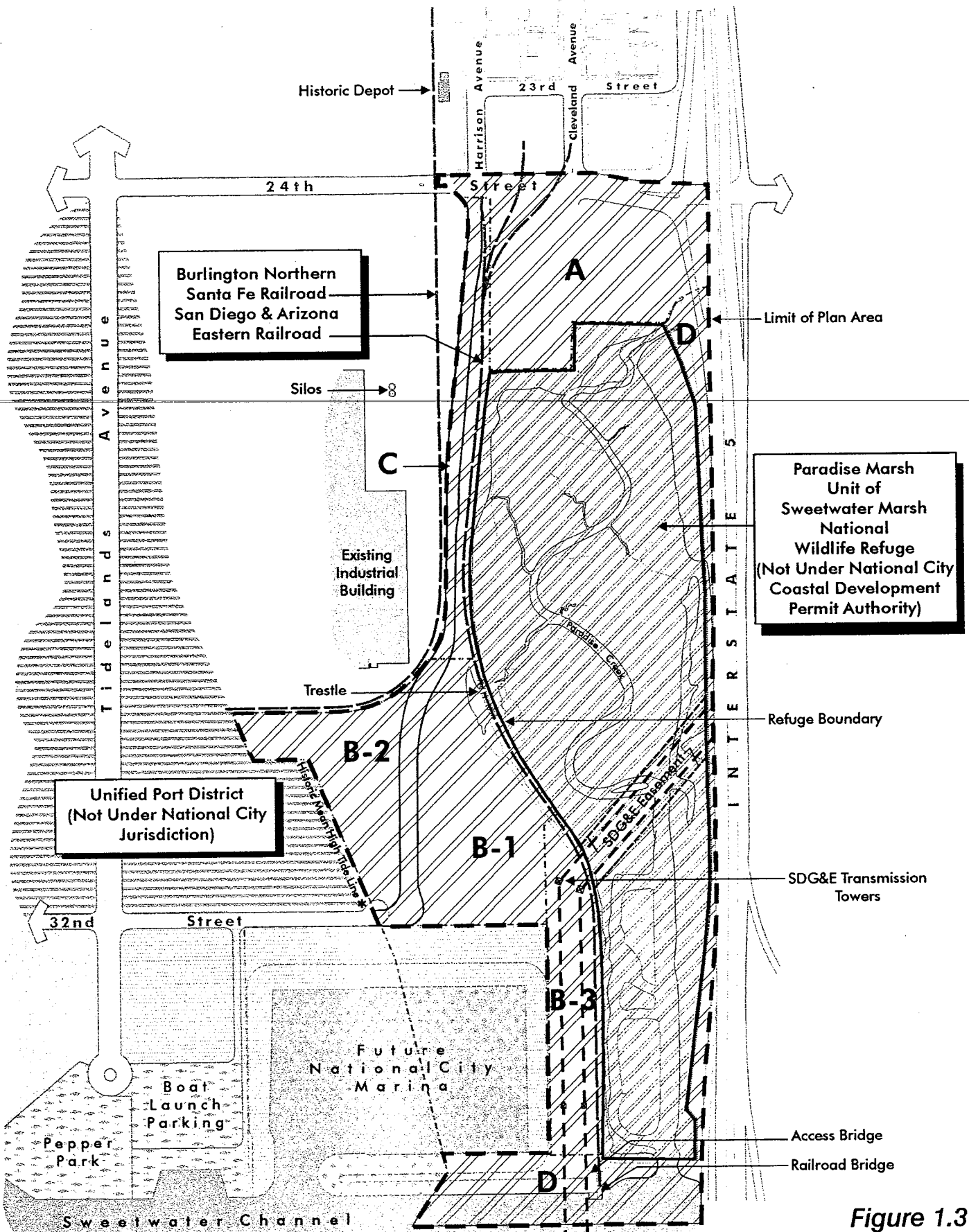


Figure 1.3
 Plan Area and Subareas
NATIONAL CITY HARBOR DISTRICT
 LCP - SPECIFIC AREA PLAN



“Combined General Plan/Zoning Map”, dated September 10, 1996, which incorporates the certified LCP, as amended, governs implementation of this Plan.)

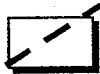



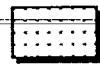


Subarea A has been severely impacted by human activities over the past 120 years, including through extensive filling and grading for railroad transportation; as a landfill, battery, and burn dump, slaughterhouse site; and for street and other infrastructure facilities. The area at present generally drains toward Paradise Marsh. Notwithstanding any appearances to the contrary, the paved street segments in this subarea were vacated by the City and only several large de facto exclusive utility easements by San Diego Gas and Electric Company (“SDG&E”), including for a 69 kv electric line, remain.

- **Subarea B**, ±16.4 acres, is also designated for tourist commercial use in the certified LCP. It includes a major utility corridor (consisting of the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railroad (“SD&AE”) railroad track, 40-year old pressurized oil pipeline, and high voltage electric transmission lines and towers) on filled historic wetlands of Paradise Marsh and San Diego Bay. The fill occurred between 1941 and 1968, variously in conjunction with United States Navy ship channel dredging projects in the Bay. ±10.9 acres within Subarea B are owned in fee by the Port District, but remain outside the Port’s master planning jurisdiction pursuant to the Coastal Act.²
- **Subarea C**, ±5.4 acres, consists of natural and filled lands designated for tourist commercial and medium industrial uses, but which have primarily been used for railroad trackage. The SDG&E oil pipeline also traverses this subarea, which may be redeveloped with the Harrison Avenue Public Access Corridor between W. 24th Street and 32nd Street.
- **Subarea D**, ±10.7 acres in size, extends some 900 feet east-west in and along the northern levee of the Sweetwater Channel and runs north some 3,300 feet north to Paradise Creek, between the I-5 freeway pavement edge on the east and the edge of Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge to the west.

The Plan refers to four other adjacent areas, which are, however, outside the Harbor

² An additional ±1.8 acres owned in fee by the Port in this area are located in Subarea C, Harrison Avenue Public Access Corridor. In addition, the “National City Marina” area (±9.6 acres) addressed by CCC effective certification of Port Master Plan Amendment No. 19, although part of the City’s certified LCP “CT-CZ” district, is not included in this Specific Area Plan because the Port is simultaneously to this Plan processing a Coastal Act §30710 legal geographical boundary amendment to include said marina area within its coastal development permit jurisdiction. To facilitate orderly and coordinated planning, as envisioned in both the City’s LCP and the Port Master Plan, National City respectfully requests CCC and the Port to schedule the Port’s boundary amendment in this area immediately preceding this Plan/LCP Amendment, to avoid unintentional creation of a coastal program area of deferred certification within the City of National City.

LEGEND

-  Harbor District Specific Area Plan Boundary
-  Tourist Commercial-Planned Development-Coastal Zone
-  Tourist Commercial-Coastal Zone
-  Open Space Reserve-Coastal Zone
-  Medium-Manufacturing-Coastal Zone
-  Refuge Boundary
-  Open Space-Coastal Zone

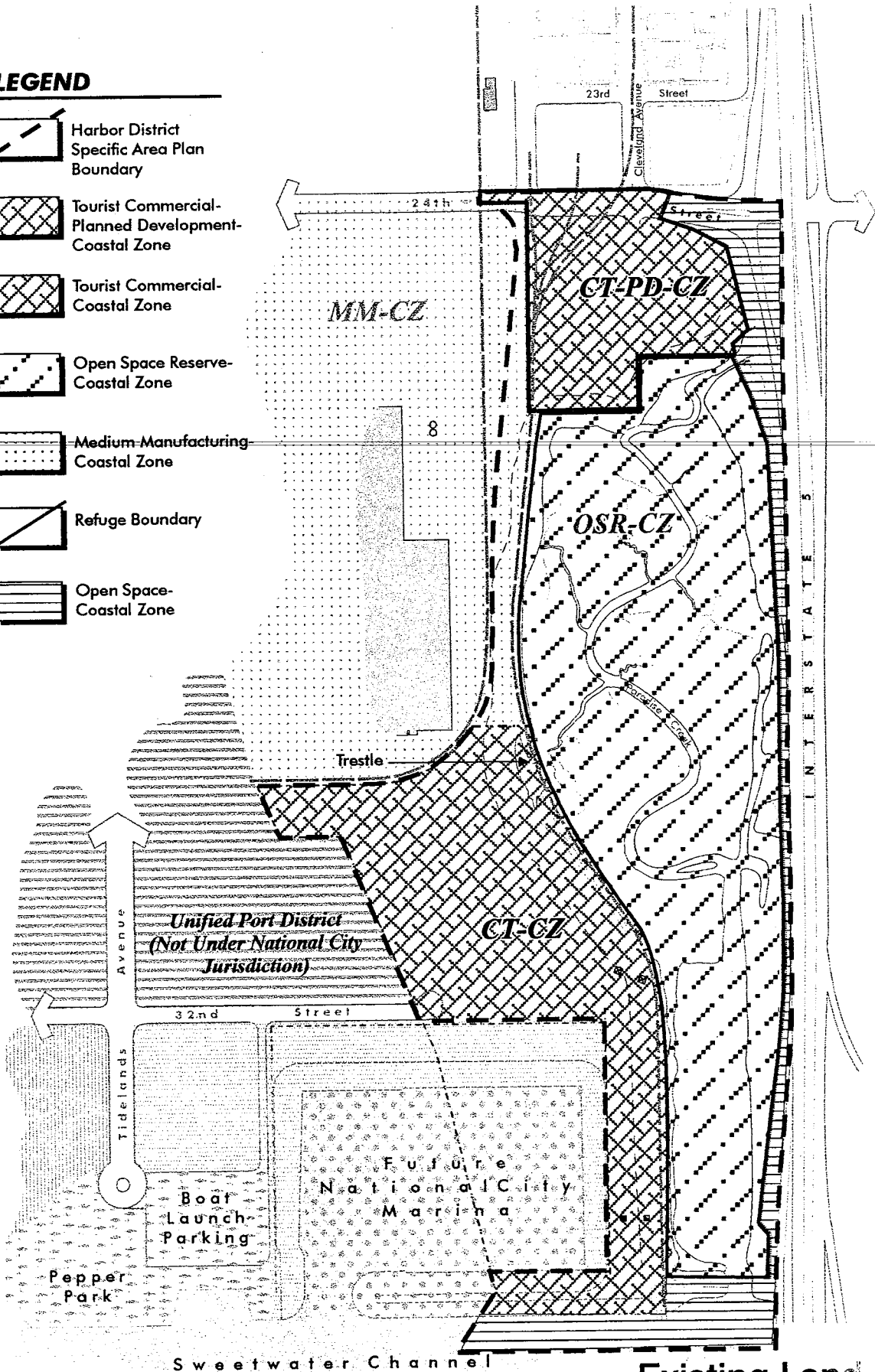


Figure 1.4

Existing Land Use/Zoning

**NATIONAL CITY HARBOR DISTRICT
LCP - SPECIFIC AREA PLAN**



District Specific Area Plan boundaries:

- (a) the federally owned and operated Paradise Marsh unit of the Sweetwater Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, and
- (b) Planning Subareas 55 ("Lumber Yards", 58 ("Boat Launching Ramp"), and 59 ("Marina") within the jurisdiction of the Port District .

1.2 Consultation and Public Participation

The CDC's preparation of the Plan has involved coordination and consultation with and among City departments, as well as with officials and staff of the Port District, County of San Diego ("County"), California Coastal Commission ("Coastal Commission" or "CCC"), California State Coastal Conservancy ("Coastal Conservancy" or "SCC"), California Department of Fish and Game ("CDFG"), United States Fish and Wildlife Service ("USFWS"), Metropolitan Transit Development Board ("MTDB"), San Diego Area Council of Governments ("SANDAG"), representatives of non-governmental organizations, interested property owners, and members of the public.

The CDC and the City of National City express their appreciation to all of the persons, organizations, and agencies that have contributed to the preparation and review of this Plan.

During preparation and local review of the Plan, the CDC, City Planning Commission, and City Council have conducted the following public workshops and public hearings, for which notice was provided by CDC:

- 1. City Council Workshop, December 8, 1997
- 2. Combined City Council and Planning Commission Workshop, March 18, 1998.
- 3. Planning Commission Hearing and Recommendation to City Council, July 20, 1998.
- 4. City Council and CDC Public Hearing, July 28, 1998.

The Public Review Draft of the Plan was publicly noticed and available for six weeks before City Council adoption of it, including with clarifying changes in response to comments, on July 28, 1998.

1.3 Harbor District Area Plan Objectives

The objective of the Plan is to be fully consistent with, and adequate to carry out, the requirements of the certified LCP Land Use Plan and Implementation Program for all of the following:

- (a) The conservation of Paradise Marsh, adjacent delineated wetlands, and associated plant and animal species, in coordination with the USFWS, CDFG and interested non-governmental organizations and persons.
- (b) The design and implementation of permanent functional habitat buffers around Paradise Marsh and adjacent wetlands, in cooperation with the National Wildlife Refuge.
- (c) Attractive, convenient, environmentally sustainable, and safe multi-modal public access to existing, approved, or planned recreational facilities within the Harbor District, and in adjacent Port Planning Subareas 58 and 59, including through the extension of the Harrison Avenue Public Access Corridor and appropriate linkages with the San Diego Bayshore and Sweetwater River Bikeway systems.
- (d) Site- and development-specific conservation and development standards that protect coastal habitat, public access, recreational, visual, and cultural resources, contribute to high quality appearance and design, and provide for economically feasible commercial recreational facilities and uses.
- (e) Appropriately sized and located infrastructure, including traffic circulation and parking, to support permitted density and intensity of uses within the Harbor District and adjacent priority uses.
- (f) Participation by the CDC in Specific Area planning, inter-agency coordination, property acquisition, and pre-project feasibility analyses to lead and assist in achieving the objectives and standards of the Plan.

1.4 Current Conditions

The Planning Area is in a blighted condition (mid-1998). The area is characterized by predominantly weedy vegetation interspersed with outdoor storage areas and miscellaneous industrial structures.

A steep, man-made fill bank, ranging in elevation from ± 18 feet to ± 30 feet MLLW, separates the Planning Area uplands from Paradise Marsh and adjacent delineated wetlands southeast of the BNSF Railroad "Weyerhaeuser" spur track. The western Planning Area uplands are also separated from Paradise Marsh by the SD&AE Railroad berm, which was constructed along the marsh's western border in the 1870's. Paradise Marsh, which was previously owned by the Sante Fe Land Investment Company, became a unit of the Refuge in 1988 through settlement of litigation. Direct surface hydrologic continuity with the area west of the berm is now limited to the vicinity of the ± 130 foot-long wooden trestle over the historic Paradise Creek outflow channel. To the east, Paradise Marsh is defined by the ± 20 -acre fill that supports I-5, the interchange with State Route 54, and the adjacent visible remains of a regional burn dump landfill.

Native vegetation occurs in the marsh and along its landward margins (Salt marsh bird's beak, *Cordylanthus maritimus*), as well as on exposed Bay Point Formation outcrops along its western edge, but much of the man-made fill margin and Planning Area upland is characterized by ruderal and exotic species. Broom baccharis scrub

has colonized substantial parts of Subarea B.

Although the Refuge boundary is posted with signs prohibiting entry, no structural or effective vegetative barriers exist at present to preclude human, vehicular, and predacious animal entry into the marsh from adjacent uplands. Indicators of such intrusion include remnants of human transient habitation, detritus, canine footprints, scat, vehicle tracks, household garbage dump areas, surface rilling and slope raveling, and marsh mud removal pits (reportedly for equestrian application).

Sustained background, and intermittently elevated, noise levels throughout the Planning Area and marsh are generated by vehicular traffic on I-5 to the east, and by maritime industrial, general industrial, truck, and railroad cargo movement to the west and north.

Paradise Creek, which extends +4,000 feet northeast of I-5 into urbanized and industrialized Paradise Valley, feeds into Paradise Marsh. Water quality within Paradise Marsh and adjacent delineated wetlands is likely to be affected, particularly during and after peak rainfall runoff periods, by discharges of hydrocarbons and heavy metals from proximate industrial sources and roadways throughout the urbanized Paradise Valley watershed. Outside the coastal zone, Paradise Creek east of I-5 contains remnant wetland vegetation despite substantial degradation and filling along its edges. A silt trap incorporated into the Paradise Creek culvert beneath I-5 functions to retard sedimentation of Paradise Marsh, but requires regular maintenance to maximize its potential effectiveness. The burn dump that straddles the inflow of Paradise Creek into the marsh, as well as subsurface hazardous materials north of the marsh, may additionally adversely affect marsh water quality.

1.5 Jurisdiction and Applicability

National City presently exercises coastal development permit jurisdiction, pursuant to its effectively certified LCP, over the area west of I-5 and north of W. 24th Street, as well as in the land areas east of I-5 and south of the Sweetwater Channel/ wetlands complex. Upon effective certification of the Harbor District Specific Area Plan by the Coastal Commission, National City will also assume coastal development permit authority over development and use in those parts of the Planning Area that are located above the mean high tide line, outside the boundary of the National Wildlife Refuge, and outside the Port Master Plan jurisdiction of the Port District. Pursuant to Coastal Act §30603(a), all coastal development permits approved by the City for development located in the Planning Area between I-5, W. 24th Street, or Harrison Avenue/32nd Street and Paradise Marsh or the Sweetwater Channel are appealable to the Coastal Commission by any person who has standing to make such an appeal.

Because local government coastal development permit authority does not extend to federal activities, the National City LCP policies relating to land owned by the federal government are advisory only, and have no binding effect on federal activities. Plan provisions do, however, directly address issues related to protecting, preserving, and enhancing Paradise Marsh in consultation and cooperation with the USFWS, which

