



San Diego Unified Port District  
P.O. Box 120488  
San Diego, California 92112-0488  
(619) 686-6283

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

PROJECT TITLE: "NATIONAL CITY MARINE TERMINAL WHARF EXTENSION & PORT MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT" (UPD #83356-EIR-795)

APPLICANT(S): San Diego Unified Port District (Lead Agency)

LOCATION: Southwestern most portion of the National City Marine Terminal in the National City Bayfront: Planning District 5 of the Port Master Plan

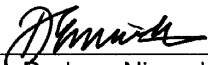
REFERENCE: CA ad. Code, Title 14, Secs. 15375; 15082; 15103 and PRC SEC 21080.4

The San Diego Unified Port District will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information, which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the probable environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study is not attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receiving this notice. **Comments regarding environmental concerns and reasonable project alternatives will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 2009**, and may be sent to San Diego Unified Port District, Land Use Planning Department, 3165 Pacific Highway, San Diego, California, 92101; or faxed to (619) 686-6508; or emailed to Anna Buzaitis at [abuzaiti@portofsandiego.org](mailto:abuzaiti@portofsandiego.org). Please provide the name of a contact person for your agency. For questions on this Notice of Preparation, please contact Anna Buzaitis at (619) 686-7263.

**A public scoping meeting for this project will be held on Tuesday, April 14, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Building located at 140 East 12th Street, South Meeting Room (No.2), National City, California, 91950.**

Date: 4/3/09 Signature:   
Darlene Nicandro  
Title: Manager of Land Use Planning



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**DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

for the

**“NATIONAL CITY MARINE TERMINAL WHARF EXTENSION &  
PORT MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT PROJECT”**

(UPD #83356-EIR-795)

within the Southwest Corner Bayfront Subarea (Subarea 56) of the National City  
Bayfront: Planning District 5 of the San Diego Unified Port District Port Master Plan

The proposed project is the completion of the western and southern faces of the National City Marine Terminal (NCMT) wharf. The western face would extend approximately 1,500 linear feet to the south (approximately 10 total acres). The southern face would extend approximately 950 feet to the west (approximately 3 total acres). The project also includes dredging the wharf extension area to accommodate deep draft vessels, as well as dredging a turning basin west of NCMT to allow military ships to access the southern berths. Biological mitigation for the Project would occur offsite at Grand Caribe Isle South, D Street Fill, and possibly Anchorage A-8.

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION**

Publication of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) initiates the Port District's compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed project. The NOP is the first step in the CEQA process. It describes the proposed project and is presented to responsible agencies, trustee agencies, involved federal agencies, and the general public. As stated in CEQA Guidelines Section 15375, the purpose of the NOP is “to solicit guidance from those agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included” in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The NOP provides an opportunity for agencies and the general public to comment on a proposed project. Comments are requested within thirty (30) days of NOP issuance, so **comments will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 2009**. Comments regarding environmental concerns and reasonable project alternatives should be addressed to the San Diego Unified Port District, Land Use Planning Department, 3165 Pacific Highway, San Diego, California, 92101. The Lead Agency (the Port District) will review the comments generated by the NOP to determine what issues should be addressed in the EIR. Other opportunities to comment on the environmental effects of the proposed project include:

- **A public scoping meeting that will be held on Tuesday, April 14, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Building located at 140 East 12th Street, South Meeting Room (No.2), National City, California, 91950**
- A forty-five (45) day public review period for the Draft EIR
- A public hearing for certification of the EIR and consideration of the adoption of a Port Master Plan Amendment
- A public hearing for issuance of a non-appealable coastal development permit

## **BACKGROUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

The San Diego Unified Port District (Port District) has planning jurisdiction over tidelands and submerged tidelands surrounding the San Diego Bay. The project site is located on the southwestern portion of NCMT, which is operated by the Port District. The NCMT is located on the approximately 125 acres on the east shore of Central San Diego Bay, north of the Sweetwater Channel and the City of Chula Vista, south of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street Naval Station and downtown San Diego, east of the Silver Strand, and west of the City of National City (Figure 1). The NCMT is surrounded by industrial uses, such as manufacturing and distribution, liquid bulk storage, and general marine industrial operations.

The NCMT was constructed in 1967. Since then NCMT has undergone changes including the addition of marginal wharves and installation and subsequent removal of a container crane. The most recent major changes at NCMT occurred in 2003 when the wharf was extended to the south approximately 1,025 linear feet to create Berth 24-5. Wetland habitat was created at the D Street Fill site in Chula Vista as part of biological mitigation required for the 2003 wharf extension. Activities at NCMT are primarily devoted to the transfer of automobiles and lumber products.

Maritime traffic at NCMT is currently comprised mostly of automobile carriers and some finished lumber shipments. Remaining activity is primarily transient moorage for barges and other miscellaneous vessels. The NCMT is served by rail freight facilities of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Company. The main entrance to NCMT is provided by Bay Marina Drive (24<sup>th</sup> Street), and Interstate 5 is located approximately one-half mile east of the NCMT entrance.

The NCMT is designated as a Priority Use Terminal by the US Department of Transportation Maritime Administration National Shipping Authority. The Priority Use Terminal designation requires that the terminal be available for the "deployment of the Armed Forces of the United States or other requirements for the nation's defense." Under Port Planning Order No. CASD12, the NCMT must provide three berths and 15 acres of staging space to support national defense missions with as little as 48 hours notice for periods up to 30 days or longer. When implemented, this order impacts commercial operations at NCMT.

Eelgrass currently exists in the shallow, subtidal waters of the bay along the proposed wharf extension.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose of the NCMT Wharf Extension project is to provide additional berthing space for ship offloads, ensure minimal stand-off time for incoming ship traffic, and minimize impacts of military maritime movements on commercial shipping operations.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project is the completion of the western and southern faces of the wharf located at NCMT (Figure 2). The western extension would extend the existing wharf approximately 1,500 linear feet to the south and 300 feet to the west (from the existing shoreline) (approximately 10 total acres), to match the existing wharf at Berth 24-5. The southern extension would extend the existing southern wharf approximately 950 feet to the west and 120 feet to the south (from the existing shoreline) (approximately 3 total acres). Consistent with the most recent wharf extension (2003), the wharf extension would include a steel sheet pile cellular bulkhead along and abutting the landward side of the wharf, under-wharf rock slope protection, and a pile-supported wharf. The area of the wharf extension would be dredged to accommodate deep draft vessels. The western wharf extension would result in the creation of Berths 24-6 and 24-7 and the southern wharf extension would result in the creation of Berths 24-8 and 24-9. In addition, dredging a turning basin west of NCMT would be included as part of the southern wharf extension. The turning basin would be dredged near the mouth of the Sweetwater Channel to allow military ships (approximately 1,000 feet in length) to access the southern berths.

Deepening of the berths and turning basin would result in the dredging of approximately 612,000 cubic yards of sediment. The sediment would be disposed nearshore, in-bay, or offshore. Some material may be used as backfill material to provide structural stability at the site. Eelgrass and intertidal and shallow subtidal habitat would be affected by this project. Mitigation for the biological impacts is proposed offsite at Grand Caribe Isle South (southwest of the project site) and at the D Street Fill area (south of the project site) (Figure 3). The Grand Caribe Isle South site is a disturbed upland area that would be regraded to accommodate intertidal marsh and/or eelgrass habitat. The D Street Fill site would be converted to marsh habitat by altering the existing topography to create favorable hydrologic conditions to accommodate saltwater marsh plants, which are expected to populate the area naturally. Anchorage A-8, located west of NCMT and the main shipping channel, will also be evaluated as a potential dredge disposal and eelgrass mitigation site.

A Port Master Plan Amendment will be required to redesignate the land uses of the mitigation sites.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The EIR will address the following probable environmental effects: air quality/climate change, biological resources, geology/soils, hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality/sediment quality, land use, noise, traffic, cumulative impacts, and others as identified as part of the NOP process. The EIR will also address a reasonable range of alternatives, as required by CEQA. The effects of the proposed Port Master Plan Amendment, as well as the project's consistency with the Coastal Act, will also be analyzed in the EIR.

## **PORT MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT**

The Port Master Plan establishes 10 planning districts covering approximately 5,500 acres of Port District jurisdiction. The NCMT is located in three subareas of the National City Bayfront Planning District (Planning District 5) of the Port Master Plan. The three subareas are Container Terminal, Southwest Corner Bayfront, and Sweetwater; however, the wharf extension component of the proposed project is located only in the Southwest Corner Bayfront subarea. The Grand Caribe Isle South mitigation site is located in the Grand Caribe Isle South subarea of the Silver Strand South Planning District (Planning District 8) of the Port Master Plan. The D Street Fill mitigation site is located in the D Street Area subarea of the Chula Vista Bayfront Planning District (Planning District 7) of the Port Master Plan.

The proposed wharf extension sites have a land use designation of "Marine Related Industrial" in the National City Bayfront Planning District Precise Plan, Figure 15, of the Port Master Plan. The proposed wharf extension would be consistent with this land use designation. However, the Grand Caribe Isle and D Street Fill mitigation sites have existing land use designations of "Commercial Recreation" and "Marine Sales & Services," respectively. Implementation of these mitigation sites would require a Port Master Plan Amendment to change the Grand Caribe Isle South mitigation site land use designation from "Commercial Recreation" to "Wetlands," and the D Street Fill mitigation site land use designation from "Marine Sales & Services" to "Estuary." The Port Master Plan Amendment proposed as part of this project would change these land uses in the associated Port Master Plan maps, text, and tables. The Port Master Plan Amendment may also include redesignation of a portion of the Anchorage A-8 from "Ship Anchorage" to "Estuary."

## **COMMENTS**

Comments regarding environmental concerns or any reasonable project alternatives should be addressed to the San Diego Unified Port District, Land Use Planning Department, Attn: Anna Buzaitis, 3165 Pacific Highway, San Diego, California, 92101. Comments can also be faxed to (619) 686-6508 or emailed to [abuzaiti@portofsandiego.org](mailto:abuzaiti@portofsandiego.org). Public comments on the NOP will be accepted until **4:00 p.m. on Monday, May 4, 2009**. This NOP is also available on the Port of San Diego website: [www.portofsandiego.org](http://www.portofsandiego.org)

For questions regarding this NOP, please call (619) 686-7263.

# NCMT Wharf Extension EIR

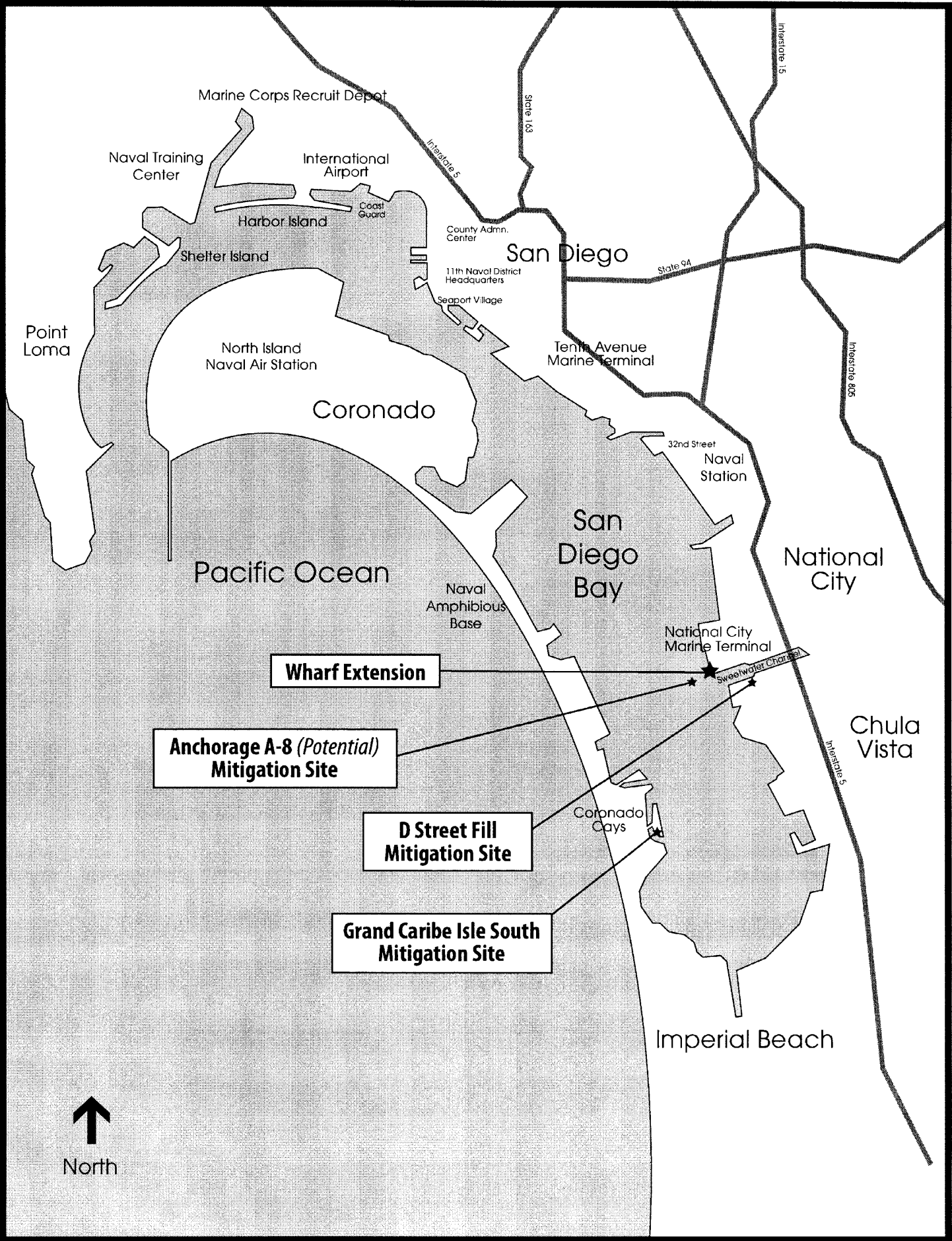


FIGURE 1 - PROJECT VICINITY

# NCMT Wharf Extension EIR

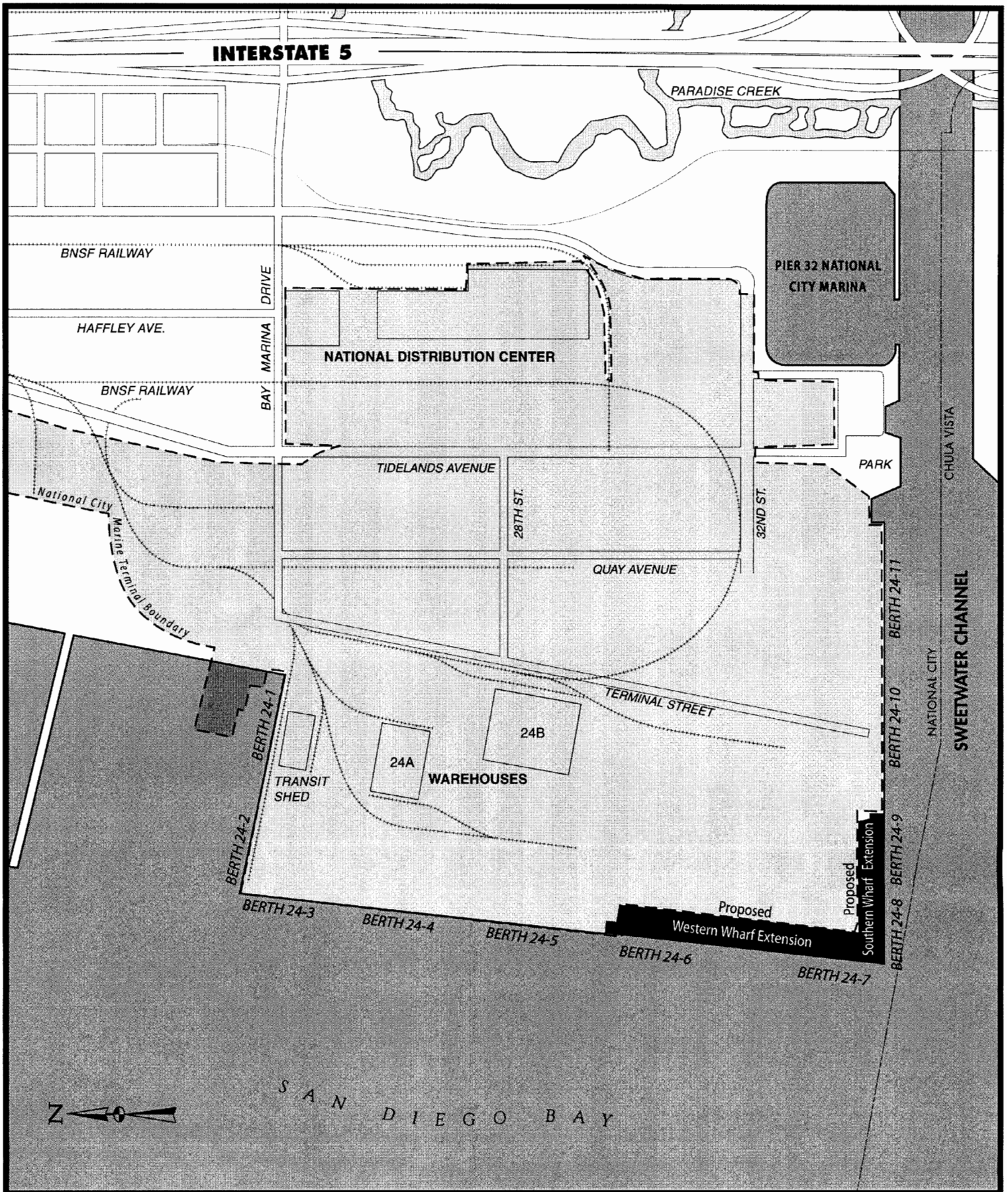
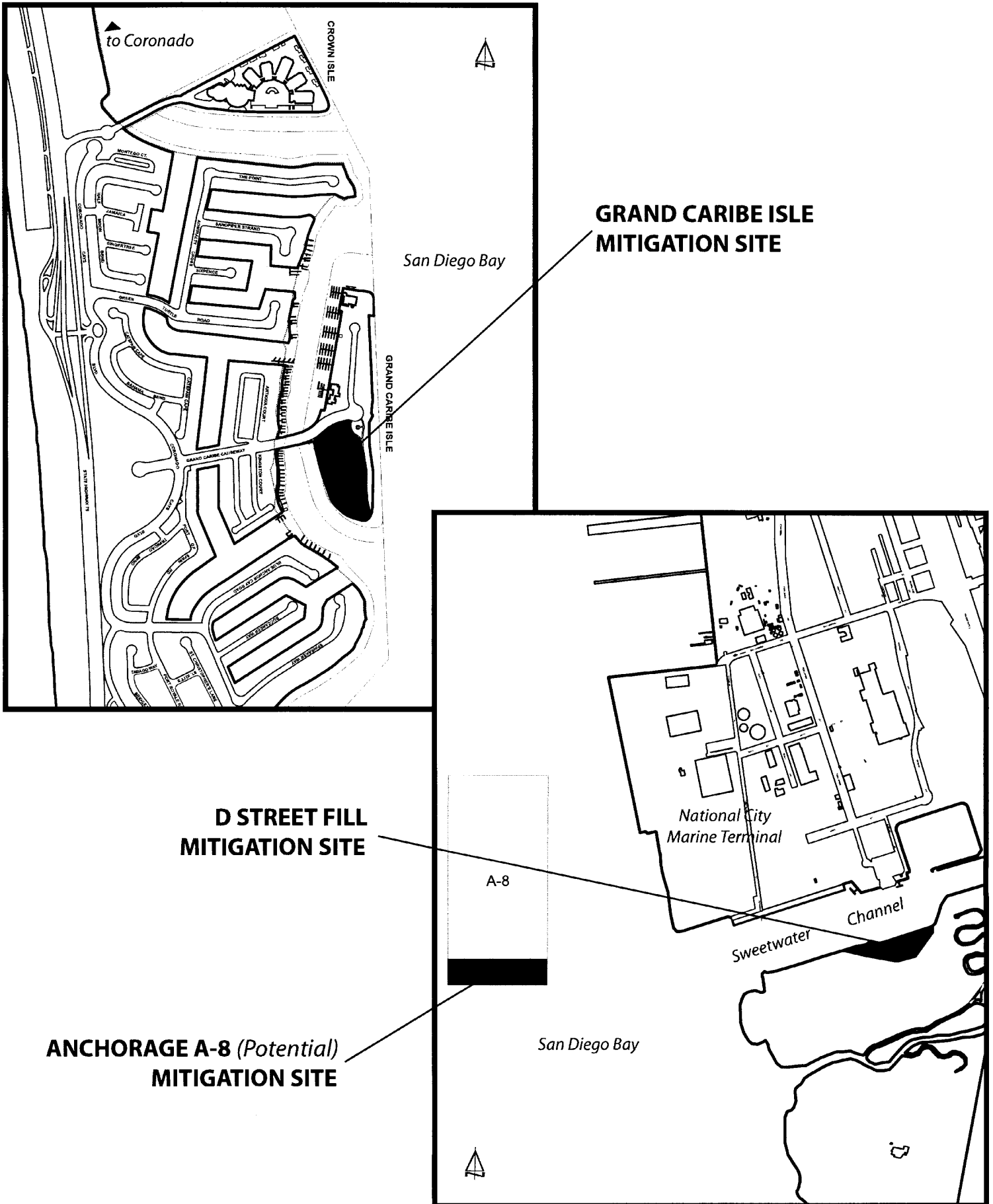


FIGURE 2 - WHARF EXTENSION LOCATION

# NCMT Wharf Extension EIR



**FIGURE 3 - PROPOSED BIOLOGICAL MITIGATION LOCATIONS**