

Urban Waterfront & Ecotourism Study
Working Paper #1
Assessment of Opportunities and Constraints

Prepared for:

City of Imperial Beach

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background and Objective

This working paper has been prepared at the request of the City of Imperial Beach. It is but the first element of a larger study, Urban Waterfront & Ecotourism Study, the goal of which is to stimulate tourism in the City by capitalizing on the ecological assets that surround it.

As a first step in the process, this paper's main objective is to assess key opportunities and constraints evident in the City. The assessment has been based on evaluation of existing "baseline" conditions in the City pertaining to real estate market conditions, planning and regulatory guidelines, environmental conditions, and the inventory of surrounding ecological resources.

B. Project Overview and Methodology

The Urban Waterfront & Ecotourism Study is being spearheaded by the City of Imperial Beach with substantial funding support from the California Coastal Conservancy. The focus of the study is ecotourism, a little-known but rapidly-emerging niche segment of the global travel industry. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people."

With regard to natural areas in and adjacent to Imperial Beach, the City is abutted by two National Wildlife Refuges offering habitat to a wide variety of bird species, a network of hiking and equestrian trails, and both ocean beach and bay frontage. These amenities have the potential to be further enhanced and promoted to ecotourists. Concurrently, the City could encourage development of new visitor-serving infrastructure and/or improvement of existing visitor services.

A team of consultants with expertise in real estate economics, urban planning, environmental sensitivity, and development of sustainable ecotourism destinations has been assembled to lead the process and prepare the strategy. The timeline for completion of the study will extend to early 2005.

The ultimate product of the effort will be a comprehensive strategy to stimulate ecotourism in Imperial Beach and an implementation plan to enact the strategy. The strategy will seek to accomplish several goals, including:

- Capitalize on natural, recreational, and educational resources available to residents and visitors.
- Generate revenue for the City.
- Enhance the City's image.
- Preserve the integrity of the natural resources as well as the City's small-town ambiance.
- Revitalize waterfront commercial areas with new uses.

In order to prepare this paper, the consultant team performed the following tasks:

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- Met with City staff and interviewed key stakeholders.
 - Toured the City and adjacent natural areas.
 - Reviewed City planning and land use documents.
 - Inventoried ecological amenities.
 - Evaluated regional and local demographic trends.
 - Reviewed real estate market conditions for a variety of land uses.
 - Evaluated the uniqueness of the natural areas for compatibility with ecotourism principles.

C. Report Organization

This paper is organized as follows:

- Section II summarizes the key opportunities and constraints influencing an ecotourism strategy plan.
- Section III discusses key market dynamics, infrastructure, and finance pertaining to Imperial Beach.
- Section IV provides a narrative definition of ecotourism, guiding principles of destination development, and ecotourism's relation to economic development.
- Section V inventories ecological amenities and evaluates them from both a resource and ecotourism planning perspective.

Supporting documentation for this study is found in the technical appendices.

D. Next Steps

The cornerstone of the Urban Waterfront & Ecotourism Study process is strong community involvement. The City and its consultant team acknowledge that, first and foremost, an ecotourism strategy must benefit the citizens of Imperial Beach and that implementation of a strategy cannot succeed without their support.

Currently, a Steering Committee consisting of representatives of local interest groups and citizens is being formed to help guide the process. In addition, beginning in late September 2004, the consultant team will facilitate a series of workshops to inform the public on the objectives of the study, the concept of ecotourism, and to elicit their commentary on the issues that matter to them.

Following this public outreach phase of the study process, the consultant team will undertake formulation of ecotourism strategy plan alternatives for presentation to the City, the Steering Committee, and the public. Further public involvement will be solicited to refine the alternatives and determine which single alternative is most appropriate for Imperial Beach.

II. OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

This section summarizes the key factors representing both opportunities and constraints influencing the formulation and implementation of an ecotourism strategy plan. As discussed earlier, the cornerstone of the Urban Waterfront and Ecotourism Study is community input and public participation. As a first step in the process, on July 20 the consultants met with a wide cross-section of local stakeholders to engage them in the process and to solicit their feedback on key issues. This summary, therefore, reflects not only the consultants' conclusions based on the research to date, but also the relevant themes that emerged during the stakeholder interviews.

The ecological amenities and planned public improvements referred to in this section are illustrated in map figures and are discussed in detail in Section V.

A. Overview of Stakeholder Groups

At the initiation of this ecotourism study, interviews were held with more than 30 representatives of government, the private sector, and special interest groups and individuals. The intent of the interviews and subsequent document review was to gather ideas for and assess the roles of those interested in an ecotourism plan for Imperial Beach.

Each of the individuals and/or groups interviewed or contacted represent ecotourist "stakeholders," i.e., people or organizations with an interest in the outcome of an ecotourism study.

One consequence of those initial interviews was substantiation that a diverse range of interests converge on the topic of ecotourism in Imperial Beach. While there are multiple instances where groups have broad and overlapping concerns, most often stakeholder groups focus within one of three areas:

1. Environmental Values:

"Environmental values" is defined as a concern with protection, improvement, and proper stewardship of the natural environment, and it is an interest strongly represented in both the public and private sectors. The City is surrounded by ecological resource areas respectively owned and managed by multiple Federal, State, and local agencies. Within this category, representatives of the following agencies and organizations were interviewed:

- U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (San Diego National Wildlife Refuge, Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve)
- California Department of Parks and Recreation (Border Field State Park)
- County of San Diego (Tijuana River Valley Regional Park, Otay Valley Regional Park)
- Tidelands Advisory Committee, City of Imperial Beach
- California Coastal Conservancy

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- Environmental Health Coalition
 - Friends of San Diego Wildlife
 - Wild Coast

2. Economic Interests:

The economic health of a community impacts many aspects of life – from who can afford a home to how well streets are maintained. Not unexpectedly, economic considerations cut a wide swath in Imperial Beach. Since the greatest source of tax revenue for municipalities is typically sales tax, the limited revenue base in Imperial Beach means that there is less money in the City’s general fund to undertake civic improvement projects. That is, because there are few large successful businesses in the community that create a major and steady stream of tax revenue, the City has less money to spend on everything from salaries to pothole repair. The consequences to an ecotourism plan are that the City may not have the funds necessary to provide key improvements such as directional and interpretive signage, pedestrian and bicycle ways, or other civic beautification projects, thus requiring identification of partnerships and other funding sources. Within this category, the following organization were contacted:

- Unified Port of San Diego (Pier Plaza, Pond 20)
- Imperial Beach Chamber of Commerce/Business Improvement District (BID)
- Local Business and Property Owners
- Palm Avenue Liaison Group

3. Quality-of-Life Factors:

Everyone with an interest in Imperial Beach, whether they are public agencies or private citizens, is concerned about quality of life elements. These elements include the way the community looks, i.e., from entrance monuments to street trees to the design of structures; the quality of the air and water; the ability to work and shop locally; congestion on local streets; walkability; housing adequacy and affordability; habitat preservation; noise levels; shoreline projection; recreational resources adequacy; and the health of the economy. While all groups previously mentioned in the section are concerned with quality of life elements, some other entities and groups which influence the quality of life fabric in the City that were contacted include:

- Local Residents
- I.B. Beautiful
- Camp Surf
- Design Review Board, City of Imperial Beach
- San Diego Association of Governments (Bayshore Bikeway)

B. Summary of Major Issues

While the character of an ecotourism plan for Imperial Beach has not yet been established, a series of themes considered relevant to that plan emerged from interviews and document reviews early in this study. The synthesis of the interview process and review of relevant documents reveals the following:

- The City proper is bounded by rich environmental resources, although planning for those resources is being undertaken by multiple agencies, is in various stages of completion, and the status of funding for improvements varies from assured to questionable.
- Imperial Beach is surrounded by bike routes/paths/ways, but linkages among those routes must be improved.
- There is a need for new recreational and interpretive signage that is more uniform, informational, and attractive.
- It is perceived by some that the City has a negative image in the eyes of outsiders, which reduces visitor and redevelopment interest. The reconstruction of the Seacoast Inn could provide a positive image boost for the City.
- The City has a local business environment that often struggles and there is evidence of a disconnect between the interests of environmentalists and the interests of business owners.
- The City's resident population includes some who are reluctant to see major changes in the community.
- Development opportunities along the bayfront exist, especially because of City ownership of a public works yard in the area and adjacent private ownerships that appear interested in redevelopment and open to possible partnerships.
- The underutilized Old Palm Avenue corridor is a part of the City's history and along with Seacoast Drive should be revitalized.

C. Key Opportunities and Constraints

Within the context of the major issues listed above, there are several key factors that represent the opportunities and constraints facing the City. They are listed in random order, as follows:

Opportunities:

- Enthusiastic and committed local and regional stakeholders.
- Existing programming appeals to a broad constituency, such as the Fiesta del Rio.
- Extensive trail networks are planned by multiple agencies and will interconnect.
- A rich ecological amenity is present in Pond 20, if restored.
- Strong local potential for bird watching given the diversity of species and excellent viewing opportunities.
- Substantial investment is planned by public agencies for visitor-serving facilities, e.g., the TRNERR Visitor Center and Bayshore Bikeway Extension.
- Strengthening housing market bodes well for household income and retail expenditure potential.
- Existing overnight tourist market is strong, and increased private sector investment such as the Seacoast Inn will reinforce tourism.
- Continued appeal of the beachfront remains an attraction for visitors, businesses, and residents.
- Potential visitor market results from proximity to Mexico.

Constraints:

- Existing ecological habitats are not all pristine and may be sensitive to increased activity.
- Inferior public access, including limited visibility of some sites, limits visitors.
- Unattractive condition of Pond 20 at present.
- Unregulated equestrian and Border Patrol activities make areas unavailable for ecotourism planning.
- Limited leverage available to City to implement changes to other municipalities and County, regional, state, and federal authorities that manage ecotourism resources.
- Fractional visitor-serving infrastructure in Imperial Beach.
- Negative image of Imperial Beach persists.

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- Inability of City to appeal to brand-name retailers.
 - Persistence of noise and overflight from Ream Field.
 - Absence of adequate parking for any special event.

III. THE IMPERIAL BEACH CONTEXT

A. Regional Context

Imperial Beach is the southwesternmost municipality in the continental United States, as shown in Figure III-1. It also lies at the intersection of multiple interests and jurisdictions. The City's literal borders are Mexico on the south, the Pacific Ocean on the west, the City of Coronado and San Diego Bay on the north, and the City of San Diego on the east.

- The proximity of Mexico creates a number of border issues for the City. In the past particularly, the presence of illegal migrants was common in Imperial Beach and led to a frequent police and/or Border Patrol presence.
- The Pacific Ocean provides a long sandy beachfront, a feature considered by most to be an extremely important local resource and an important source for tourist trips to the City.
- The City of Coronado, with its upscale and military communities, links to Imperial Beach via the largely unoccupied Silver Strand. This separation between the two cities is a long and literal one.
- The southern reaches of San Diego Bay, long the site of salt ponds, are newly incorporated into a national wildlife refuge. As the refuge is restored, the bird population is expected to increase, creating new public interest in what had previously been an industrial operation.
- The southern portion of the City of San Diego, which sprawls to the east as part of the larger San Ysidro/Otay Mesa community, has economic and image issues which spill over into Imperial Beach.

Also influencing the City are large federal ownerships within the Imperial Beach municipal boundaries, which represent approximately half the land area of the City, as shown in Figure III-2. The U.S. Navy is owner and operator of Ream Field, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is owner and cooperative operator (with the State of California) of the Tijuana National Estuarine Research Reserve. Immediately north of the City is the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Thus federal ownership and management occurs north and south of the developed portion of Imperial Beach.

Another regional influence is notable along the beachfront itself. Most of the accessible sandy beach is under the jurisdiction of the San Diego Unified Port District.

Northeast and southeast of the City lay two major parks under the jurisdiction of San Diego County. They are the Otay River Valley Regional Park and the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park. Both parks have or expect to have trail systems that can link to trails in and around Imperial Beach.



Legend:

- Neighborhood Park
- E Elementary School
- H High School



North
No Scale - 9.13.04

Figure III-1
Imperial Beach and Environs
Imperial Beach Eco-Tourism Study

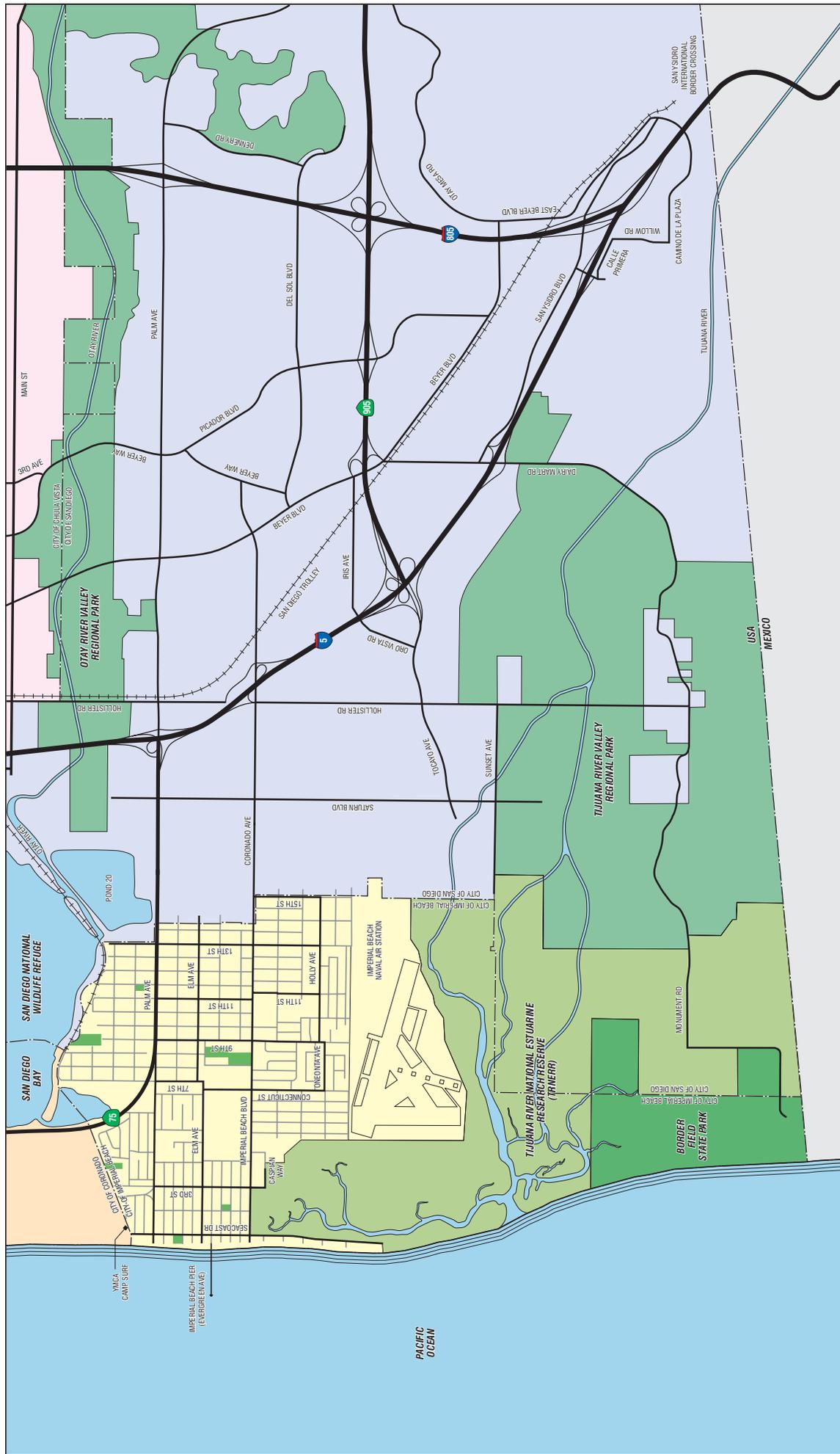


Figure III-2
 Park Jurisdictional Boundaries
 Imperial Beach Eco-Tourism Study

Beyond the primary and secondary impacts which these jurisdictions and uses have on Imperial Beach, two of the region's major north/south freeways lie well east of the City (see Figure III-2). As a result, access to Imperial Beach from the interstate freeway system is indirect. Moreover, access is confused by street names.

Neither of the two Interstate 5 exits that lead west to Imperial Beach carry the "Imperial Beach" name. Palm Avenue, the exit which becomes State Route 75, is principally known for its connection to the City of Coronado. The other exit, known as "Coronado Avenue," actually becomes "Imperial Beach Boulevard" only within the city limits of Imperial Beach.

B. Demographic Overview

This section provides an overview of demographic trends for Imperial Beach, the South Bay, and the County. The City of Coronado has not been included in the demographic analysis because of its physical separation from the mainland and its distinct tourist-oriented economy.

- Nominal population growth is forecast for Imperial Beach over both the next 10 to 30 years.
- The South Bay as a whole is expected to experience substantial population growth of 32% by 2010 and 56% by 2030. The bulk of this population growth will occur in Chula Vista and Otay Mesa, which could add approximately 175,000 new residents to the South Bay by 2030.
- Imperial Beach is largely built-out, so its best prospects for new housing are represented by infill development and redevelopment of existing properties at higher densities. Over a 30-year horizon, the City is expected to add only 1,180 new housing units.
- In terms of new housing units, the South Bay will add approximately 50,000 additional units by 2030. Again, the vast majority of this new stock will be built in the Chula Vista and Otay Mesa areas.
- Median household incomes in Imperial Beach are modest and are well below the County benchmark. Though incomes are projected to rise annually on pace with the County, they are anticipated to remain substantially below the County average through 2030.
- With the exception of National City, Imperial Beach posted the lowest median household income of any South Bay area in 2000.
- Immediately to the south of Imperial Beach lies the Municipality of Tijuana. In contrast to Imperial Beach's modest population of approximately 27,000, Tijuana's population is massive, estimated at 1.2 million in the 2000 Mexican Census, or nearly 50% of the entire Baja California populace.

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- Tijuana's population is growing rapidly. Between 1990 and 2000 population increased at an annual pace of nearly 5% and the rate of household formation exceeded 5%.
 - The Mexican State of Baja California had a population of 2.5 million in 2000, and is also growing rapidly at an average annual rate of 4.1%.

C. Real Estate Market Considerations

This section provides an overview of real estate market conditions evident in the San Diego region, the South Bay area, and Imperial Beach. Tables III-1, III-2, and III-3 present the principal market factors relevant to commercial, lodging, and residential land uses.

Commercial:

The Imperial Beach market is a second-tier commercial market, with few national credit tenants and no big-box retailers. Its retail base is comprised almost entirely of small local-serving retailers and service providers. The City has small retail nodes in the areas of 13th Street/Imperial Beach Boulevard, and Old Palm Avenue/Seacoast Drive.

The bulk of the City's retail activity is located along the Palm Avenue corridor, which generally extends from I-5 on the east to 8th Street on the west. The corridor serves as a key gateway to the City and benefits from high daily traffic counts, estimated at approximately 70,000 per day. The six-lane Palm Avenue corridor is an active commercial corridor offering a wide mix of non-complimentary retail and commercial businesses.

The eastern portion of the corridor, between I-5 and 14th Street, lies within the boundaries of the City of San Diego. The Southland Plaza community shopping center, located at the northwest juncture of Palm Avenue and I-5, is the dominant retailer of the corridor. The 370,000-SF center is anchored by Mervyn's, Home Depot, and Vons and benefits greatly from its location at the I-5/SR 75 interchange as well as from visibility from the I-5.

The remainder of the corridor is characterized by older/obsolete, stand-alone buildings on small/shallow parcels, a handful of small strip centers, automotive uses, convenience service stations, mobile home parks, and economy hotels. The City's portion of the Palm Avenue Corridor lacks freeway visibility and direct access from the I-5, site attributes prized by most national credit tenants. By virtue of its location, the City's ability to attract national credit tenants is hindered by the following limiting factors:

- City is bypassed by major transportation arteries.
- Trade area is truncated by Pacific Ocean to the west, San Diego Bay to the north, and the U.S./Mexico international border to the south.
- Modest household incomes.

TABLE III-1

**KEY MARKET FACTORS
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH**

RETAIL	OFFICE/INDUSTRIAL	LODGING	RESIDENTIAL
<p>City's main retail concentration is located along Palm Avenue. This corridor is characterized by small local-serving retailers operating in old/obsolescent buildings.</p>	<p>City lacks any true office nodes. There are few pure office buildings in the City.</p>	<p>City has few lodging properties, with only 137 total rooms. Lodging properties are older, of low quality, and lacking in modern amenities.</p>	<p>Sales activity is strong and prices are rising.</p>
<p>National credit tenants are not present in the City. Many of these types of tenants are represented in power centers in other South Bay cities.</p>	<p>Total office space in the City is estimated at less than 10,000 SF. Industrial space is estimated at approximately 100,000 SF.</p>	<p>Demand for weekly vacation rentals is strong in the Seacoast Drive area.</p>	<p>The City has few/no sites available for new residential development.</p>
<p>Attractiveness of trade area demographics is limited due to small population, low household incomes and truncated trade area (e.g., Pacific Ocean).</p>	<p>Occupancy in the City's pure office buildings is low.</p>	<p>City is lacking in visitor-serving amenities.</p>	<p>Infill development and condominium conversions will help improve the household economic profile in the City.</p>
<p>Retail parcels in main commercial corridors tend to be shallow in depth and backed by residential, thus limiting possibilities for assemblage.</p>	<p>Buildings tend to be occupied by owner/users</p>		
<p>City as a whole is bypassed by major transportation arteries resulting in lack of direct access and freeway visibility.</p>	<p>No demonstrated demand for pure office space</p>		
<p>Buildings tend to be occupied by owner/users.</p>			

TABLE III-2

ASSETS
 URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
 CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH

RETAIL	OFFICE/INDUSTRIAL	LODGING	RESIDENTIAL
Proximity to Mexico provides retail capture opportunities.		Demand for vacation rentals is strong, representing over 40% of City TOT in 2003. Citywide TOT collections are growing.	Interest in condominium conversions is high, with several projects underway or in process.
Housing market is strong and introduction of new homes and condo conversions promise to improve income profiles.		The South Bay lodging market has performed well in recent years, with consistently rising occupancy figures.	Median home prices exceed or are on pace with the County benchmark.
		Proximity to Mexico is a key driver for the South Bay lodging market.	The pace of annual escalation in median detached home prices is well in excess of the County benchmark.
		Plans for improvement to the Chula Vista Bayfront could bring more visitors to the South Bay.	Apartment vacancy is low and rents are strong, though lagging County benchmarks.

TABLE III-3

**CONSTRAINTS
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH**

RETAIL	OFFICE/INDUSTRIAL	LODGING	RESIDENTIAL
Retail storefronts tend to be older and unappealing.	City is not an employment center. Office/industrial uses are scattered throughout the City.	South Bay lodging market is relatively small with respect to number and quality of rooms.	Lack of sites for new home development.
Household incomes in the City are well below the County average.	Very little pure office space in the City, with most office tenants occupying retail storefronts.	Though occupancy in South Bay hotels continues to rise, average room rates remain low.	Existing housing stock is older and shows signs of disinvestment.
Competition from regional malls and power centers elsewhere in South Bay is currently strong and growing.	Both office and industrial uses commonly about residential areas.	Imperial Beach has few lodging properties, which are older properties of substandard quality.	
City is bypassed by major transportation arteries.		There is a general lack of visitor amenities in the City (e.g., theatres/entertainment, dining, recreation).	
Military commissaries and "px"s in Coronado and Imperial Beach also create retail competition.		Signage and wayfinding in the City is inadequate.	
Lack of readily available opportunity sites for retail development. Strong need for redevelopment intervention.			
On a per capita basis, the City retails sales are well below comparable benchmarks for the County and nearby cities.			

However, the 2001 rehabilitation of the Imperial Beach Promenade shopping center, located at 9th Street and Palm Avenue marks a bright spot along the City's portion of Palm Avenue. The \$1 million dollar project upgraded a tired strip center with a new and attractive look and finish. A new 15,000-SF building was added to the center to house an anchor Sav-On drug store. The City's Redevelopment Agency assisted the developer through financial assistance, acquisition and conveyance of an existing fast food operation, and vacation a portion of 8th Street. This project could serve as a catalyst for similar projects in the area that can provide residents of Imperial Beach with needed retail stores.

The City faces stiff competition for retail sales from numerous power centers and regional malls in the South Bay offering a wide variety of general merchandise, comparison goods, eating and drinking, specialty goods, and entertainment. These centers include:

Chula Vista Center	886,000 SF
Westfield Shoppingtown Plaza Bonita	818,000 SF
Palm Promenade	440,000 SF
Eastlake Terrace	405,000 SF
Plaza Las Americas	372,000 SF
Costco Plaza	371,000 SF
Terra Nova Plaza	310,000 SF
Sweetwater Town & Country	240,000 SF
Palomar Trolley Center	180,000 SF
Eastlake Village Marketplace	<u>155,000 SF</u>
Total	4,177,000 SF

In addition, there are several new centers scheduled to come online within the next two years, including:

Otay Ranch Town Center	867,000 SF
Village Walk at Eastlake	170,000 SF
Eastlake Design District	230,000 SF
Plaza Las Americas (expansion)	<u>193,000 SF</u>
Total	1,460,000 SF

Between 1997 and 2002, the City's volume of total retail sales experienced positive growth, rising 16%, or about 3% annually.

When the City's retail sales volumes for major categories are compared with those of other South Bay cities and the County on a per capita basis, evidence of retail leakage emerges. Per capita retail sales expenditures in Imperial Beach have consistently fallen well below those of competing cities and the comparable County benchmark. This is particularly true in the following categories in 2002:

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- General Merchandise (\$95 per capita vs. \$1,559 Countywide)
 - Eating and Drinking (\$606 per capita vs. \$1,199 Countywide)
 - Comparison Goods (\$649 per capita vs. \$3,022 Countywide)
 - Automotive (\$526 per capita vs. \$2,689 Countywide)

Home improvement sales average \$909 per capita Countywide but no comparison to the City is available due to reporting rules of the California State Board of Equalization (BOE). The City's home improvement outlets and sales are not of a magnitude that can be reported under BOE guidelines. Therefore, these sales were accounted for in the City's comparison goods category. In this analysis, the comparison goods category includes home furnishings, apparel, food stores, specialty goods, packaged liquor, second-hand merchandise, and farm and garden supplies.

The wide gap in per capita spending between the City and the County benchmark indicates that residents spend significant portions of their dollars on these types of goods outside the City.

With respect to office and industrial uses, Imperial Beach is not an employment center and in terms of square footage the amount of both industrial and office space is modest. Estimated total space inventories vary due to methods of classification but KMA estimates the quantity of office and industrial space as follows:

- Office space: approximately 15,000 SF to 25,000 SF
- Industrial/warehouse space: approximately 65,000 SF to 75,000 SF

Many traditional office tenants operate from retail storefronts, spaces located in retail centers, or residential buildings. There is very little pure office space in the City and no concentration of existing space. Demand for office space appears modest in light of vacant spaces and the conversion of spaces formerly used as offices to retail usage.

Likewise, light industrial uses are scattered in various locations throughout the City and consist mainly of older single-tenant and multi-tenant buildings. The vast majority of industrial space is located along the City's bayfront. Brokers familiar with the area indicate there is demand for industrial/warehouse space but very little product to market.

Lodging:

The San Diego County visitor market continues to be among the strongest in the nation. According to San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau (CONVIS), since 1999 the region has averaged approximately 15 million visitors annually generating an estimated \$5 billion in visitor spending. The region's diverse economy, its popularity with visitors in other western U.S. states, and its designation as a first-tier convention city are key factors supporting the success of the visitor industry.

The San Diego Convention Center now ranks as a first-tier convention center due to two expansions of the facility and increases in the number of hotel rooms downtown. The facility boasts robust bookings that extend well into the foreseeable future. In addition, decision makers are considering a possible third expansion of the facility, a project which could add as much as 1.5 million additional square feet of event and service space to the existing 1.8 million square foot convention center. To date, several possible sites for the third phase have been evaluated, including non-contiguous locations, but there are no firm plans for expansion and no funding for the project.

Leisure travelers and conventioners alike can avail themselves of an ample menu of recreational attractions during their stay in the region, including among others:

- Old Town State Historic Park 6.4 million annual attendance
- San Diego Zoo 3.5 million annual attendance
- Seaworld 4.1 million annual attendance
- Seaport Village 4.0 million annual attendance
- San Diego Wild Animal Park 1.7 million annual attendance
- Legoland 1.4 million annual attendance

The South Bay area is sorely lacking in family-oriented recreational amenities. The notable exception is Chula Vista's Knott's Soak City which, due to the temperate climate and its out-of-the-way location, achieves a modest annual attendance of approximately 226,000.

The possible development of the Chula Vista Bayfront could provide the visitor destination that South Bay currently lacks. The City of Chula Vista, the Port of San Diego, and Pacifica, a major land owner, are working to develop a long-range master plan for the Bayfront. The goal is to ultimately bring about development of a world-class waterfront destination on the 480-acre site. Studies prepared in support of the planning effort indicate that local residents could support 100,000 SF of recreation and entertainment uses and that demand from Mexican visitors could raise that amount to 250,000 SF. Numerous possible uses are being evaluated, including:

- Business/R&D park
- Lodging
- Specialty Retail
- Amusement Park
- Quality in-fill residential development
- Cultural/Civic Uses
- Conference Center

If successful, development of the Chula Vista Bayfront could become an active visitor destination in the South Bay.

Excepting Coronado, the South Bay mainland is not currently a visitor destination. The bulk of the South Bay lodging submarket consists mainly of limited-service, freeway-oriented, economy chain hotels and motels. For the most part, the hotels serve price-sensitive group and transient visitor segments. Of course, the major exceptions are the upscale/luxury hotels located in the City of Coronado, which represent the high end of the South Bay submarket with respect to quality and pricing.

According to PKF Consulting, the South Bay lodging market consists of approximately 2,550 rooms, inclusive of resort properties in Coronado. Trends indicate that the occupancy rate in the South Bay lodging market has risen steadily since 1998 and continues to increase. The occupancy rate in 1998 was measured at a low 55% and then began a steady climb of approximately 7.0% annually, reaching 77% in 2003 and outpacing the County average since 2001. Despite the rise in occupancy, average daily rates (ADRs) have remained low throughout the period, hovering around \$60. The high ADRs of the Coronado hotels are diluted by the low ADRs achieved by a vast majority of the total submarket sample.

The City of Coronado is recognized as a world-class resort destination with the Hotel Del Coronado as its anchor. The City offers visitors a unique natural setting and a small-town ambience within sight of metropolitan San Diego. It is home to the historic Hotel Del Coronado, the Loews Coronado Bay Resort, the Marriott Coronado Island Resort and a number of mid-market and economy hotels and motels. According to estimates prepared by the Coronado Visitors Bureau, approximately one million visitors come to Coronado each year.

The lodging market is supported primarily by three main segments of the visitor market: tourists, groups, and the military. The Hotel Del Coronado caters largely to groups and, to a lesser extent, tourists. The mid-market and economy lodging facilities are supported mainly by tourists and from spill-over from the group market segment. The more affordable properties report that the military segment comprises about 50% of their business and that increased military activity at Naval Air Station North Island (NASNI) since 9/11 has helped sustain this figure.

Average room rates in Coronado are well above the typical room rate in San Diego County. In 2000, the average room rate in Coronado was \$208, as compared with \$135 for the County. Since 1998, average room rates in Coronado have increased approximately 9%, or nearly 5% annually. Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) collected by the City has risen 14% overall during the same time period. Occupancy has remained relatively static since 1998, averaging over 76%.

By way of contrast, the City of Imperial Beach is served by four lodging properties, consisting of a total of 137 rooms, as follows:

- Seacoast Inn – 36 rooms
- Sand Castle Inn – 17 rooms
- Hawaiian Garden Suites – 64 rooms
- El Camino Motel – 20 rooms

Each are limited service properties. The El Camino Motel, the Hawaiian Garden Suites, and the Seacoast Inn are older exterior-corridor properties built prior to 1971 and are lacking in modern amenities. The recently renovated Sand Castle Inn and the Hawaiian Garden Suites offer daily/weekly apartment/cottage style rentals. Rack rates vary widely, ranging from \$40/night at the El Camino Motel to \$330/night at the Sand Castle Inn.

The two beachfront properties, the Seacoast Inn and the Sand Castle Inn, achieve strong occupancy and room rates. The ownership of the Seacoast Inn, Pacifica Companies, is planning to raze its existing facility and construct an attractive, modern 81-room hotel. The plans for the new facility indicate that the rebuilt property would include four suites, a pool, conference space, a restaurant with patio dining, and structured parking. Located directly on the beach, this project should receive a strong market response. However, this project is just one piece of the City's tourism puzzle and the City's lack of visitor-serving amenities (i.e., restaurants, entertainment, shopping) will continue to cause Imperial Beach overnight visitors to spend their dollars outside the City.

The demand for weekly vacation rentals in Imperial Beach is reportedly strong, primarily in the Seacoast Drive area. The proximity to the beach is an attractive amenity to prospective visitors who may view the cost of the weekly rental as affordable in contrast with other beachfront lodging choices in the region. Weekly vacation rentals typically consist of private homeowners offering their units for rent and function in much the same way as timeshares do. Review of the City's TOT receipts indicate that TOT from vacation rentals represented over 40% of total TOT in 2003.

Residential:

The housing market in San Diego County continues to perform strongly, spurred by high demand, a steady job market, and record-low interest rates. The uneven relationship between housing supply and demand in San Diego County has been a key factor in the steep escalation of housing prices. During the past 10 years, prices for new and resold homes, both attached (condominiums and townhomes) and detached (single-family homes) units have risen sharply. Key factors contributing to the upward pressure on pricing include:

- Population growth
- Lack of entitled residential land
- Opposition to multi-family housing
- Construction defect litigation
- Fiscalization of land use policy

According to data provided by the California Association of Realtors, since 1999 resold units in San Diego County have exhibited the following price escalations:

- Median price of detached units increased approximately 114%, or about 16% annually.

- Median price of attached units increased approximately 139%, or 19% annually.

The prices of new homes in the County are also at record levels. According to MarketPointe Realty Advisors, the new home market broke records in the second quarter of 2004.

- Over 4,400 attached and detached sales.
- Average price of a new detached home exceeded \$700,000.
- Average price of a new attached home rose \$81,000 over previous quarter to \$473,000.

South County was the only submarket in the region with an average detached home price below \$600,000.

Since the City of Imperial Beach is fully built-out, there are few opportunities for new-home development. It is, therefore, important to review trends in resale prices versus the comparable County measures. The pace of escalation of detached home resale prices in Imperial Beach has significantly outperformed the County benchmarks since 1999, as shown:

Rise in Median Detached Home Price, 1999 - 2004		
	<u>Imperial Beach</u>	<u>County</u>
Total Increase in Median Price	190%	114%
Average Annual Increase	24%	16%

Sources: California Association of Realtors; SANDICOR, Multiple Listing Service

Through August 2004, the median home price of a 3 bedroom/2 bath detached home in Imperial Beach averaged approximately \$479,000.

Supply constraints have seen the number of actively-selling new home projects in the County drop to its lowest level in ten years and the high cost of new detached homes is pricing the vast majority of County residents out of the market. This trend has led to an explosion in the attached housing market, including both new projects and condominium conversions. Over the past two years, the number of actively-selling attached projects has more than doubled. Currently, there are 14 condominium conversion projects in Imperial Beach seeking approval from the City, ranging in magnitude from 2 units to 18 units. Combined, these projects will convert 125 rental units to ownership units, a positive step toward improving the City's overall economic profile.

Since 1999, the median price of an attached resale unit in Imperial Beach has escalated 108%, or nearly 16% annually. Though a slightly slower pace of escalation than the County, the actual median

Since 1999, the median price of an attached resale unit in Imperial Beach has escalated 108%, or nearly 16% annually. Though a slightly slower pace of escalation than the County, the actual median unit price has consistently been far greater than the County average. In 2004, the median price of an attached home is \$415,000, or \$79,000 greater than the County median.

The multi-family housing market is also extremely competitive, with Countywide apartment vacancy rates consistently averaging less than five percent. Vacancy rates below five percent typically herald a true landlord's marketplace and result in aggressive rent increases. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) calculation of Fair Market Rents, since 1998 Countywide rental rates have increased more than 70%.

According to data published by the San Diego County Apartment Owners Association, the current Countywide vacancy rate is slightly less than 4% and exactly 4% in Imperial Beach. Rental rates for various rental unit types in the City are generally lower than the County average and fluctuate with respect to other South Bay cities.

D. Focus Planning Areas

As a result of the analysis conducted for this study, three planning areas, or "focus areas," are preliminarily identified as sites for more concentrated study. These focus areas are shown in Figure III-3 and have been broadly defined so that they are contiguous with one another. While only a portion of each focus area may be the subject of specific ecotourism recommendations, virtually any development activity occurring within the boundary of each area may contribute – or detract – from the success of an ecotourism program.

Old Palm/Seacoast Focus Area:

As detailed in Figure III-4, the Old Palm/Seacoast Focus Area includes the older commercial spine of Imperial Beach:

- Seacoast Drive from Imperial Beach Boulevard northerly to Palm Avenue, and
- Palm Avenue from the beachfront easterly to 3rd Street.

With minor exception, the commercial uses that front on Seacoast Drive or Palm Avenue are no more than one lot deep. Virtually all other portions of this focus area are designated for residential use. Densities range from 7 to 29 dwelling units per acre. Under the City's zoning regulations, heights vary from 26-30 feet, with an exception made for hotels in the "Seacoast Commercial Zone" where the height allowance rises to 40 feet.

Bayfront Focus Area:

As detailed in Figure III-5, the Bayfront Focus Area includes that portion of the City north of Calla Avenue and east of Highway 75. Major opportunities provided within this focus area derive principally from its adjacency to San Diego Bay, its proximity to Pond 20, and the municipal ownership of the Imperial Beach Public Works Yard, which is north of Cherry Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets.

Private redevelopment may also be an option for the low-scale, low-intensity office building which occupies a bayfront site just east of the Public Works Yard. Other development opportunities potentially include the General Commercial area on either side of Highway 75 as the road curves northerly toward Coronado, and an area which lies east of Highway 75 and west of 7th Street, which is designated “Urban Reserve” by the City.

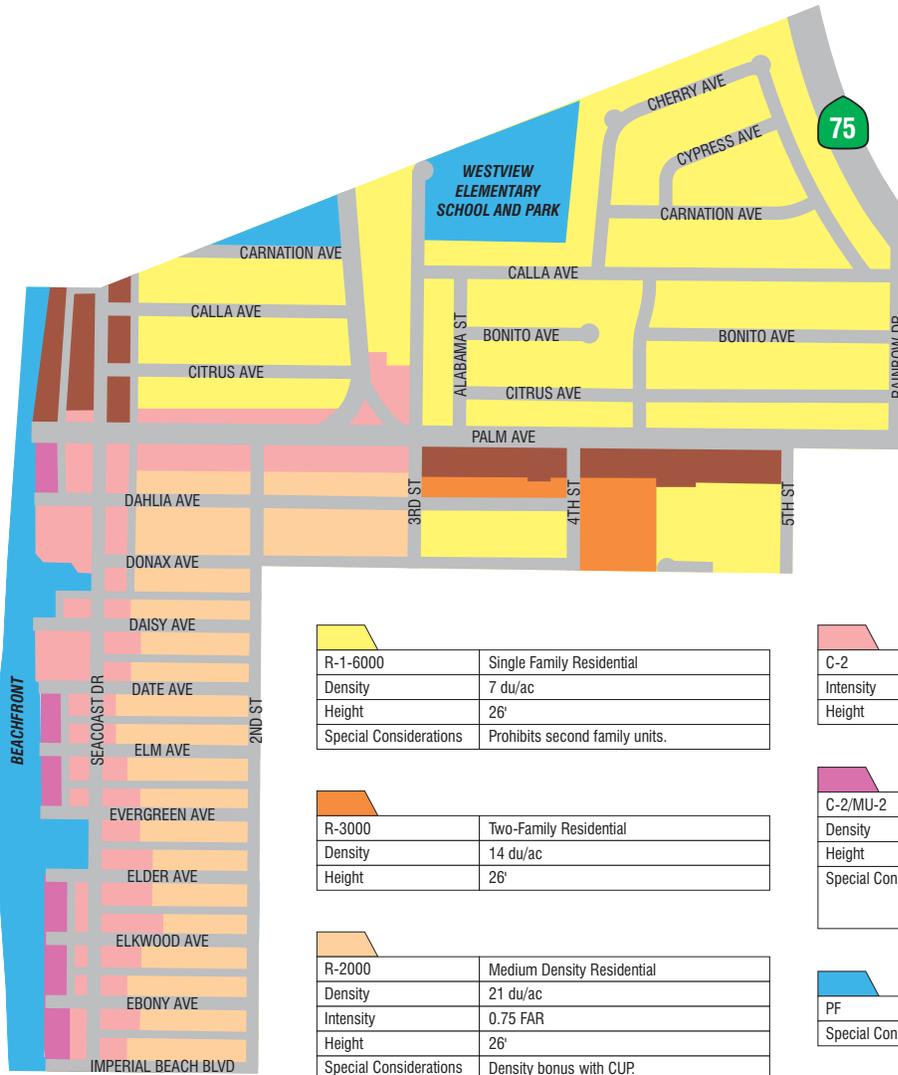
Virtually all other portions of this focus area are designated for residential use. Densities range from 7 to 21 dwelling units per acre. Under the City’s current zoning, residential heights are limited to 26 feet. For general commercial use, heights are limited to 40 feet.



North
No Scale - 8.25.04

Figure III-3
Focus Areas

Imperial Beach Eco-Tourism Study



R-1-6000	Single Family Residential
Density	7 du/ac
Height	26'
Special Considerations	Prohibits second family units.

R-3000	Two-Family Residential
Density	14 du/ac
Height	26'

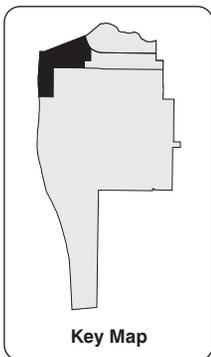
R-2000	Medium Density Residential
Density	21 du/ac
Intensity	0.75 FAR
Height	26'
Special Considerations	Density bonus with CUP.

R-1500	High Density Residential
Density	29 du/ac
Intensity	1.0 FAR
Height	30'

C-2	Seacoast Commercial (Tourist Commercial)
Intensity	3000 sf Min Lot Size
Height	30' Except Hotel 40'

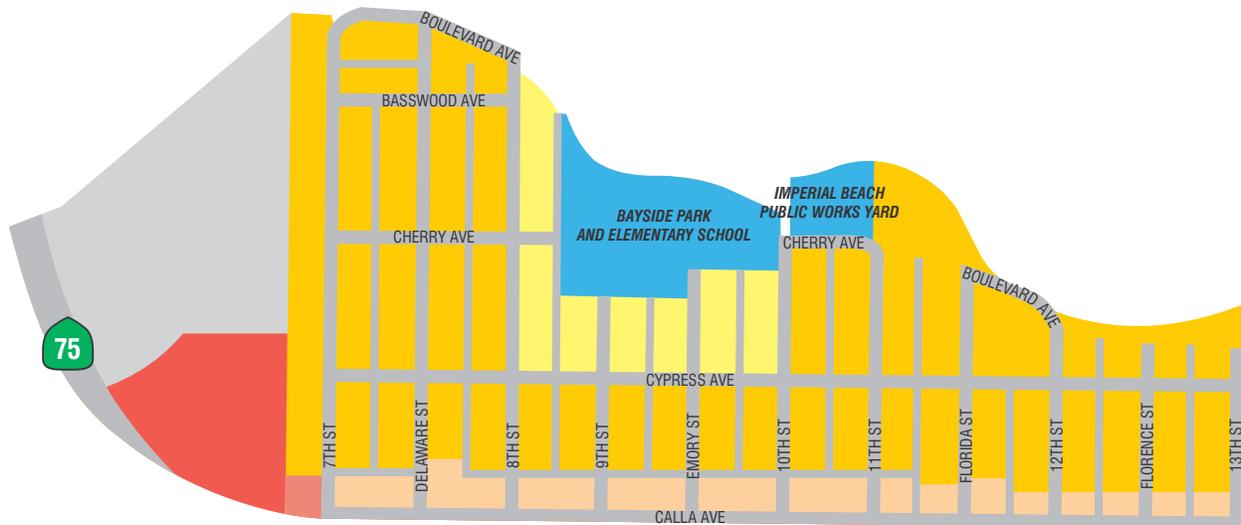
C-2/MU-2	Seacoast Commercial - Residential Overlay
Density	29 du/ac
Height	26'-30' Based on Use
Special Considerations	Encourage commercial use in predominantly residential area. Specific Plan required for some uses.

PF	Public Facility
Special Considerations	Development subject to Site Plan Review.



Sources:

1. City of Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Plan and Zoning Ordinance Land Use Map - May 2004
2. Imperial Beach Municipal Code



R-1-6000	Single Family Residential
Density	7 du/ac
Height	26'
Special Considerations	Prohibits second family units.

R-3000-D	Two-Family Detached Residential
Density	14 du/ac
Height	26'

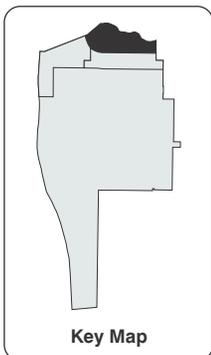
R-2000	Medium Density Residential
Density	21 du/ac
Intensity	0.75 FAR
Height	26'
Special Considerations	Density bonus with CUP.

C-1	General Commercial
Intensity	3000 sf Min Lot Size
Height	40'

C-1/MU-1	General Commercial Mixed Use Overlay
Special Considerations	Allows commercial expansion under specific circumstances within R-1500 Area. CUP required for commercial development.

PF	Public Facility
Special Considerations	Development subject to Site Plan Review.

UR	Urban Reserve
Height	26'
Special Conditions	Requires Specific Plan to develop.



Sources:

1. City of Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Plan and Zoning Ordinance Land Use Map - May 2004
2. Imperial Beach Municipal Code

New Palm Focus Area:

As detailed in Figure III-6, the New Palm Focus Area includes roughly one block north and one block south of Palm Avenue, between the City Limits on the east and Rainbow Drive on the west. The area – particularly as seen from Palm Avenue - represents a major gateway into the City. As such, the view from Palm Avenue sets impressions and establishes a context for travelers.

With minor exception, both sides of Palm Avenue are designated for General Commercial use. While much of this General Commercial designation backs up on residential use, current zoning allows commercial expansion within these residential areas.

Single-family and two-family residential uses within this focus area have densities of 7 and 14 du/ac, respectively, and both are limited to a height of 26 feet. General Commercial use has a height limit of 40 feet.

E. Infrastructure and Finance

An evaluation of existing and planned water, sewer, storm drain, and street systems within the study area is necessary to determine implications for future development. A major resource in this evaluation is the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which identifies infrastructure project upgrades planned for the near and long term.

What follows is an assessment of existing and proposed infrastructure within Imperial Beach based on separate meetings held with Hank Levien, City of Imperial Beach Public Works Director, and Wayne Leisch, Operations Superintendent for the California American Water Company.

Water System:

The existing water system is owned and operated by the California American Water Company (CAWC). The water is purchased from the San Diego County Water Authority and distributed through the CAWC pipeline network. Within the project area, there is an existing 16" looping water main, which is the main distribution line. This line is located in Palm Avenue, Third Street and Imperial Beach Boulevard. The remaining water system is comprised of 4", 6", 8" and 12" water mains to service City users.

The 16" water main is in good condition and there are no identified pressure or capacity issues with the existing system. The CAWC does not have any capital improvement projects planned for their distribution system. For future redevelopment, it should be anticipated that an upsized water main would be required from the existing 16" water main if the existing water system does not meet fire flows. Figure III-7 portrays the water mains within Imperial Beach.



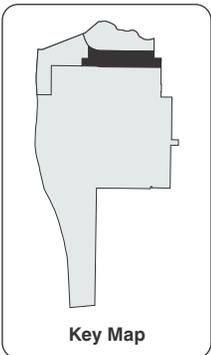
	R-1-6000	Single Family Residential
	Density	7 du/ac
	Height	26'
	Special Considerations	Prohibits second family units.

	R-3000	Two-Family Residential
	Density	14 du/ac
	Height	26'

	C-1	General Commercial
	Intensity	3000 sf Min Lot Size
	Height	40'

	C-1/MU-1	General Commercial Mixed Use Overlay
	Special Considerations	Allows commercial expansion under specific circumstances within R-1500 Area. CUP required for commercial development.

	PF	Public Facility
	Special Considerations	Development subject to Site Plan Review.



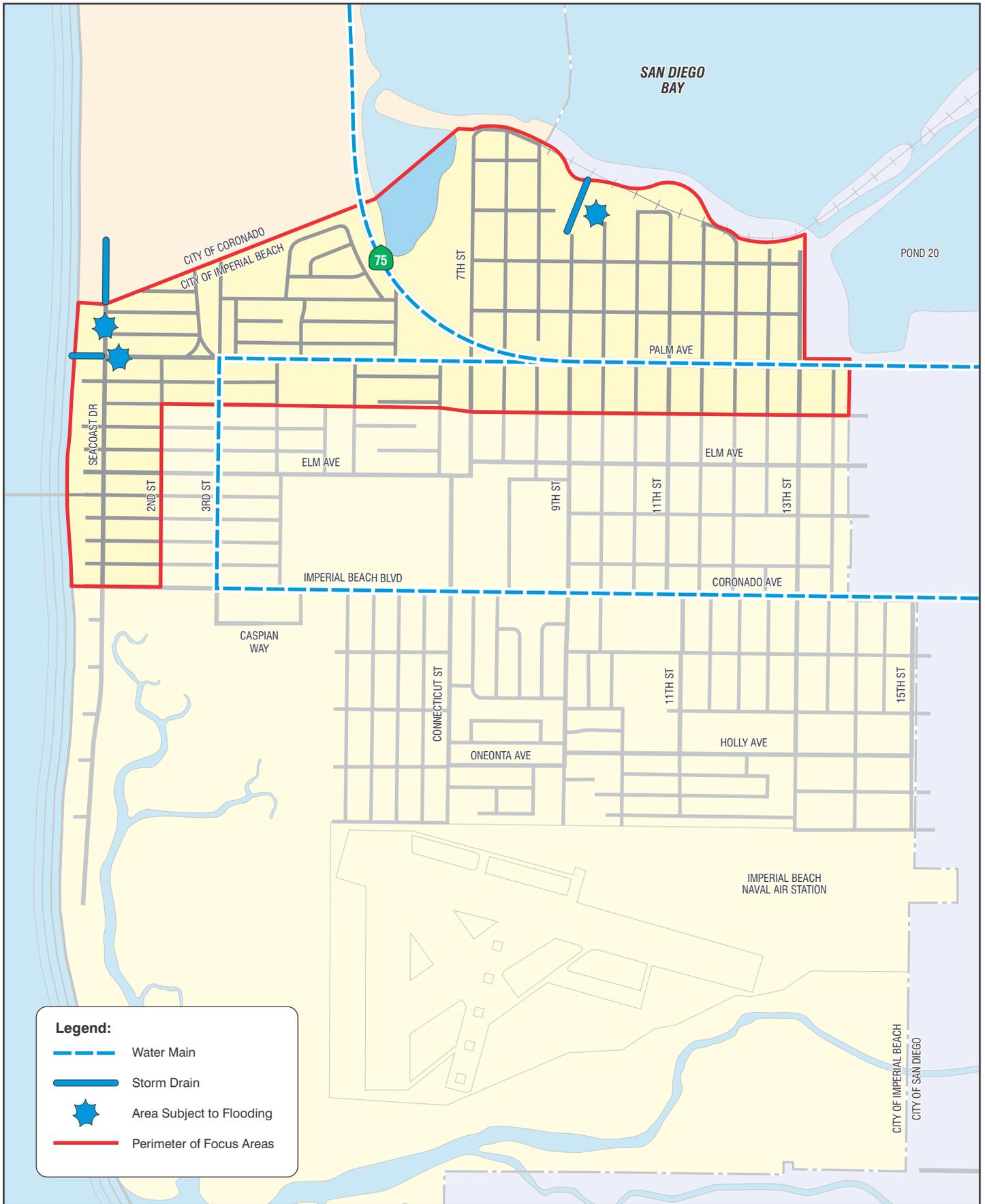
Sources:

1. City of Imperial Beach General Plan/Local Coastal Plan and Zoning Ordinance Land Use Map - May 2004
2. Imperial Beach Municipal Code



North
No Scale - 8.25.04

Figure III-6
New Palm Focus Area
Imperial Beach Eco-Tourism Study



North
No Scale - 9.13.04

Figure III-7
Infrastructure Considerations
Imperial Beach Eco-Tourism Study

Sewer System:

The existing sewer system utilizes a series of gravity mains, sewer pump station and sewer force mains to serve Imperial Beach. The sewer system pumps City sewage easterly through a series of force mains which outlet to the City of San Diego trunk sewer. The existing system is in fair condition. The City has several future capital improvement projects planned, including pump station upgrades and sewer main replacements. None of these upgrades will substantially affect or increase the capacity of the sewer system. In general, the existing sewer system is near capacity and will require additional analysis for any new proposed redevelopment projects within the project area.

Drainage System: Topographically, Imperial Beach is relatively flat and located at seal level. As a result, the City experiences isolated flooding at several locations during even minor storm events. There are three areas in particular that have problematic street flooding within the project area. The first is at Palm Avenue and Seacoast, the second is at Seacoast and Carnation Avenue intersection (Camp Surf) and the third is the 48" storm drain at the Westview Elementary School.

These areas in particular will have to be addressed by any proposed redevelopment projects that are tributary to these drainage areas. The City does not have any planned CIP projects to address these or other problem areas. In general each redevelopment project will have to comply/mitigate for any drainage issues arising as part of future projects. Figure III-7 portrays City storm drains and provides a graphic representation of the areas most susceptible to flooding.

Streets:

Overall, the Imperial Beach street system is in fair condition. The City recently completed a \$4.5 million CIP project for street rehabilitate and repair. This project addressed approximately forty percent of the required rehabilitation and maintenance for the City. The existing circulation pattern does not have significant traffic issues and as a result, the City does not have any future CIP projects for street widenings.

F. Overview of Imperial Beach Redevelopment Agency

The Imperial Beach Redevelopment Agency (Agency) was established in 1995. The major objective of the Agency is to eliminate blighting conditions and encourage new development or rehabilitation of properties within its boundaries. Members of the City Council serve as the Agency board members.

At the time of establishment, the boundaries of the Agency's 250-acre Project Area generally included the City's portion of the Palm Avenue commercial corridor and the 13th Street corridor. In 2001, the Redevelopment Project Area boundaries were amended to include most of the areas in the City not already included in the original Project Area, including Pond 20, Seacoast Drive, and parcels near the bayfront. The Agency has only limited eminent domain powers within the original Project Area and no eminent domain powers within the Amended Project Area.

The Agency's ability to stimulate change was extremely limited until recently. During the first six years of its existence tax increment revenues were modest, peaking at approximately \$320,000 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2002. As the Imperial Beach residential real estate market picked up steam, sales volumes increased, triggering reassessment of long-held properties with low assessed values. This trend combined with higher assessed values from pockets of infill development throughout the City reaped financial benefits for the Agency, especially within the largely-residential Amended Project Area. In FY 2003, estimated tax increment revenues had increased to \$1.7 million and are projected to rise to \$3.1 million by FY 2005.

The City issued \$22.8 million in tax allocation revenue bonds through its Public Financing Authority in 2003. As stated in the bond statement prepared by Kinsell, Newcomb De Dios, Inc., proceeds are to be used by the Agency for the following purposes:

- To fund redevelopment activities in the original Project Area.
- To fund redevelopment activities in the Amended Project Area.
- Provision of a reserve fund.
- Provision for the costs of bond issuance.

After the bond discount, underwriters discount, and issuance costs were accounted for, approximately \$22.0 million in proceeds remained and was allocated as follows:

- Reserve Fund \$1.6 million
- Original Project Area Activities \$4.3 million
- Amended Project Area Activities \$16.2 million

The RDA is currently in the process of developing an Economic Development Plan that will incorporate the following funding allocations for the bond proceeds that remain to be spent:

- Palm Avenue Redevelopment \$8.0 million
- Capital Improvement Program Projects \$4.5 million
- Housing Projects/Programs \$4.0 million
- Old Palm Avenue Infrastructure and Property Improvements \$1.5 million
- Façade Improvement Program \$250,000
- Planning Studies (Bayfront, Palm Ave., etc.) \$250,000

IV. ECOTOURISM DEFINED

This section defines the term ecotourism, lists principles of ecotourism destination planning, and also discusses ecotourism's relation to economic development.

A. Definition of Key Principles

Ecotourism is a growing niche market within the larger travel industry which is defined by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people.”

From a functional viewpoint, ecotourism in the marketplace is managed by tourism operators and hotels that are operated by small and medium sized companies that concentrate on leading and accommodating small groups in natural areas in an education manner using interpretive materials and local specialist guides.

Ecotourism has been defined as nature-based tourism in the marketplace, but it has also been and studied as a sustainable development tool since the 1980s. The strong orientation of the ecotourism field toward the evolution of principles and guidelines based on sustainability standards give it an unusual position in the tourism field. One set of principles, published by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) in 2002, that evolved via international consensus, follows:

- Contributes to the conservation of biodiversity.
- Sustains the well-being of local people.
- Includes an interpretation – learning experience.
- Involves responsible action on the part of tourists and the tourism industry.
- Is delivered primarily to small groups by small-scale businesses.
- Requires lowest possible consumption of non-renewable resources.
- Stresses local participation, ownership, and business opportunities.

B. General Principles of Ecotourism Destination Development

Each region seeking to attract the ecotourism market must undertake a thorough destination development planning process. General principles for destination development, as defined by a leading research firm, are provided below.

According to Stanley Plog (2004), any destination entering the market will face a competitive marketplace. Plog asserts that “To stand out in the crowd, effective tourism planning must begin.”

“A newly developing area must not allow excessive commercial development to dominate the landscape, and they must decide which [niche] segment they will target and ensure that the place retains the qualities this segment most desires.”

Destination Development Guidelines

- Protect what is unique or natural about an area.
- Reduce density. Do not overcrowd an area with too many hotels, shops, restaurants, and game parlors.
- Enhance the feeling of seclusion and privacy to contribute to the ambience of retreat or escape.
- Seek quality throughout. A destination that ensures high standards of construction of hotels, offices, retail centers, and public spaces will attract an audience that spends more, stays longer, and returns more often.
- Emphasize variety in terms of activities available.
- Restore the natural and historic to retain a sense of heritage.
- Value local culture and traditions.
- Institute height limits on buildings to protect vistas and scenic views.
- Gain community acceptance.

Stanley Plog © 2004 Pearson Education

The destination development guidelines above are complemented by the eco-destination planning guidelines that follow, written specifically for the ecotourism market.

Eco-Destination Planning Guidelines

- Master plans for the entire tourism development region should specify green zones, trails, walking paths, public access areas, and clear rules on the density of development allowed in residential and commercial zones.
- Zones for tourism use should be clearly designated, as are zones inappropriate for tourism use.
- Visitor management plans and procedures should incorporate public comment during design and implementation phases, with monitoring programs that allow for regular discussion of tourism use and the correction of problems.
- Full stakeholder consultation should take place on the type of tourism development desired.
- Integrated natural resource planning should offer residents a variety of sustainable economic development alternatives beyond ecotourism.

Megan Epler Wood 2002, © United Nations Environment Program and TIES

C. Relation to Economic Development

Ecotourism offers an opportunity to generate income and employment and generate tangible economic benefits from natural areas. It has been shown through research that economic benefits from ecotourism are an important basis for positive resident attitudes toward adjacent natural areas. Conversely, there have been instances where residents will either express very negative attitudes toward conservation or damage fragile natural resources, because they are seeing few economic benefits from the protection of these areas.

For this reason, a common priority in ecotourism is to increase local economic benefits from adjacent natural areas. But there have been many misinterpretations about how to achieve this goal. The most traditional approach is to increase the number of visitors to the area. Damage from over-visitation can result, unless well designed visitor management rules and regulations are in place and enforced.

Other options for increasing economic development benefits do exist. It is generally preferable to increase local economic benefits by increasing:

- Spending per visitor.
- Local participation in the tourism industry.
- Linkages between tourism and local businesses.
- Local ownership of tourism businesses.

An ecotourism plan for a destination must look at the provision of services by local business people in tourism and related fields to analyze how to increase their opportunity. The key business types to review are hotels, tour operators, and local vendors. Local vendors include gift shops, food stands, restaurants, guiding services, vehicle rentals, taxis, recreation services (horses, boats, bikes, etc), craft producers and other specialty products depending on the location. Local specialty products that are made with sensitivity to the environment receive an especially good reception from this market – such as environmentally friendly gifts.

Local vendors play a crucial role in the success of ecotourism development and its ability to economically benefit local communities. Many times these businesses need business planning assistance and a small amount of capital or low-interest loans to get started. They turn to both governmental and non-governmental sources for this assistance. Efforts to assist community businesses must be based on analyzing and understanding the business opportunities for small and medium sized enterprises at the local level.

Some basic generic steps in an ecotourism economic development plan include:

- Review what types of local producers may be seeking to produce local goods that will exemplify the ecotourism destination.

- Foster the production of such products by assisting with business planning and reasonably priced credit to ensure appropriate business systems are in place for the production and distribution of these products.
- Ensure adequate venues for the sale of such products are available.
- Include such products in all venues in the destination and promote their availability as part of destination promotions.

This business development approach will create a value-added chain of production that is locally beneficial and not based on the importation of cheap goods (such as t-shirts and other low-cost goods from China). The key for ecotourism economic development is to support the production of goods that will be distinct or even emblematic to the destination, help build the desired image, and become a part of the destination's ecotourism brand identity. This business development process builds pride in the community. And such goods can become a reason to visit a destination and an attraction unto themselves.

D. Baseline Economic Development Options

Business development options in the field of ecotourism can be categorized into business sizes. As reference, the boxes below illustrate typical upper-scale revenue and number of employees for ecotourism business enterprises operating at various scales. A listing of the typical businesses within each category are included, as follows:

<p><u>Micro-enterprise: 0-10 employees, up to \$100,000 in revenue</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local crafts and artisanal products • Bike rentals • Prepared food stalls – usually healthful with local ingredients • Fresh local produce • Fresh local fish • Walking & bike tours
<p><u>Small Business: up to 50 employees, up to \$3 million in revenues</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurants • Catering • Bicycle, Roller Blade sales • Boat trips • Bed & Breakfast

Medium Business: up to 300 employees, up to \$50 million in revenues

- Inns & Lodges
- Small conference centers

Large Business: over 300 employees, over \$50 million in revenues

- Large hotels
- Large conference centers

E. Infrastructure for Ecotourism Development

Imperial Beach has much of the infrastructure in place or in the planning stages for a destination development program that could attract ecotourists, but there are constraints as well. Imperial Beach's destination development infrastructure presently available or in the planning stages includes:

- Upcoming Investment from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in trails, interpretation, and observation points along San Diego Bay adjacent to the Bayshore Bikeway. Work of visitor management planning, interpretative planning, stakeholder consultation and integrated natural resource planning required by an ecotourism destination development plan (referenced above) to be paid for and undertaken by USFWS staff.
- Cooperation and visitor amenities provided by the Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) including:
 - Visitor center in place at the Tijuana Slough NWR with expansion plans in place for new auditorium and amphitheater to hold 100 visitors each.
 - Piloted event, Fiesta del Rio, originated by the Tijuana Slough NWR. Event celebrates environment and local cultures found on both sides of the Mexican border. Cooperative events already taking place in Tijuana and Tecate.
 - Strong environmental education program, Habitat Heroes, already embraced by the community. Habitat Heroes brings approximately 3,500 students to Imperial Beach from places throughout the San Diego region annually.
 - National Estuary Research Reserve Program annually attracts between two and four research groups from throughout the U.S.

-
- Coastal Decision Makers program attracts 25-50 decision makers bi-monthly from throughout California.
 - Location adjacent to San Diego and Tijuana along major highway thoroughfare with potential to attract visitors from both markets.

Imperial Beach's infrastructure constraints are:

- Investment from USFWS in San Diego Bay not secure due to federal budget constraints.
- Tijuana Slough NWR signage extremely poor in Imperial Beach and no plan to improve at present.
- Tijuana Slough's quality of experience on the trail system significantly impaired by impact of helicopter noise from Ream Field, making visitation unpleasant for general consumers, except close to the visitor center.
- Business community lacks resources for development of new businesses that would attract ecotourism.

V. ECOLOGICAL AMENITIES AND ECOTOURISM PLANNING

This section addresses the key physical and planning aspects of the relevant ecological amenities that could be part of an ecotourism strategy plan. Each amenity is discussed in narrative detail, from both a resource planning perspective and an ecotourism planning perspective. Key opportunities and constraints for each amenity are also identified.

A. Overview of Ecological Amenities

From a natural resource planning perspective, natural resources in or adjacent to Imperial Beach, including the San Diego Bay, Pacific shoreline, Otay River and Tijuana Estuary, provide a rich and diverse range of habitats that are found nowhere else in the state. Long-range planning efforts have focused on the preservation of the region's rich diversity of wildlife and vegetation and overall health of its riparian systems.

While much has been accomplished, much still needs to be done to restore the area's coastal lagoons, tidal marshes, beach dune, riparian and upland habitats which have been degraded over time by a range of activities. Habitat preservation efforts have been augmented by efforts to improve water quality in the region, reduce illegal alien traffic from south of the border, and coordinate with national security agents responsible for monitoring border operations.

The areas bays, marshes and riparian resources are a major stopping point along the Pacific Flyway and designation of the San Diego Bay NWR, Tijuana Slough NWR and TRNERR, has, and will continue to provide for ongoing preservation and restoration. Ultimately, as the quality of the preserved and restored habitats improves, so will wildlife diversity throughout the area.

The area surrounding Imperial Beach is rich with potential for ecotourism, but much of this potential has yet to be fulfilled. San Diego Bay and the TRNERR are both habitats that have been highly disturbed in their past history and, therefore, do not offer the visitor the kind of stunning scenic beauty and sense of retreat from an urban environment that undisturbed protected areas are known for.

Efforts to restore these habitats are intensive, but this process is slow and will not result in dramatic changes in the relative beauty of these destinations quickly. Imperial Beach is in a position to take advantage of the increasing potential for ecotourism in its area, but must consider carefully how its biological amenities can be best positioned in the marketplace.

When reviewing ecotourism as a development option, the potential for the viewer to enjoy and appreciate the biological amenities in the region is the number one consideration. These opportunities can be categorized in a variety of ways.

From an ecotourism planning perspective, it is important to rate an area not only by its biological amenities, but also by its visitor experience amenities. These are highly different considerations and cannot be equated. Frequently, refuges and reserves have unique and important biological resources

that require protection, but these biological resources may be difficult for the average visitor to appreciate. In this section the visitor experience amenities and constraints of each relevant ecological area will be evaluated.

The constraints to creating visitor experience amenities that attract visitors to a destination must be carefully evaluated, both for general visitors and for more specialized visitors. It must be noted, however, that visitors vary greatly in their motivations and reasons to visit a site, such as research, training, or birdwatching, and these more specialized visitors will be very important to the Imperial Beach plan.

This evaluation will factor in the following visitor experience amenities and constraints for the respective relevant ecological areas inventoried in Section V with respect to the following:

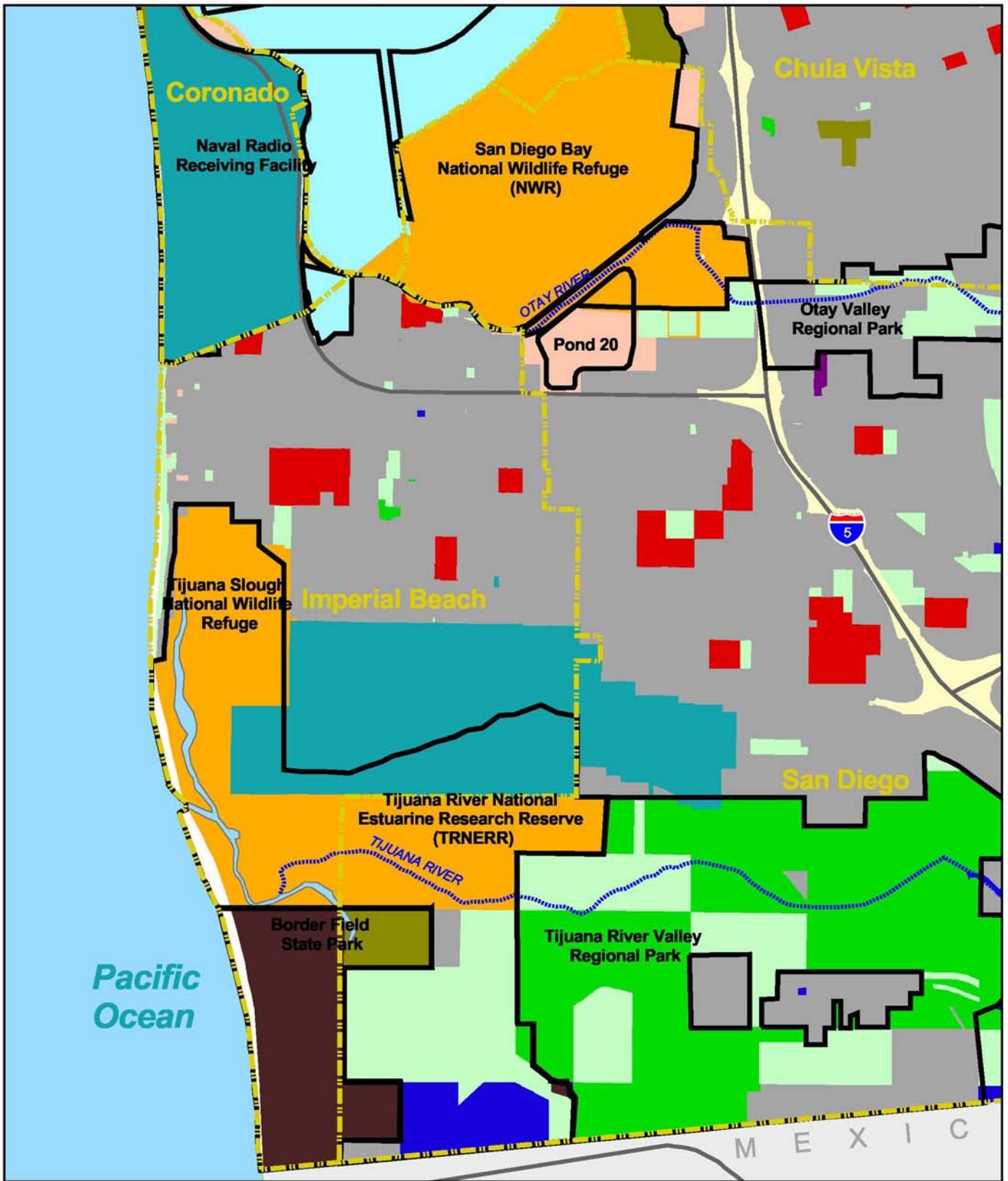
<u>Visitor Experience Amenities</u>	<u>Visitor Experience Constraints</u>
Access to Site	Noise
Trail Systems	Viewability of Wildlife
Interpretive Displays	Finance
Stopping Points/Turnouts	Signage
Observation Points and Platforms	Visitor Facilities (e.g., restrooms, sitting area, parking)
Non-Motorized Boating Access	
Birdwatching Potential	

B. Overview of Partner Agencies

Within the City of Imperial Beach, regulatory responsibility varies with ownership. Figure V-1 provides an overview of the various private and public ownerships within the city and on adjacent lands. In some cases, one or more agencies may share jurisdiction over proposed land uses at a given location.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

USFWS operates the Tijuana Slough NWR in collaboration with State Parks. USFWS is also responsible for the management of South Bay Unit of the San Diego NWR. A Comprehensive Management Plan has been formally adopted for the management of lands within the TRNERR/Tijuana Slough NWR and a draft plan for management of the South Bay Unit of the San Diego NWR is currently underway. Future actions with the potential to affect resources within the reserve or refuges must be consistent with the approved planning documents and all applicable regulations.



Land Ownership as of 2000

- California Department of Fish and Game
- City
- County
- Military Reservations
- Other Federal
- Other Special Districts
- Port of San Diego
- Private
- School Districts
- State

- State (Caltrans)
- State Parks
- State of California Land Commission
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

- Streams
- City Boundaries
- Jurisdictional Boundaries



RECON

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FIGURE V-1
Land Ownership

U.S. Navy:

The U.S. Navy is responsible for the management of all lands within the Naval Radio Receiving Facility (NRRF) located north of the city and Naval Outlying Field (NOLF)-Ream Field to the south. Future land use proposals for adjacent lands should be coordinated and reviewed by Navy personnel prior to implementation to avoid compromising the security requirements of these facilities and ensure compatibility with on-going operations.

California Department of Parks and Recreation:

California State Parks is responsible for management of the visitor center and oversees management of the TRNERR. State Parks is also responsible for the management of Border Field State Park at the south end of the planning area. Future actions by the City should be coordinated to ensure compatibility with planning efforts by State Parks.

County of San Diego:

The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation is currently coordinating multi-jurisdictional planning efforts for the Otay Valley Regional Park and Tijuana River Valley Regional Park. Both efforts include multiple ownerships. Planning for the Otay Valley Regional Park is being coordinated with the City of Chula Vista and City of San Diego. County planning efforts for the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park plan and TRNERR are being coordinated with the USFWS and State Parks. Trail planning efforts are also coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions, including the City of Imperial Beach and City of San Diego, where applicable. Future actions by the city should be coordinated to ensure compatibility with county planning efforts.

San Diego Unified Port District (Port):

The Port currently owns the southern portion of Pond 20, which is located in the City of San Diego, adjacent to City of Imperial Beach. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between these three entities anticipates annexation of Pond 20 by the City of Imperial Beach for future development or use. Future proposals for this location will be reviewed by the Port for compliance with adopted plans and policies and the MOU.

South Bay Union School District:

The school district occupies a large tract of land generally located between 8th Street and Florida Street just south of the San Diego Bay and Bayshore Bikeway. The District must approve future proposals for new development on the school site. Proposals for new uses in the vicinity of the school could be subject to stricter controls designed to prevent encroachment and exposure to hazardous materials or uses restricted from development near schools.

C. Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR) and Tijuana Slough

The TRNERR is one of 26 national estuarine research reserves (NERRs) in coastal areas throughout the nation designated under the Coastal Management Act of 1972. It is an important component of the larger NERR system and protects an important biogeographic region of the United States for long-term research, water-quality monitoring, education and coastal stewardship. Figure V-2 shows the TRNERR boundary. The western and northern portions are located within the City of Imperial Beach's jurisdictional boundary.

NERRs are estuarine areas protected and managed through a federal and state cooperative effort for long-term research, education, and interpretation. While linked to two federal land preservation networks; the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS); NERR administration is provided by the USFWS.

At TRNERR, California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) is NOAA's partner in the state-federal cooperative effort. Daily management is the responsibility of the CDPR, with input from local partners that together comprise a Management Authority. Permanent members include NOAA as the lead federal (but non-voting) member, and USFWS, California Coastal Conservancy (CCC), U.S. Navy, City of Imperial Beach, City of San Diego, County of San Diego, and the U.S. Border Patrol as voting members, among others.

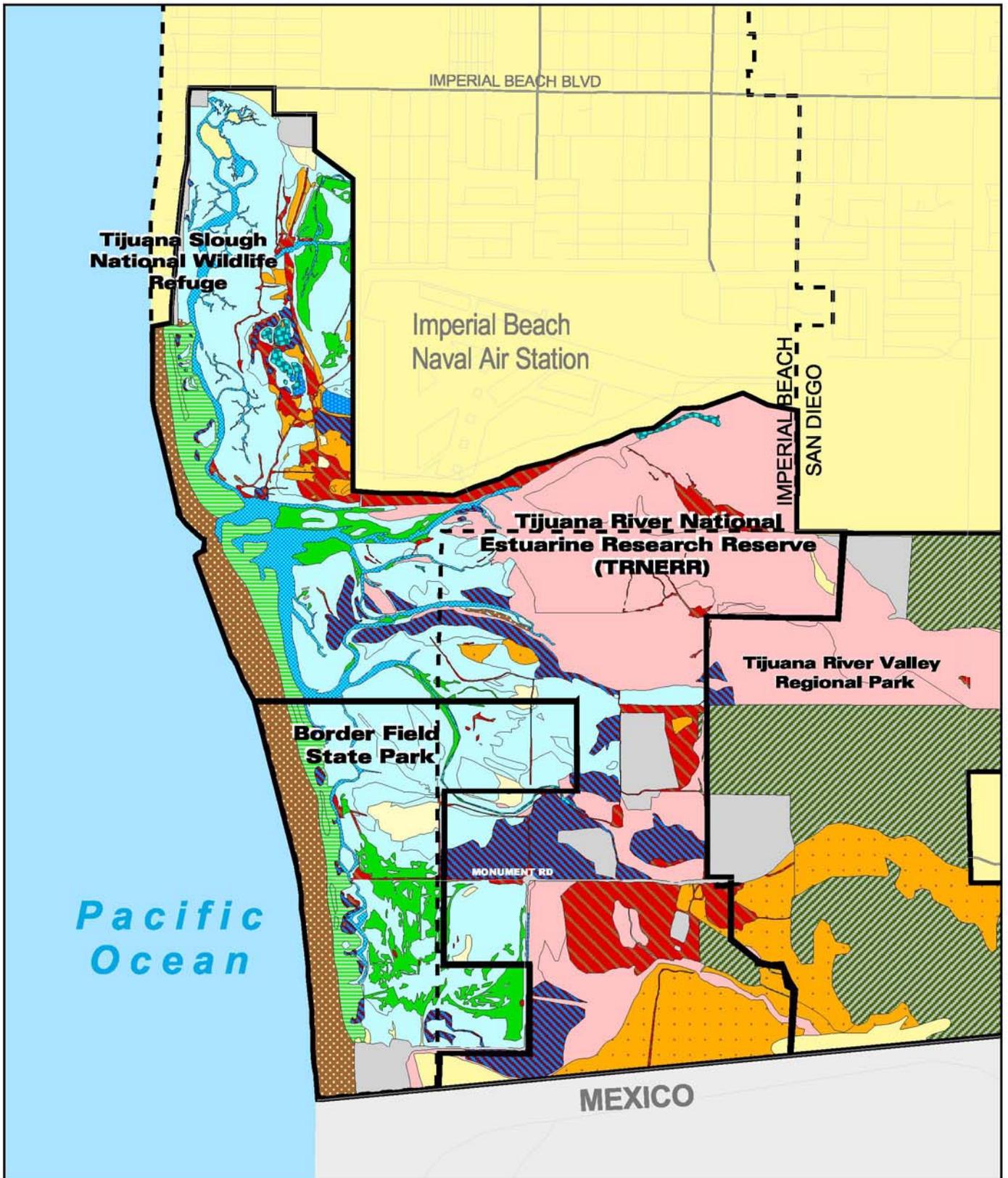
TRNERR and its protected resources, including Tijuana River Estuary, are located along the Pacific Flyway and are used for migration and wintering habitat for a variety of waterfowl and shorebirds. Examples of wintering waterfowl include pintail, cinnamon teal, American widgeon, surf scoter, and ruddy duck. Reserve wetlands are important habitats for a large number of shorebirds (shorebirds account for the majority of the migratory bird population). While about 20 species occur regularly along the sandflats and mudflats of the estuary, four species -- willet, dowitcher, western sandpiper, and marbled godwit -- account for most of the shorebird population throughout the year (USFWS). Abundance and species composition fluctuate seasonally. Intertidal sand and mudflats support the largest numbers of individuals and species. Also present is the San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit, a California species of special concern (CDPR, et al 2000).

Also present in the TRNERR and/or NWR boundary are significant archaeological resources dating as far back as 4,000 years. Artifacts are associated with early habitation by the San Dieguito, La Jolla, and Yuman cultural groups. Later activities by the Spanish have also been recorded starting in the 1700s, and include a camp established by Father Junipero Serra in the area of Smuggler's Gulch.

Figure V-3 shows the beach, dune, mudflat, saltmarsh, riparian, coastal sage scrub, and other upland habitats encompassed within the TRNERR boundary. The rapidly urbanizing areas of Tijuana, Imperial Beach, and San Diego virtually surround the reserve.



-  Imperial Beach City Boundary
-  Bayshore Bikeway
-  Freeways



Vegetation

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
|  | Beach |  | Freshwater |
|  | Freshwater Marsh |  | Saltpan/Mudflats |
|  | Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub |  | Southern Coastal Salt Marsh |
|  | Disturbed Habitat |  | Southern Foredunes |
|  | Disturbed Wetland |  | Southern Riparian Scrub |
|  | Estuarine |  | Subtidal |
|  | Extensive Agriculture |  | Urban/Developed |
| | |  | Valley and Foothill Grassland |



The *Comprehensive Management Plan for the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve and Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge* was approved in 2000. Threatened and endangered species are identified in the reserve including the light-footed clapper rail, California least tern, least Bell's vireo, white and brown pelicans, and numerous shorebirds. Sensitive plant species such as the salt marsh bird's beak and cordgrass are also present.

With three-quarters of the Reserve's watershed located within Mexico, critical issues identified by the Management Authority for the reserve include:

- Habitat restoration
- Endangered species management
- Wastewater management (from Mexico)
- Sediment management
- Integration of recreation and habitat conservation and restoration

Established in 1980 under authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Tijuana Slough NWR was established specifically to protect habitat for and enhance recovery of the endangered light-footed clapper rail. Officially, the purpose of the refuge is "to conserve (A) fish or wildlife which are listed as endangered species or threatened species [...] or (B) plants." Secondary uses, such as recreation, commercial activities, rights-of-way, and research may be considered as a discretionary use and are allowed only if found compatible with the NWR's wildlife conservation purpose for which the refuge was established. Even if found compatible, the use may be allowed only if a determination is made that sufficient funding and staff resources are available to implement the programs.

Secondary uses listed below for the Tijuana Slough NWR have been determined to be compatible with the purpose(s) of the refuge, as qualified in the individual compatibility determinations.

- Environmental Education: found compatible in Compatibility Determination and Environmental Action Memorandum of September 1, 1994.
- Pest Management (including removal of exotic vegetation and mosquito control): found compatible in Compatibility Determination and Environmental Action Memorandum of September 21, 1994.
- Research (including population monitoring and surveys): found compatible in Compatibility Determination and Environmental Action Memorandum of September 1, 1994 (Note: Individual research proposals may be subject to additional compatibility determination).

-
- Boating (non-motorized): found compatible in Compatibility Determination and Environmental Action Memorandum of September 1, 1994.
 - Wildlife Observation and Photography: Compatibility Determination in preparation.
 - Wildlife Interpretation: Compatibility Determination in preparation.
 - Foot, bicycle and equestrian trails: Compatibility Determination in preparation.

The USFWS has full jurisdiction over lands for which it holds fee-title. On NWR lands operated under the 1984 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Navy and on state tidelands operated as part of the NWR under the 1980 Lease No. PRC 5938.9 of the California State Lands Commission, the USFWS exercises jurisdiction only as specified in the MOU and Lease, and does not have complete jurisdiction over all secondary uses.

Figure V-3 shows the habitats within the Tijuana Slough NWR. The refuge encompasses some 1,056 acres of open water, tidal salt marsh, beach dune, riparian, and upland habitat types. The refuge is entirely within the Tijuana River NERR and is operated by the USFWS in collaboration by the CDPR and San Diego County Parks Department. The visitor center area is leased by CDPR. The Tijuana Slough NWR is the only coastal lagoon not bisected by roads and rail lines. The USFWS is in the process of updating the refuge's comprehensive management plan.

Ecotourism Planning:

With respect to ecotourism planning, the TRNERR is presently not very accessible to general visitors, but offers interesting opportunities for learning programs, research exchanges, and volunteer tourism. The TRNERR is part of the NOAA program National Estuarine Research Reserve System, which is a network of 26 protected areas nationwide, established for long-term research, education and stewardship. This partnership program between NOAA and the coastal states protects more than one million acres of estuarine land and water, which provides essential habitat for wildlife; offers educational opportunities for students, teachers and the public; and serves as living laboratories for scientists. There are many opportunities within this program for attracting educators, scientists, and students interested in estuaries to the Imperial Beach area.

For example, September 25th is National Estuaries Day, which according to the National Estuarine Research Reserve System website (<http://nerrs.noaa.gov>) is “an annual celebration of the magical places where rivers meet the sea. EstuaryLive kicks off the excitement with seven, interactive field trips over the Internet.” There is also the “Coastal Training Program which provides up-to-date scientific information and skill-building opportunities to individuals who are responsible for making decisions that affect coastal resources.” In addition there is monitoring, training and fellowship programs associated with the National Estuarine Research Reserve system that could one day be of substantial benefit to

Imperial Beach if more scientists, graduate students, volunteers, and students travel to the TRNERR to take part in these programs.

The Tijuana Slough NWR has the most developed visitor program in the region, with an existing visitor center on site which is due for renovation in the next year, and a 10 mile trail system for walkers, birders, and hikers and about six miles of equestrian trails.

Wooden interpretive display panels are found four points throughout the estuary. There are plans to replace the wooden panels with metal mesh panels to prevent future vandalism. The Visitor Center will be expanded in 2005 and improvements will include:

- Upgrading of existing exhibits
- Construction of a new auditorium with seating for 100 visitors
- Construction of an outdoor amphitheater with seating for 100 with a view of the refuge

Opportunities:

- Birdwatching potential is very good, with nearly two-thirds of all bird species in California being recorded/sighted in the refuge (378 species recorded out of 595 species). Tijuana Slough is recognized as among the top 20 birding locations in California and birdwatching groups regularly visit the refuge. Species congregation is rated as superior, with hundreds of species sited in the estuary and at the mouth of the Tijuana River. Rare species, such as the light-footed clapper rail, are highly viewable. Other species found in the reserve include:
 - California least tern;
 - Light-footed clapper rail;
 - Least Bell's vireo;
 - California brown pelican;
 - Salt marsh bird's beak;
 - Western snowy plover; and a variety of
 - Migrating shorebirds and wintering waterfowl.

Birdwatching web sites list the following species, among many others, as being highly viewable in the estuary:

- Brown Pelican
- Snowy Egret
- Snowy and Grey Plovers
- Black-vented Shearwater
- Great Northern and Pacific Divers
- Elegant Common
- Forsters and Caspian Terns
- Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants

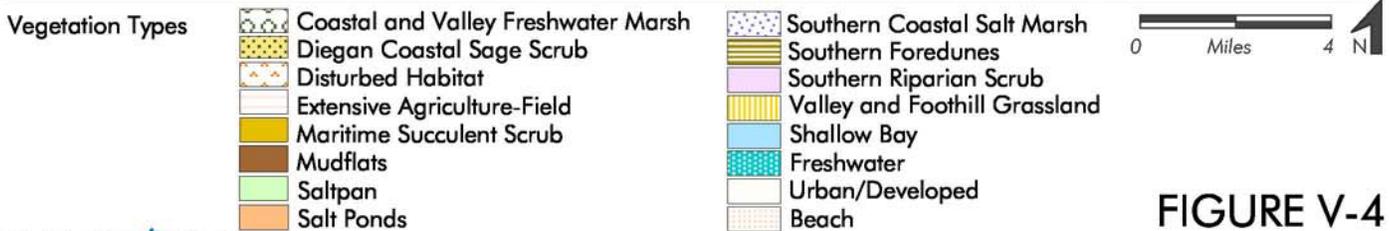
Constraints:

- The visitor experience is seriously harmed by helicopter noise from the Navy Auxiliary Landing Field, Imperial Beach, known as Ream Field. Ream Field is located less than one mile south of the Visitor Center and is used as a supply and training facility by helicopters from Naval Air Station North Island (NASNI). Helicopters take off and land from Ream Field every few minutes and fly at low altitudes above the southern two-thirds of the Tijuana Slough Refuge.
- Signage in the City directing visitors to the Tijuana Slough refuge and the Visitor Center is extremely poor. Directional signage on hiking trails in Tijuana Slough is inadequate and confusing.
- The parking lot for the Tijuana Slough Visitor Center is too small. Despite plans to expand the Visitor Center, the parking area will not be expanded. The lack of on-site parking is exacerbated by a lack of public parking in areas surrounding the refuge.
- From an environmental protection viewpoint, although some habitat areas are protected by fencing and enclosures, increased activity (vehicle, horse and foot traffic) in or near these areas may jeopardize sensitive local bird populations such as the light-footed clapper rail (coastal salt marsh), the California least tern (river mouth areas and dunes), western snowy plover (river mouth, dunes), and Belding's savannah sparrow (higher salt marsh habitat).

D. San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)

The San Diego Bay NWR encompasses some 3,940 acres of submerged lands, intertidal mudflats, salt marsh, and eelgrass beds known to provide habitat for thousands of migrating and resident shore birds and waterfowl. The refuge boundary, proposed acquisition lands and existing habitats are shown on Figure V-4. Excluded areas include the south end of Pond 20, all railroad rights-of-way, and navigational channels, any dredged channel, and all property of SDGE above the mean high water level (USFWS 1999). Existing and proposed future public uses that include wildlife-dependent recreation, recreation that is not wildlife dependent, commercial uses, rights-of-way, and other uses on lands not identified for future protection are allowed.

The primary purpose of the refuge is to “protect, enhance, restore, and manage wetland and upland habitats” to support the endangered, threatened, and other species of native fish, wildlife and plants. Additional goals include providing high quality wintering habitat to benefit migratory shorebirds and water birds and providing opportunities for compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses that foster public appreciation of the unique natural heritage of southern San Diego Bay. To meet these goals, a program is in place and is being coordinated by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to acquire privately held lands as feasible. Studies prepared by the USFWS show that the economic contributions of future anticipated ecotourism activities are estimated to be more than twice the value of the property tax losses, should all privately owned properties in the study area be acquired for conservation.



**FIGURE V-4
NORTH PROJECT VEGETATION**

Marine development projects proposed for lands within the South San Diego Bay Unit are subject to existing federal and state protections, but would not increase USFWS authority. Applicable federal and state protections may include the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Clean Water Act (CWA), Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

A previous study, entitled *Developmental and Environmental Opportunities for the Imperial Beach Bayfront* (Lettieri-McIntyre and Associates August, 1994) identified conceptual site development planning efforts for the bayfront and areas generally within what is now the South Bay Unit of the NWR. Additional environmental opportunities are outlined in the *Imperial Beach Bayfront Development Framework* plan (November 1993). The purpose of the framework was to focus on measures to stimulate economic development within an environmentally sensitive setting. A number of options were considered, ranging from development of low-intensity park uses and wetlands preservation to construction of a boardwalk extending into the salt pond wetlands, a bridge over the Otay River channel, or even construction of a nature center, aerial tramway, and a train station with an historic train museum. All were in the vicinity of the bayfront.

With designation of the NWR, allowed public uses within the boundary may include wildlife-dependent recreation, recreation that is not wildlife dependent, commercial uses, right-of-ways, and other uses that are not part of the “wildlife first” mission of the refuge system.

The NWR land protection plan anticipates development of the bayfront with recreation-related uses and considered such uses compatible with sensitive resources, provided that the use is consistent with the protections mandated under the ESA, various sections of the CWA, Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, CZMA, CEQA, NEPA, and state and local regulations.

Ecotourism Planning:

The San Diego Bay NWR’s proximity to the Bayshore Bikeway and Imperial Beach makes this refuge of great strategic importance for ecotourism planning. Access to the refuge is currently limited as there are no existing trails into the refuge or interpretive displays. However, new trails and interpretive elements are now in the planning stages. These plans offer Imperial Beach an important opportunity for ecotourism planning in coordination with the refuge. USFWS has plans for a one-to-two-mile interpretive trail adjacent to the Bayshore Bikeway with access from Imperial Beach. City access points have yet to be determined but could include 13th Street, 8th Street, or the current site of the City’s Public Work Yard.

In addition, USFWS is planning an interpretive display system, including panels at 8th Street, 10th Street, and 13th Street, using the refuge as a backdrop. Ideas for more ambitious kiosks or live video feeds are on the drawing board and will be further developed as part of interpretive step down planning, and as funds become available. Elevated observations platforms are also being considered by USFWS. It must be noted, however, that budget for the development of the interpretive program

planned by the USFWS is presently limited and the interpretive program will need to obtain funding not only through federal sources but also via partnerships and cost sharing.

Opportunities:

- This refuge has excellent potential for viewing bird congregations. Hundreds of thousands of shorebirds, waterfowl and seabirds have been recorded in the mudflats and open water of the Bay in a given year (over 500,000 in 1994). It is an important stopping point for birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway because it is the largest contiguous mudflat in Southern California. Presently, this area is not accessible enough to promote for birdwatching.

Constraints:

- The major constraint affecting the refuge from an ecotourism planning perspective is the general lack of species viewability. As previously mentioned, there are no trails leading into the refuge and visitors cannot see the congregations of birds adequately from the Bayshore Bikeway or from the City street ends at 8th, 10th, or 13th Streets.
- Increased activity can interfere with overall productivity of the environmental resource.
- Proximity of existing urban development along portions of the bayfront reduces habitat values and suitability for attracting nesting and foraging birds to near shore areas.
- Regulatory requirements for development in and adjacent to wetlands and associated wildlife limit development opportunities along the bayshore.

E. Pond 20

Located just west of the historic mouth of the Otay River, Pond 20 comprises several parcels within the jurisdictional boundary of the City of San Diego. Formerly owned by the Western Salt Works, the San Diego Port District is the current owner of the approximately 115-acre site. The approximate northern half is within the approved South San Diego Unit of the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge (APN Nos. 616-021-07, 621-020-07). Figure V-2 shows the location of Pond 20 relative to the city boundary and NWR. Future development plans for the southern parcels within Pond 20 (APN Nos. 616-020-04, -08, -12) are subject to the terms and conditions outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Imperial Beach, City of San Diego, and San Diego Unified Port District.

The MOU, dated June 13, 2000, provides for future consideration of Pond 20 as part of the City of Imperial Beach's redevelopment planning efforts. In addition to completion of a market and feasibility study to determine the highest and best economic development of Pond 20, the MOU provides support for a future "holistic restoration/enhancement master plan to provide a balanced approach that would increase the wetland and wildlife habitat values for the Pond 20 area and provide for limited economic

development opportunities.” No development rights or approvals are conferred or guaranteed under the MOU.

Vegetation mapping for Pond 20 is shown on Figure V-4. The southern coastal salt marsh habitat on the pond provides nesting and foraging habitat for sensitive bird species on and adjacent to the site. Specifically the Belding’s savannah sparrow and loggerhead shrike have been identified, as has the San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit.

Ecotourism Planning:

The present condition of Pond 20, adjacent to the San Diego Bay NWR is an important ecotourism planning constraint, as it seriously damages the viewshed from 13th Street terminus of Imperial Beach. This site is an unattractive empty salt pond, which is presently owned and managed by the Port of San Diego. The site’s economic development potential has been studied extensively by the Port as well as by private real estate development entities. The Port has determined that commercial development on Pond 20 is not economically viable due to the high costs associated with filling the site to bring it to street grade, estimated between \$4 million and \$5 million. The Port believes that the highest and best use of the sight is for mitigation credits received through habitat restoration. The Port did not investigate stilted structures for developing the site – a type of development extensively used in wetlands that is environmentally sound. The USFWS is interested in restoring Pond 20. It is therefore important for the City of Imperial Beach to determine its stance toward restoration of the Pond 20 site.

Opportunities:

- Development of some, or all, of the southern portion of Pond 20 may be feasible, provided that the use and design are compatible with the proposed Refuge and adequate buffers are provided to protect nearby habitats and sensitive species.
- Development of stilted structures on the pond that would enable visitors to see wading birds at closer range -- without disturbing them -- offers a whole new development opportunity that could benefit Imperial Beach. Such a development could be targeted to attract both birdwatchers and generally interested wildlife watchers to a set of environmentally designed stilted buildings (perhaps connected by bridges) that could be developed as a new ecotourism attraction for Imperial Beach from both a commercial and informational perspective; for example a San Diego Bay birdwatching museum and gift shop, developed by the private sector in cooperation with a non-profit organization.
- Pond 20 currently offers views into south San Diego Bay from Palm Avenue and provides open space for adjacent urbanized areas in the northern portion of the city.
- Pond 20, if managed properly, could provide a buffer between urbanized areas and more sensitive areas of the bay.

-
- Removing incompatible land uses and/or rezoning area adjacent to sensitive habitats would improve compatibility with wildlife and improve the overall long-term viability of associated habitats.

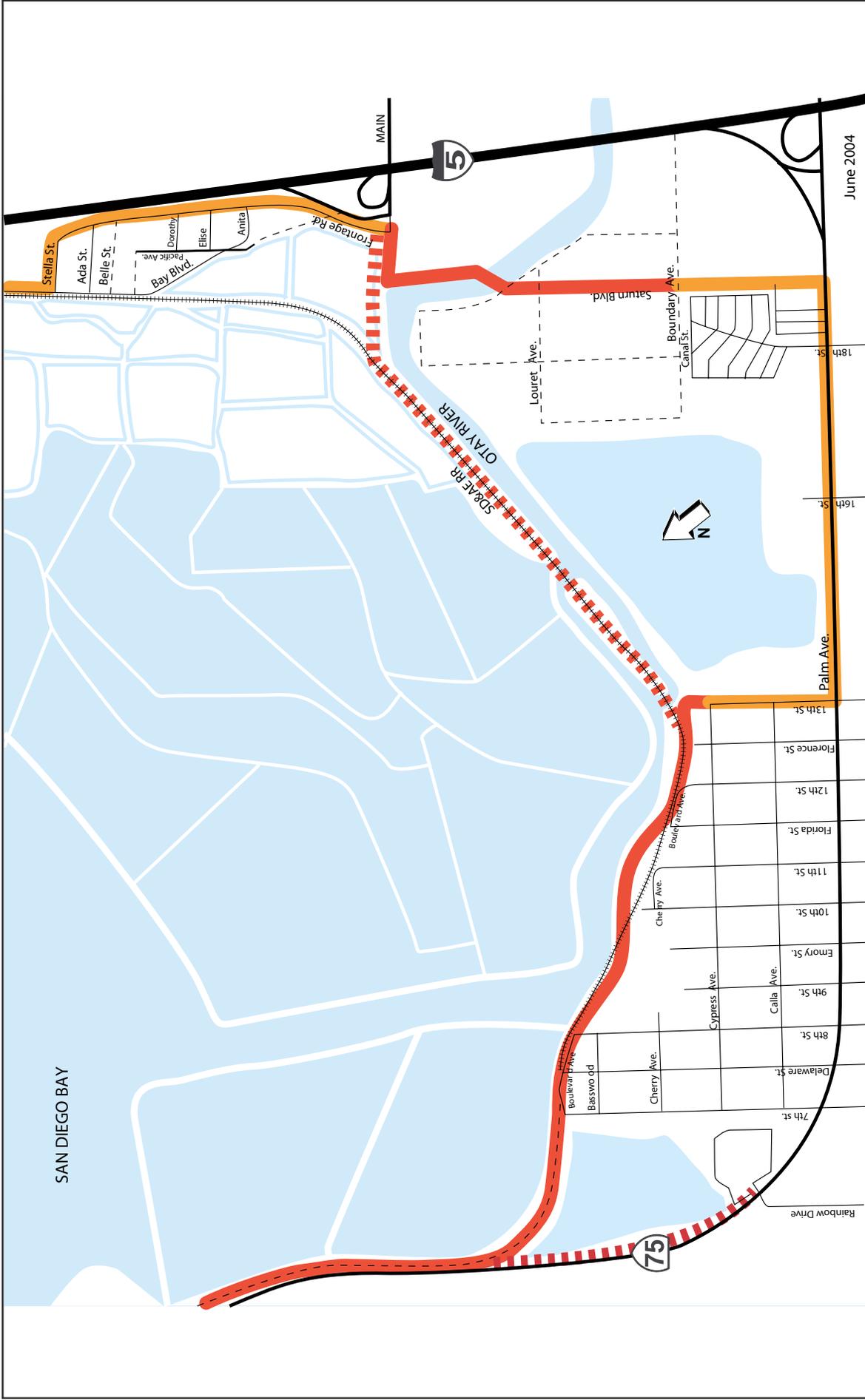
Constraints:

- Multiple ownerships/jurisdictional responsibilities for the site and existing development on adjacent lands complicate future planning efforts.
- Proximity of urbanized land uses could increase predation of nesting marsh wildlife and shorebirds by pets.
- Proximity of urbanized land uses could degrade water quality and habitat restoration efforts, if pursued, in the pond.
- Mitigation of impacts to wetlands/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdictional waters would be required for any future development affecting these resources.

F. Bayshore Bikeway

The Bayshore Bikeway is a multi-jurisdictional effort to complete a planned 24-mile bikeway around San Diego Bay. The Bayshore Bikeway extends 24 miles around San Diego Bay, including 11 miles of path surrounding the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Overall, 14 miles of the 24-mile bikeway consist of bike path and 10 miles consist of surface streets. The existing and proposed facilities for the Bayshore Bikeway in the south end of the bay are presented as Figure V-5. The facility is planned to provide a combination of dedicated bike paths, bike lanes, and bike routes utilizing both new and existing transportation facilities. In addition to utilizing existing roadways, the bikeway along the southern San Diego Bay area is planned to align with the existing railroad right-of-way. Bikeway improvements within the city have been completed along the south end of the bay from the Coronado/Imperial Beach city boundary to approximately Thirteenth Street, just west of Pond 20.

Completion of the Bayshore Bikeway north of the pond is pending. Construction is approved for 2005 to extend the path at 13th Street in Imperial Beach easterly and north to Bay Boulevard in Chula Vista using a combination of railroad right-of-ways now controlled by Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) and adjacent berms that are part of the historic salt extraction operation. This will provide the most direct route between Imperial Beach and Chula Vista and is generally preferred by commuting bicycle riders in the community. The City of San Diego is the lead agency for this section; and right-of-way agreements with the Port District, the State Lands Commission, and MTDB have been negotiated.



NO SCALE

- BIKE PATH
- ON STREET LANE/ROUTE
- PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

FIGURE V 5
San Diego Bayshore Bikeway

Ecotourism Planning:

The bikeway co-exists very comfortably with the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge and it is the existing trail connection between Imperial Beach and its most important markets, the Cities of Coronado and San Diego. At present, most bikers and roller-bladers have little awareness of Imperial Beach as they pass the City's northern boundary and reach the present terminus of the bike trail at 13th Street. As previously mentioned, because of the sensitivity of the wildlife refuge no access from the bikeway to the refuge is permitted and present viewscapes of wildlife in the refuge from the bikeway are limited.

The planned 1.5-mile extension from 13th Street in Imperial Beach which is to begin construction in 2005 is to include interpretive elements that will bring more attention to the southern end of San Diego Bay and provide an opportunity for Imperial Beach to develop more strategic market connections to both the Bay and the Bikeway. Funding for these interpretive elements has already been secured. At present, there is only one interpretive display along the bikeway in the City of Coronado.

An additional three to five miles of bikeway could be built in the future along existing railroad right of ways, but there are many historic resource and biological issues that must be evaluated before this segment could be constructed.

Opportunities:

- Recreational opportunities to experience unique habitat and wildlife species, including biking, walking, bird watching and, in general, communing with nature.
- Significant water views and long-range skyline views contribute to the overall experience.
- Planning efforts of adjacent agencies provide an opportunity to connect with trails and habitats outside the city. With proper planning, trails originating in the city could provide a linkage from the Pacific Ocean to eastern Chula Vista and the Upper and Lower Otay Lakes.
- Public access to dikes would provide enhanced viewing opportunities and experiences.
- The birdwatching potential from the bikeway is very good and can be realized by the addition of elevated platforms (presently under consideration by the USFWS). Elevated observation platforms along the Imperial Beach stretch of the bikeway would be an important attraction for ecotourism. The platforms would allow cyclists, walkers, and joggers, entering the bikeway from access points in Imperial Beach to not only enjoy the viewshed and planned interpretive signage from ground level, but also to stand above and see the refuge from an elevated position, thus greatly enhancing the ability to view wildlife.

Constraints:

- Active uses could interfere with wildlife and habitat preservation efforts, depending on popularity of the bikeway.
- Public access to dikes could interfere with wildlife and habitat preservation efforts.
- Trail planning efforts by adjacent jurisdictions in the Otay Valley Regional Park and Tijuana Valley are still somewhat unrefined.
- Future visitor serving or other adjacent uses may not be compatible with the long-term sustainability of the site's wetland and wildlife resources.
- The primary constraint for the visitor experience along the Bayshore Bikeway is the inability to view wildlife from the shoreline of the national wildlife refuge.

G. Otay Valley Regional Park

The Otay Valley Regional Park is a joint planning effort of the County of San Diego, City of Chula Vista, and City of San Diego. The intent of its formation is to create a regional park stretching from the Upper and Lower Otay Reservoirs along the Otay River to San Diego Bay. The park study area overlaps the proposed San Diego NWR South San Diego Bay Unit and Stewardship Project in the area of the Ghio/Fenton property (east of the Imperial Beach city boundary and Pond 20).

Ecotourism Planning:

The County of San Diego Department of Park and Recreation is planning two trail corridors within the Otay Valley Regional Park. The corridors will run along the north and south sides of the Otay River and will connect the Otay Reservoir with San Diego Bay. Though this trail corridor will not have its terminus in Imperial Beach, it will connect to the planned Bayshore Bikeway extension. The trail systems will also connect to the California Riding and Hiking Trails as well as the Pacific Crest Trail, a trail corridor that brings hikers from Mexico to Canada. When constructed, these regional trail corridors will add to the visitor amenities available to ecotourists coming to Imperial Beach and the south San Diego Bay region.

Construction drawings will be completed on the first 10 miles of the trail corridor by March 2005 and environmental review is anticipated to be underway by 2006. Though funding for the overall trail project has yet to be secured, a two-mile portion of the trail has been funded. Located near Fenton Pond, this portion of the trail is compliant with guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will be the initial phase of the trail project.

The interpretive display system will include the Finney Interpretive Overlook, which will serve elementary schools and feature a small amphitheater and nature/science elements. There is no scheduled date for completion of this project and other interpretive elements have yet to be identified.

Opportunities:

- Birdwatching potential is promising, although the park currently is not very well known among birdwatchers. Several birds of special interest have been reported in the area, including the California Gnatcatcher, Forster's and California Least Terns, and excellent congregations of Western Grebes
- Link trails within the park to the proposed Bayfront Bikeway and other northeastern areas of Imperial Beach, in the vicinity of the salt ponds and Bayshore Bikeway.
- Trail connectivity to the park would allow a greater number of users a unique and attractive access route to other resources within the city, including direct access to natural areas and traditional ocean activities.

Constraints:

- Currently, there are no funds identified to construct the planned trail corridors. In addition, the process faces impediments in the form of environmental impact process and the requirement of permits from the Corps of Engineers for rivers crossing.
- Care must be taken to protect nesting and foraging habitat along the planned trail route.
- Noise, lighting, and other potential impacts affecting natural habitat and wildlife areas from any future active use must be adequately evaluated for direct and indirect impacts before introduction along the trail network.

H. Border Field State Park

Located within the TRNERR and City of Imperial Beach jurisdictional boundary, Border Field State Park occupies the southwestern most corner of the continental United States and is located on the border with Mexico. The park provides access to the Pacific Ocean and to the Tijuana River and its estuary for the south. Coastal bluffs offer spectacular views of the Pacific shoreline and of points north and south of the border.

Access from the City of Imperial Beach to the park is not directly available. While amenities at the park include nature trails for hiking, horse trails, surf fishing, and birding, the need to protect sensitive habitats and wildlife in the Tijuana River valley and estuary prevents direct access from urbanized portions of Imperial Beach to Border Field State Park. Figure V-5 shows the habitats within the park boundary. Salt and freshwater marshes provide refuge to migrating waterfowl and resident wading birds

such as the black-necked stilt, avocet, teal, American widgeon, and pelican. Visitors to the park from Imperial Beach must travel out of the city and through a portion of the City of San Diego before returning to the coast and back into the City of Imperial Beach's jurisdiction.

Border Field State Park Looking East



Source: www.californiacoastline.org

Ecotourism Planning:

Border Field State Park provides an additional amenity to visitors coming to Imperial Beach that may want to visit the Southwestern most corner of the United States and experience the border between the City of Tijuana and the United States up close. It offers some excellent vistas and the potential of good hiking and bird watching. It presently is not part of the focus for ecotourism planning for Imperial Beach, as the access to Border Field State park is not contiguous to the city and has limitations due to issues related to the possible expansion of national security fencing and patrols in the area.

Opportunities:

- The site is relatively unknown and existing facilities at Border Field State Park can accommodate larger groups than currently use the park.
- The site's location along the top of the bluffs provide enhanced wildlife viewing opportunities along the shoreline and into the estuary located north of the site while minimizing potential conflicts to resources in those areas.

-
- Beach areas are easily accessible by vehicle, foot, or horseback from within the park.
 - The park offers access to rarely observed natural coastline resources in a semi-remote setting.

Constraints:

- Expansion of active use in the area could negatively affect existing sensitive resources, including nesting habitat for shoreline birds.
- The park is not directly accessible from locations within the City of Imperial Beach.
- Border patrol operations and national security considerations could limit future expansion and use of the park.

I. Tijuana River Regional Park (TRRP)

The Tijuana River Regional Park (TRRP) borders TRNERR and Border Field State Park. The TRRP provides visitors access to a diverse array of habitats, from dense riparian forests along the Tijuana River to coastal maritime scrub atop Spooner's Mesa. The park is east of the jurisdictional boundary of Imperial Beach with trails connecting the park through the TRNERR and Border Field State Park to the ocean. The park is popular with bird watchers due to its location along the Pacific Flyway. Over 340 species of birds have been observed in the area, including two dozen sensitive species. It is also a popular area for horseback riding with trails, corrals, and picnic areas available to riders and pedestrians alike. The park also sports a Little League baseball field and Community Garden. Existing and future parkland is located within multiple jurisdictions with coordination of planning efforts is the responsibility of the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation. Proposed trail alignments are being coordinated with each affected jurisdiction including the City of Imperial Beach, and are expected to be available to the public within the next several months.

Ecotourism Planning:

TRPP is most well known for over 70 miles of equestrian trails. The county of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department's review of trail use is presently underway. Equestrian use in the park is presently unregulated and questions of how to equitably manage recreational uses of the area and protect the natural resources have not been resolved. Four or five alternatives for recreational and public use will be presented in a public meeting process led by planners for the County of San Diego's Department of Parks and Recreation and a draft document on trail design will not appear until March 2005. Visitor planning is therefore not available from authorities at present, and cannot be incorporated into the Imperial Beach ecotourism plan.

Opportunities:

- Planning for the park's trail network and recreational amenities is currently underway. The city has only a limited ability to affect future alignments and facilities. The majority of lands within its jurisdictional boundary is within the TRNERR/Tijuana Slough DWR and managed by the USFWS or State Parks and Recreation.
- Trail alignments and restoration efforts are being coordinated with participating jurisdictions, including the City of Imperial Beach.
- Visitor experience along the trail network would be enhanced by connections to the larger county trail network, allowing visitors to experience a wider range of views and greater number of the region's habitats.

Constraints:

- The city has limited ability to control uses allowed in the park.
- Planning for the trail system is in public review and cannot be accessed until after March 2005.

J. Planned/Proposed Investments in Visitor Experience Amenities

Throughout this section numerous projects, planned or underway, that will represent beneficial elements of the ecotourist visitor experience were discussed. The projects are being initiated and funded by various agencies other than the City of Imperial Beach. Combined, these projects represent a substantial magnitude of investment in projects that are supportive of the establishment of an ecotourism activity network. The total investment is approximately \$6.7 million, as listed in the table on the following page.

With over \$6 million dollars to be invested in visitor amenities in areas adjacent or directly accessible to Imperial Beach in the next 3 years, it is clearly of great importance that Imperial Beach seeks to participate closely with the agencies involved and integrate the planned improvements into its overall ecotourism strategy.

Listing of Key Visitor Amenity and Investment Amount

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Estimated Timeline</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
National Estuarine Research Reserve, Tijuana Slough Visitor Center Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Department of Parks and Recreation National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 	2005-2006	\$1.4 million
National Estuarine Research Reserve, Tijuana Slough Outdoor Amphitheater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Department of Parks and Recreation National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 	2005-2006	\$200,000
National Estuarine Research Reserve, Tijuana Slough Visitor Center Interpretive Displays & Sustainable Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Department of Park and Recreation National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 	2005-2006	\$250,000
San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 	Budget requested not approved	\$210,000
San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge Observation Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 	Budget requested not approved	\$240,000
Bayshore Bikeway interpretive kiosks on bikeway extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SANDAG City of San Diego 	2005-2006	\$2.6 million
Otay Valley Regional Park, ADA Trail in Fenton Pond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation 	2005-2006	\$200,000
Otay Valley Regional Park, 10 mile trail – phase one of corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation 	2007	\$1.1 million for planning
Otay Valley Regional Park, Finney Amphitheater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation 	2005-2006	\$100,000 for planning \$400,000 for construction
Estimated Total Investment			\$6.7 Million

K. City of Imperial Beach Coordination with Partner Agencies

Representatives of each agency responsible for management of ecological and/or recreational amenities around Imperial Beach were contacted as part of the process of preparing this working paper. Each agency contact was asked how Imperial Beach could best coordinate during the planning phases of the planned investments in visitor amenities. The following table summarizes their responses.

Agency and Area/Amenity	Comments
California Department of Parks and Recreation <i>National Estuarine Research Reserve, Tijuana Slough National Wildlife Refuge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This refuge is focusing on more public visibility and seeks more collaboration on its Festival del Rio event, and all aspects of branding the region for ecotourism. • Suggest creating an ecotourism steering committee.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) <i>San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperial Beach can join with USFWS to request grants as co-applicants for interpretive trail along Bayshore Bikeway. • Imperial Beach can work with USFWS to develop interpretive program on current site of Imperial Beach Public Works property that would enhance visitor access and interpretation options, such as live video feed from nesting terns colonies in refuge.
San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) <i>Bayshore Bikeway</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation and maintenance of the 1.5 mile extension north of Imperial Beach will be the responsibility of Imperial Beach.
County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation <i>Otay Valley Regional Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers of the Otay Valley trails project can send out update reports on the 10 mile trail corridor to be built. • County would like to work with a designated liaison from Imperial Beach.

Technical Appendices

Urban Waterfront & Ecotourism Study

**Working Paper #1
Assessment of Opportunities and Constraints**

Prepared for:

City of Imperial Beach

Prepared by:

Keyser Marston Associates, Inc.

Urban Counsel

RECON

EplerWood International

Technical Appendices

Appendix A: Overview of Federal Laws Relevant to Natural Resource Management

Appendix B: Overview of Local Laws and Plans Relevant to Resource Management

Appendix C: Demographic Trends

Appendix D: Commercial Real Estate Market Factors

Appendix E: Lodging Market Factors

Appendix F: Residential Market Factors

Appendix G: Summary of Plans and Documents

Appendix H: Profiles of Firms on the Consultant Team

APPENDIX A

Overview of Federal Laws Relevant to Natural Resource Management

Proposed land use actions within the TRNERR, Tijuana Slough NWR, South Bay Unit of the San Diego Bay NWR, Naval Radio Receiving Facility (NRRF), and Naval Outlying Field (NOLF)-Ream Field are subject to federal regulations and could require coordination with the USFWS, US Navy, Army Corps of Engineers, or other federal agencies, depending on the location and resources affected. The following provides a brief summary of a few of the most critical regulations that must be considered for future proposals:

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA):

(Public Law 91-190; 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). NEPA mandates federal agencies to consider and document environmental impacts of proposed actions and legislation, and mandates preparation of comprehensive environmental impact statements where proposed action is “major” and significantly affects the quality of the human environment.

Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA):

(Public Law 93-205; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). ESA provides for listing of endangered and threatened species of plants and animals and designation of critical habitat for animal species. The act establishes federal policy that federal agencies, in exercise of their authorities, shall seek to conserve endangered species and prohibits federal agencies from taking any action that would adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or critical habitat. Further, ESA establishes a consultation process involving federal agencies generally and federal wildlife management agencies to facilitate avoidance of agency action that would adversely affect species or habitat. This act prohibits all persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction from “taking” endangered species. A “taking” prohibition includes any harm or harassment and applies within the U.S. and on the high seas.

Clean Air Act:

(42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.). Mandates the prevention and control of air pollution from stationary and mobile sources. Requires the establishment of national ambient air quality standards to regulate primary and secondary concentrations for six priority air pollutants; new source performance standards to provide ceiling emission standards for certain new industrial sources; and national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants to control pollutants, not covered under the national ambient air quality standards, which may increase mortality rates or cause serious irreversible illness.

Clean Water Act (CWA):

(Public Law 92-500, as amended; 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.). “The objective of this Act is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters” [Section 10(a)]. Section 404 of the act deals with discharge of dredge or fill material into waters of the U.S. Regulatory authority has been delegated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Section 404. Jurisdictional “waters of the U.S.” can be broadly characterized as open water areas. The use of the open waters of bays and estuaries by resident and migratory birds for

resting and foraging is well documented. At low tide, the rocky areas and flats provide forage areas for numerous shorebirds.

Coastal Zone Act Reauthorization Amendments:

(16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.). Establishes goals for the use and development of state coastal zones. Authorizes states to administer coastal nonpoint source pollution programs when approved by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972:

(Public Law 92-583; 16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.). Provides incentives for coastal states to develop coastal zone management programs. Federal actions that impact the coastal zone must be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the state program.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA):

(Public Law 96-510; 42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.). Establishes programs for the cleanup of hazardous waste disposal and spill sites to ensure protection of human health and the environment. Empowers the EPA to identify and prioritize sites for cleanup and to order or carry out environmental remediation. Designates the President as trustee for federally protected or managed natural resources.

Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972:

(Public Law 92-522; 16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.). Subject to limited exceptions, prohibits the “taking” of marine mammals in the United States or on the high seas. “Taking” includes any harm or harassment.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918:

(Public Law 65-186; 16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.). Prohibits the “taking” of migratory birds, their nests, eggs, parts, or products without the appropriate permit and provides enforcement authority and penalties for violations. The act protects all but a very few species of birds inhabiting the United States.

APPENDIX B

Overview of Local Laws and Plans Relevant to Resource Management

Plans, ordinances, and regulations must be considered for discretionary approvals prior to development of state lands or lands within local jurisdictions. Proposed land uses requiring city approvals must conform to the adopted land use plan and zoning as well as applicable state and federal regulations. Coordination may also be required as in the case of Pond 20, which is owned by the Unified Port District where multiple agencies retain jurisdiction. Consequently, a proposed project for which discretionary approval is required must also be reviewed for conformance to State of California regulations. Selected regulations are included below.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

(Pub. Res. Code {Statutes} secs. 21000-21177; California State CEQA Guidelines, California Administrative Code [Guidelines], secs. 15000-15387). CEQA sets forth a process for public agencies to make informed decisions on discretionary project approvals and aids decision makers in determining, whether any environmental impacts are associated with a proposed project. This California law requires that environmental impacts be identified, disclosed, and mitigated to the maximum extent feasible. The primary objectives of CEQA are:

- Disclosure of significant impacts to the environment;
- Identification of mechanisms to reduce or avoid significant negative impacts;
- Implementation of feasible alternatives or mitigation measures;
- Provision of agency rationale for approval of projects with significant negative impacts;
- Enhancement of inter-agency cooperation; and
- Facilitation of public participation in the process.

California Endangered Species Act (CESA):

California Fish and Game Code Div. 3, Ch 1.5, secs. 2050-2116). Proposals affecting sensitive wildlife must also comply with the CESA which provides for conservation, protection, restoration, and enhancement of any endangered species or any threatened species and its habitat and, consistent with conserving the species, acquisition of lands to provided habitat for these species. CESA prohibits all persons subject to jurisdiction from “taking” endangered species. “Taking” prohibition includes any harm or harassment and applies throughout the state.

California Coastal Act (Coastal Act):

The Coastal Act includes specific policies (see Division 20 of the Public Resources Code) addressing issues such as the maintenance and/or provision for public access and recreation along the shoreline, lower cost visitor accommodations, terrestrial and marine habitat protection, visual resources, landform alteration, agricultural lands, commercial fisheries, industrial uses, water quality, offshore oil and gas

development, transportation, development design, power plants, ports, and public works. The policies of the Coastal Act constitute the statutory standards applied to planning and regulatory decisions made by the Commission and by local governments, pursuant to the Coastal Act.

APPENDIX C

Demographic Trends

TABLE C-1

POPULATION FORECAST, SAN DIEGO COUNTY AND SOUTH BAY, 2000-2030
 URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
 CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2030</u>	Percent Change 2000-2010		Percent Change 2000-2030	
				<u>Total</u>	<u>Average Annual</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average Annual</u>
South Bay							
<u>Imperial Beach</u>	26,992	27,899	32,797	3.4%	0.3%	21.5%	0.7%
National City	54,260	56,095	62,837	3.4%	0.3%	15.8%	0.5%
Chula Vista	173,556	247,885	278,183	42.8%	3.6%	60.3%	1.6%
<u>Other South Bay (1)</u>	<u>82,996</u>	<u>112,748</u>	<u>154,442</u>	<u>35.8%</u>	<u>3.1%</u>	<u>86.1%</u>	<u>2.1%</u>
Total South Bay	337,804	444,627	528,259	31.6%	2.8%	56.4%	1.5%
San Diego County	1,223,400	1,370,328	1,656,820	12.0%	1.1%	35.4%	1.0%

(1) Includes City of San Diego Community Planning Areas (CPA's) of Otay-Nestor, Tijuana River Valley, and Otay Mesa, and County CPA's of Otay and Sweetwater.

TABLE C-2

**HOUSING FORECAST, SAN DIEGO COUNTY AND SOUTH BAY, 2000-2030
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH**

	Housing Units (1)			Percent Change 2000-2010		Percent Change 2000-2030	
	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2030</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average Annual</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average Annual</u>
South Bay							
<i>Imperial Beach</i>	9,739	9,802	10,919	0.6%	0.1%	12.1%	0.4%
National City	15,422	15,724	17,029	2.0%	0.2%	10.4%	0.3%
Chula Vista	59,495	81,465	87,537	36.9%	3.2%	47.1%	1.3%
<u>Other South Bay (2)</u>	<u>21,961</u>	<u>29,668</u>	<u>40,106</u>	<u>35.1%</u>	<u>3.1%</u>	<u>82.6%</u>	<u>2.0%</u>
Total South Bay	106,617	136,659	155,591	28.2%	2.5%	45.9%	1.3%
San Diego County	469,689	519,996	604,399	10.7%	1.0%	28.7%	0.8%

(1) Includes single-family, multi-family, and mobile home units.

(2) Includes City of San Diego Community Planning Areas (CPA's) of Otay-Nestor, Tijuana River Valley, and Otay Mesa, and County CPA's of Otay and Sweetwater.

TABLE C-3

**HOUSEHOLD INCOME FORECAST, SAN DIEGO COUNTY AND SOUTH BAY CITIES, 2000-2030
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH**

	<u>Median Household Income (1)</u>			<u>Percent Change</u> <u>2000-2010</u>		<u>Percent Change</u> <u>2000-2030</u>	
	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2030</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u> <u>Annual</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average</u> <u>Annual</u>
South Bay							
<i>Imperial Beach</i>	\$36,081	\$36,247	\$48,915	0.5%	0.1%	35.6%	1.0%
National City	\$30,121	\$29,244	\$40,546	-2.9%	-0.3%	34.6%	1.0%
Chula Vista	\$45,289	\$54,625	\$70,841	20.6%	1.9%	56.4%	1.5%
San Diego County	\$46,284	\$47,713	\$63,146	3.1%	0.3%	36.4%	1.0%

(1) Includes single-family, multi-family, and mobile home units.

Source: SANDAG

Prepared by: Keyser Marston Associates, Inc.

File Location: I:\Imperial Beach\Demographics.xls;9/13/2004;10:42 PM;tch

TABLE C-4

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW, MEXICO CITIES, 1990-2000
 URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
 CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH

	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>Average Annual Change</u>
<u>State of Baja California</u>			
Population	1,660,855	2,487,367	4.1%
Households	373,476	568,090	4.3%
Persons Per Household	4.45	4.38	
<u>Municipality of Tijuana</u>			
Population	747,381	1,210,820	4.9%
Households	161,520	269,965	5.3%
Persons Per Household	4.10	4.00	

Appendix D

Commercial Real Estate Market Factors

TABLE D-1

**PROFILE OF MAJOR SOUTH BAY RETAIL CENTERS
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH**

<u>Name / Location</u>	<u>Gross Leasable Area (GLA)</u>			<u>Year Opened</u>	<u>Stores</u>	<u>Anchor Stores</u>
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Anchor</u>	<u>In-Line Shops</u>			
Eastlake Village Marketplace	155,000	75,000	80,000	1996	34	Rite Aid Pharmacy, Vons
Chula Vista Center	885,739	588,137	297,602	1962	100	Ultra Star Cinemas, JC Penney, Macy's, Mervyn's, Sears
Westfield Shoppingtown Plaza Bonita	818,000	384,729	433,271	1981	143	JC Penney, Mervyn's, Robinson's-May
Palm Promenade	440,000	422,070	17,930	1994	18	AMC Theatres, Home Depot, Vons, Wal-Mart
Eastlake Terrace	405,000	359,500	45,500	2004	24	Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Walgreen's
Plaza Las Americas	371,716	57,300	314,416	2001	75	Nike, Gap, Old Navy
Costco Plaza	371,043	135,688	235,355	1980	27	Costco, Jo-Ann Fabrics
Terra Nova Plaza	310,000	185,504	124,496	1986	42	Bed, Bath and Beyond; Marshalls; Vons; Sports Authority; Long's Drugs
Sweetwater Town & Country	240,400	129,545	110,855	1976	32	Pacific 6 Theatres, Circuit City, Staples Office Supply, Holiday Spa, Long's Drugs
Palomar Trolley Center	180,372	112,627	67,745	1994	28	Office Depot, Ross, Gap, Blockbuster

Source: Interactive Market Systems, Inc.
Prepared by: Keyser Marston Associates, Inc.
File Location: I:\Imperial Beach\Retail\Taxable Sales.xls;9/22/2004;3:08 PM;TCH

TABLE D-2

GENERAL MERCHANDISE SALES, 1998 - 2002 (1)
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH

<u>Sales Per Capita</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>
Imperial Beach	\$32	\$117	\$41	\$25	\$95
Chula Vista	\$2,401	\$2,678	\$2,887	\$2,744	\$2,890
National City	\$2,891	\$2,745	\$2,458	\$2,226	\$1,990
San Diego County	\$1,318	\$1,442	\$1,535	\$1,550	\$1,559
 <u>Per Capita Sales as a % of Per Capita Income</u>					
Imperial Beach	0.2%	0.8%	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%
Chula Vista	13.7%	14.8%	15.6%	14.3%	14.5%
National City	26.5%	24.4%	21.2%	19.0%	16.8%
San Diego County	5.1%	5.4%	5.5%	5.4%	5.2%

(1) Includes drug stores.

TABLE D-3

**EATING AND DRINKING SALES, 1998 - 2002
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH**

<u>Sales Per Capita</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>
Imperial Beach	\$465	\$519	\$558	\$576	\$606
Chula Vista	\$825	\$867	\$906	\$859	\$935
National City	\$1,228	\$1,277	\$1,355	\$1,439	\$1,453
San Diego County	\$1,004	\$1,065	\$1,144	\$1,173	\$1,199
 <u>Per Capita Sales as a % of Per Capita Income</u>					
Imperial Beach	3.1%	3.4%	3.5%	3.5%	3.6%
Chula Vista	4.7%	4.8%	4.9%	4.5%	4.7%
National City	11.2%	11.4%	11.7%	12.3%	12.3%
San Diego County	3.9%	4.0%	4.1%	4.1%	4.0%

TABLE D-4

**HOME IMPROVEMENT SALES, 1998 - 2002
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH**

<u>Sales Per Capita</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>
Imperial Beach (1)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Chula Vista	\$475	\$535	\$596	\$512	\$502
National City	\$1,974	\$1,890	\$1,959	\$1,915	\$1,960
San Diego County	\$662	\$730	\$795	\$867	\$909
<u>Per Capita Sales as a % of Per Capita Income</u>					
Imperial Beach	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Chula Vista	2.7%	3.0%	3.2%	2.7%	2.5%
National City	18.1%	16.8%	16.9%	16.3%	16.5%
San Diego County	2.5%	2.7%	2.9%	3.0%	3.0%

(1) Reporting guidelines of the California State Board of Equalization prevent disclosure of home improvement sales in the City of Imperial Beach.

TABLE D-5

**TOTAL OTHER COMPARISON GOOD SALES, 1998 - 2002 (1)
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH**

<u>Sales Per Capita</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>
Imperial Beach (2)	\$553	\$550	\$576	\$615	\$649
Chula Vista	\$2,092	\$2,127	\$2,217	\$2,119	\$2,457
National City	\$3,471	\$3,632	\$3,963	\$3,962	\$4,016
San Diego County	\$2,526	\$2,712	\$2,939	\$2,976	\$3,022
<u>Per Capita Sales as a % of Per Capita Income</u>					
Imperial Beach	3.7%	3.6%	3.6%	3.8%	3.9%
Chula Vista	11.9%	11.8%	11.9%	11.0%	12.3%
National City	31.8%	32.3%	34.2%	33.8%	33.9%
San Diego County	9.7%	10.1%	10.6%	10.3%	10.0%

(1) Includes home furnishings, apparel, food stores, specialty goods, packaged liquor, second-hand merchandise, and farm and garden supply.

(2) Due to Board of Equalization disclosure rules, other comparison goods sales for Imperial Beach also includes building materials and farm implements.

Source: California State Board of Equalization, California Department of Finance, Census 2000, Claritas, Inc.

Prepared by: Keyser Marston Associates, Inc.

Filename: I:\Imperial Beach\Taxable Sales.xls;9/22/2004;3:08 PM;TCH

TABLE D-6

**TOTAL AUTOMOTIVE SALES, 1998 - 2002 (1)
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH**

<u>Sales Per Capita</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>
Imperial Beach	\$439	\$336	\$455	\$512	\$526
Chula Vista	\$1,231	\$1,351	\$1,556	\$1,416	\$1,543
National City	\$7,055	\$8,115	\$9,204	\$9,561	\$10,149
San Diego County	\$1,865	\$2,133	\$2,479	\$2,589	\$2,689
 <u>Per Capita Sales as a % of Per Capita Income</u>					
Imperial Beach	3.0%	2.2%	2.8%	3.1%	3.2%
Chula Vista	7.0%	7.5%	8.4%	7.4%	7.7%
National City	64.6%	72.1%	79.5%	81.6%	85.6%
San Diego County	7.2%	7.9%	9.0%	8.9%	8.9%

(1) Includes new and used motor vehicle dealers; parts and supplies, and service stations.

Appendix E
Lodging Market Factors

TABLE E-1

VISITOR STATISTICS, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, 1999-2003
 URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
 CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH

	Percent Change, 1999-2003						
	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Average Annual</u>
Overnight Visitors (Millions)	14.7	15.2	14.8	15.0	15.3	4.1%	1.0%
Visitor Spending (Billions)	\$4.9	\$5.2	\$5.1	\$5.0	\$5.3	8.2%	2.0%
Visitor Spending Per Capita	\$332	\$344	\$346	\$333	\$347	4.5%	1.1%
Hotel							
Room Nights (Millions)	12.1	12.6	12.6	12.6	13.2	9.1%	2.2%
Occupancy	72.6%	73.8%	69.8%	68.4%	69.5%	-4.3%	-1.1%
Average Daily Rate	\$102	\$109	\$111	\$111	\$111	8.8%	2.1%
Airport Arrivals (Millions)	7.6	7.9	7.6	7.5	7.6	0.0%	0.0%
Border Crossings (Millions)	53.8	55.9	55.9	54.7	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau
 Prepared by: Keyser Marston Associates, Inc.
 Filename: I:\Imperial Beach\Hotel Trends.xls;9/22/2004;3:15 PM;tch

TABLE E-2

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY RECREATION ATTRACTIONS
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH**

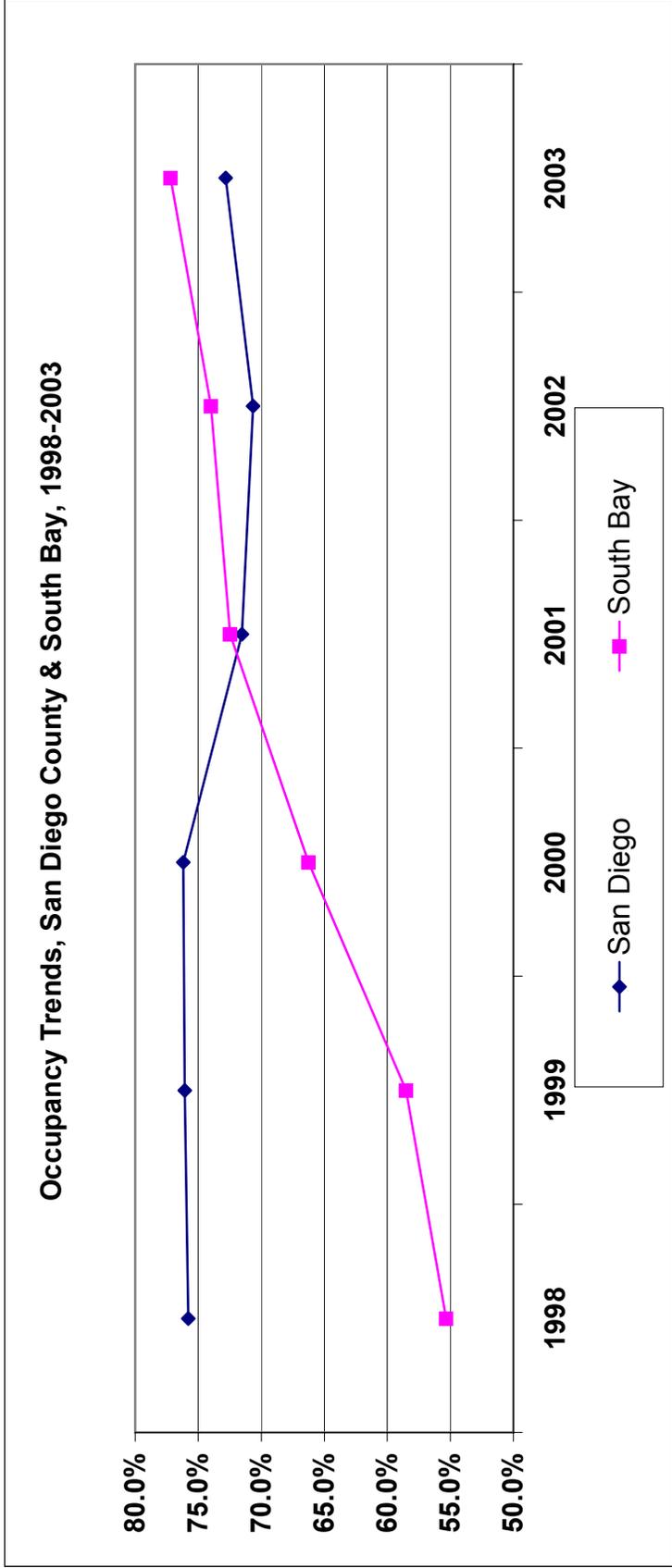
<u>Attraction</u>	<u>Visitors 2001</u>		<u>Visitors 2002</u>		<u>% Change</u>
	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Daily</u>	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Daily</u>	
Old Town Historic Park	5,500,000	15,068	6,404,000	17,545	16.4%
San Diego Zoo	3,500,000	9,589	3,500,000	9,589	0.0%
Seaport Village	4,000,000	10,959	4,000,000	10,959	0.0%
Seaworld	4,000,000	10,959	4,100,000	11,233	2.5%
San Diego Wild Animal Park	1,700,000	4,658	1,700,000	4,658	0.0%
Legoland	1,375,000	3,767	1,400,000	3,836	1.8%
Cabrillo National Monument	1,119,000	3,066	1,130,000	3,096	1.0%
Balboa Park Museums (1)	595,000	1,630	668,000	1,830	12.3%
Birch Aquarium, Scripps Institute	376,000	1,030	400,000	1,096	6.4%
Knott's Soak City - San Diego	250,000	685	226,000	619	-9.6%
UltraZone - The Ultimate Laser	129,000	353	129,000	353	0.0%
Museum of Contemporary Art	135,000	370	114,000	312	-15.6%

(1) Includes: San Diego Aerospace Museum, San Diego Model Railroad, San Diego Automotive Museum and San Diego National History Museum.

TABLE E-3

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TRENDS, 1998-2003
 URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
 CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH

	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>Absolute</u>	<u>Average Annual</u>
San Diego County	75.8%	76.1%	76.2%	71.5%	70.6%	72.8%	-3.0%	-0.8%
South Bay	55.3%	58.5%	66.2%	72.5%	74.0%	77.2%	21.9%	6.9%

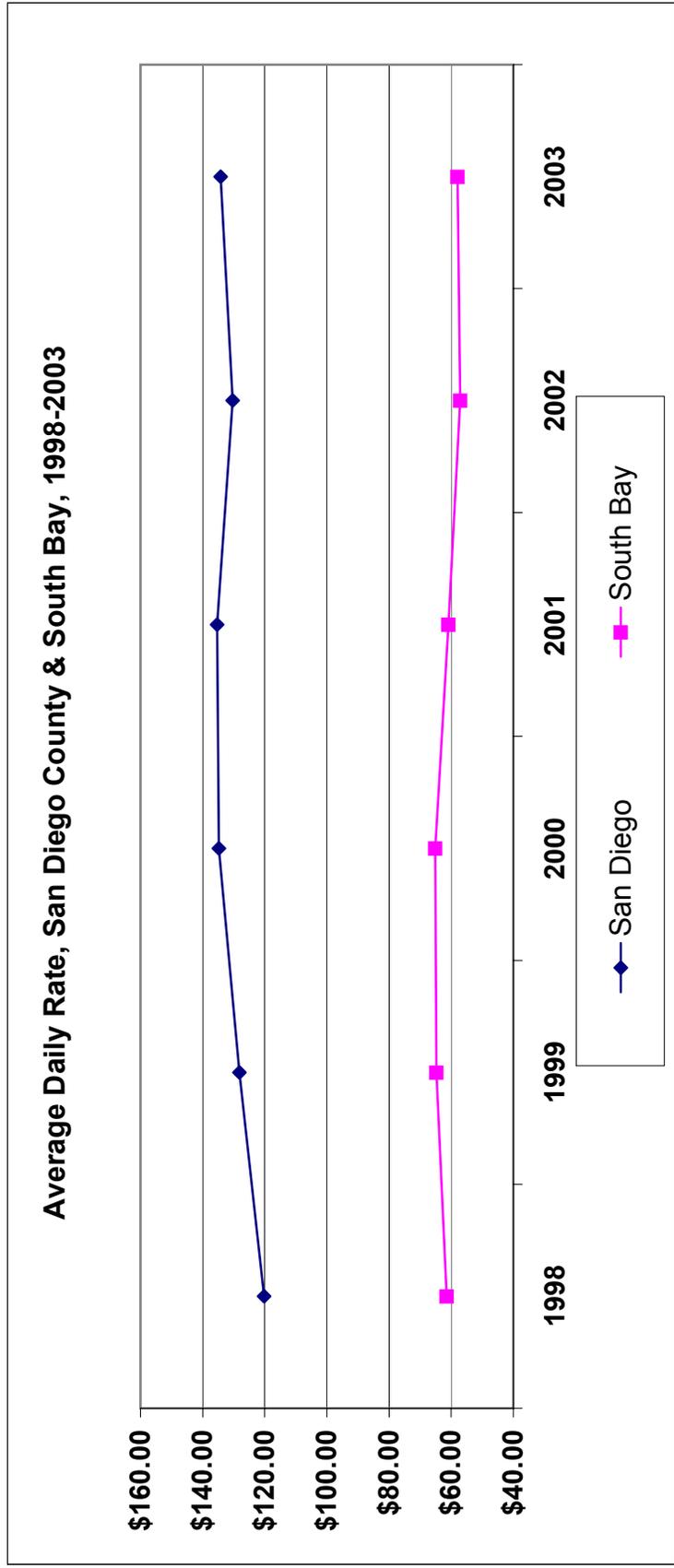


Source: PKF Consulting
 Prepared by: Keyser Marston Associates, Inc.
 Filename: I:\Imperial Beach\Hotel Trends.xls; 9/22/2004; 3:15 PM; tch

TABLE E-4

HOTEL AVERAGE DAILY RATE (ADR) TRENDS, 1998-2003
 URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
 CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH

	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>Absolute</u>	<u>Average Annual</u>
San Diego County	\$120.23	\$128.20	\$134.81	\$135.36	\$130.35	\$134.23	\$14.00	2.2%
South Bay	\$61.44	\$64.71	\$65.17	\$60.90	\$57.09	\$57.92	-\$3.52	-1.2%

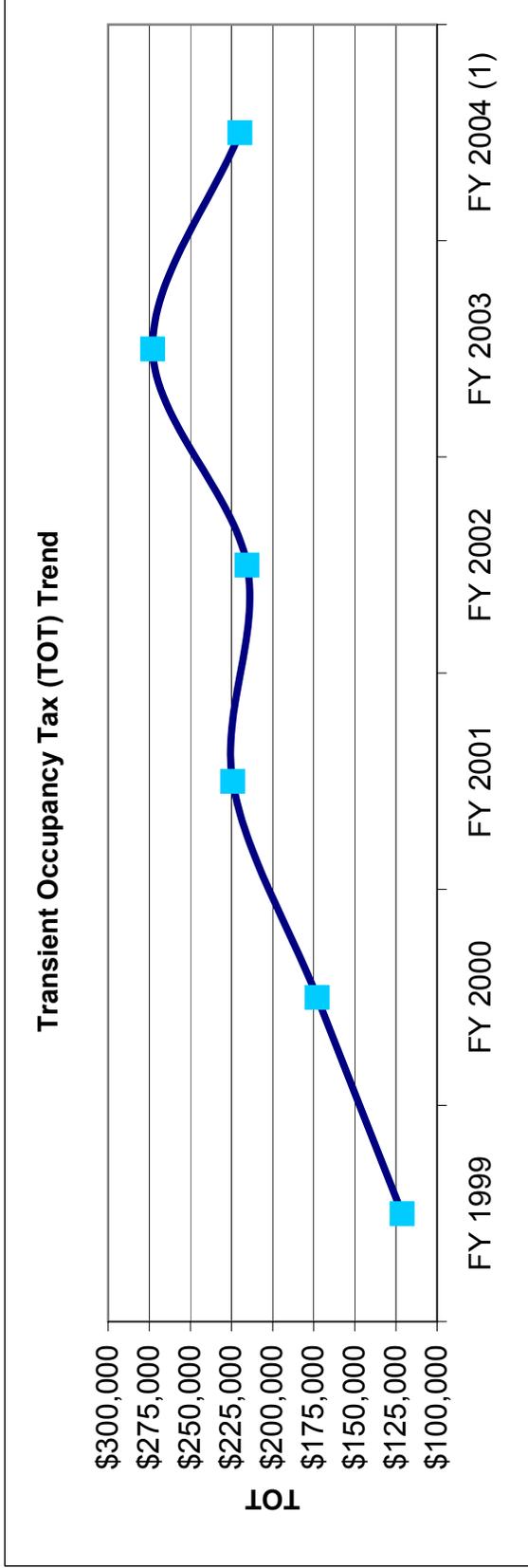


Source: PKF Consulting
 Prepared by: Keyser Marston Associates, Inc.
 Filename: I:\Imperial Beach\Hotel Trends.xls; 9/22/2004; 3:15 PM; tch

TABLE E-5

TRENDS IN TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX (TOT), CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH
 URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
 CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH

Transient Occupancy Tax	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004 (1)	Percent Change 1999-2004	
							Total	Average Annual
	\$121,172	\$172,920	\$224,311	\$215,589	\$272,925	\$219,900	81.5%	12.7%



(1) Projection per the City of Imperial Beach.

Source: City of Imperial Beach

Prepared by: Keyser Marston Associates, Inc.

Filename: I:\Imperial Beach\Hotel Trends\Hotel Trends.xls; 9/22/2004; 3:15 PM; crg

Appendix F

Residential Market Factors

TABLE F-1

**PROFILE OF HOUSING SALES, CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH, 2004
URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH**

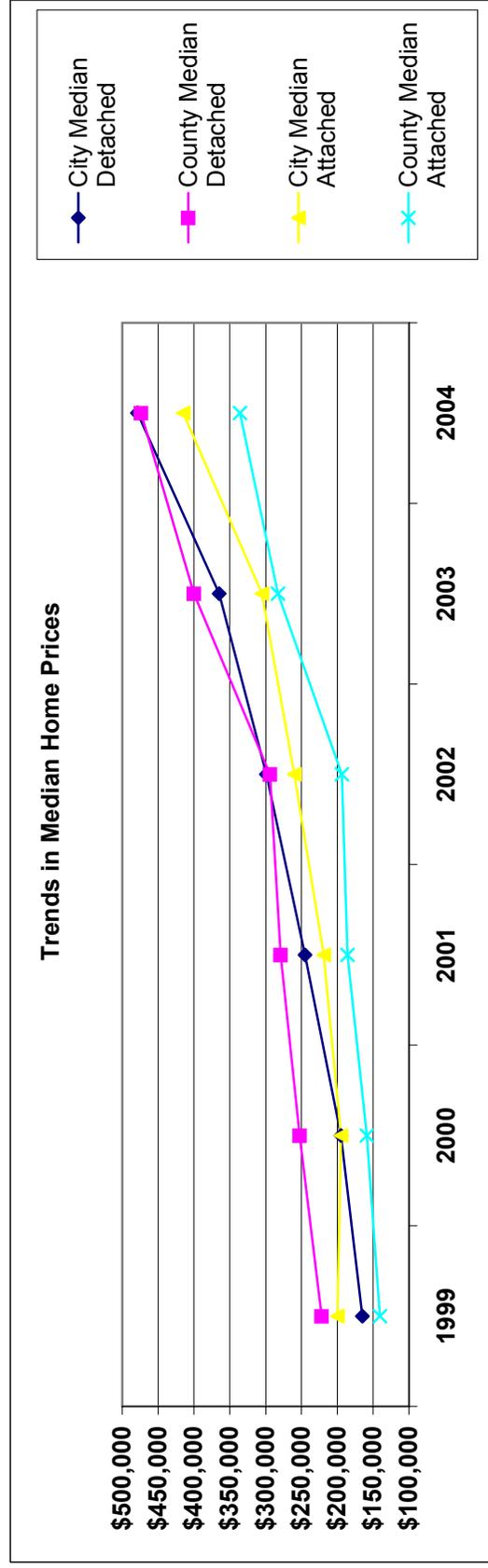
Housing Characteristics, 2004 (1)						
	<u>Beds</u>	<u>Baths</u>	<u>Size (SF)</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Sales Price</u>	
Single-Family Detached						
Minimum	2	1	813	1925	\$275,000	
Maximum	5	3.5	3,575	2004	\$875,000	
Average	3	2	1,482	1965	\$486,756	
Median	3	2	1,481	1957	\$479,000	
Single-Family Attached						
Minimum	1	1	612	1964	\$244,000	
Maximum	4	3.5	2,934	2003	\$1,100,000	
Average	2	2	1,268	1983	\$481,048	
Median	2	2	1,212	1986	\$415,000	

(1) Date range from January 2004 to August 2004.
Source: SANDICOR, Multiple Listing Service
Prepared by: Keyser Marston Associates, Inc.
Filename: I:\Imperial Beach\Summary of Housing Sales.xls;9/22/2004;Time:TCH

TABLE F-2

TRENDS IN MEDIUM HOME PRICES, CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH, 1999-2004 (1)
 URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
 CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH

Single Family Detached	Percent Change 1999-2004					Average Annual		
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003		Total	
Imperial Beach Median	\$165,000	\$195,000	\$245,000	\$299,000	\$365,000	\$479,000	190.3%	23.8%
County Median	\$221,750	\$252,375	\$279,250	\$294,000	\$400,000	\$474,000	113.8%	16.4%
Single Family Attached								
Imperial Beach Median	\$200,000	\$195,000	\$219,000	\$260,000	\$305,000	\$415,000	107.5%	15.7%
County Median	\$140,625	\$159,000	\$186,000	\$193,500	\$283,000	\$336,000	138.9%	19.0%



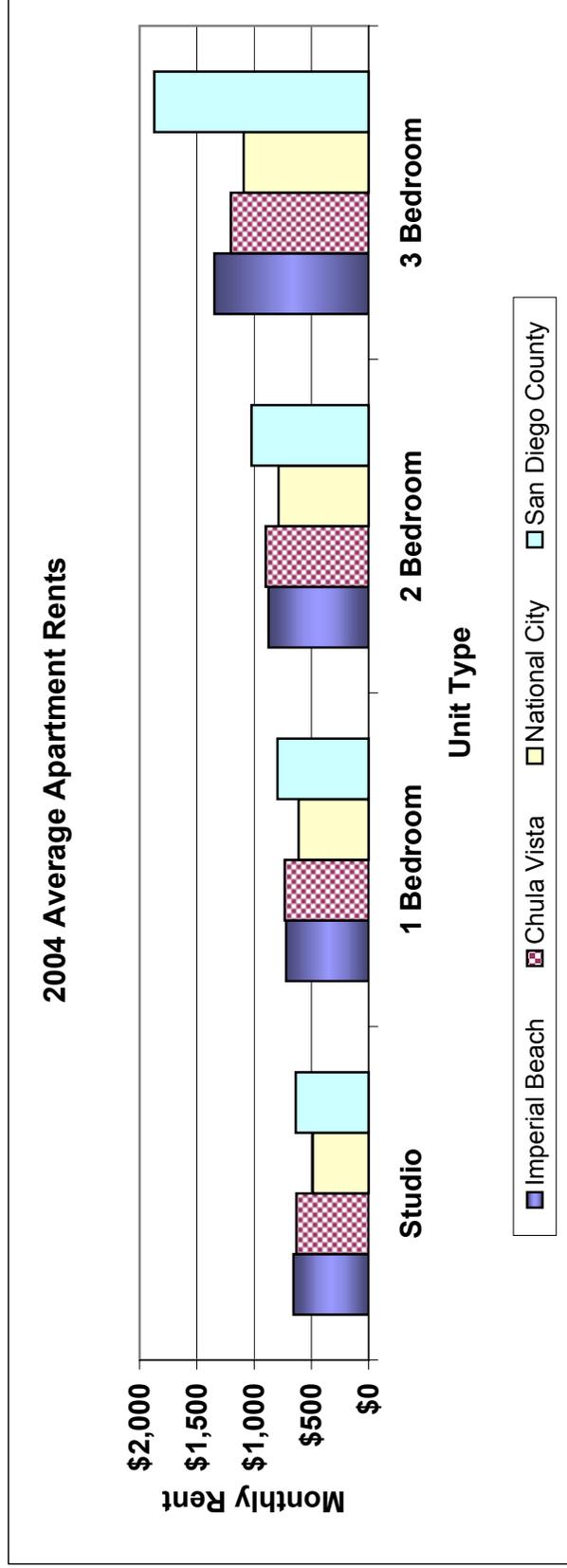
(1) Data reflects resold units.

(2) Date range from January 2004 to August 2004.

TABLE F-3

APARTMENT VACANCY AND AVERAGE RENT
 URBAN WATERFRONT/ECOTOURISM STUDY
 CITY OF IMPERIAL BEACH

	Total Vacancy	Average Monthly Rent			
		Studio	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3+ Bedroom
Imperial Beach	4.0%	\$657	\$721	\$874	\$1,348
Chula Vista	3.6%	\$632	\$733	\$899	\$1,204
National City	2.3%	\$488	\$612	\$787	\$1,092
San Diego County	3.9%	\$637	\$796	\$1,023	\$1,872



Source: San Diego County Apartment Association, Spring 2004 Vacancy Rental Rate Survey
 Filename: i:\Imperial Beach\Summary of Housing Sales.xls; 9/22/2004; 3:23 PM; crg

APPENDIX G

Summary of Governing Plans and Documents

More than a dozen documents with specific application to this ecotourism study were reviewed. Several of the most relevant are summarized below.

The Big Picture:

Prepared for the City of Imperial Beach by Project Design Consultants (October 2000), *The Big Picture* describes the results of questionnaires and workshops directed to residents, business interests, and public agency representatives to help ascertain a future direction for the City of Imperial Beach. It also expresses a series of recommendations and implementing strategies. The dominant opinions that emerged from the study were that Imperial Beach should:

- Maintain the small-town, quiet, casual atmosphere.
- Create economic stability - "Sustainability".
- Increase tourism while avoiding over-crowding.
- Pursue appropriate development opportunities.
- Pursue all available funding mechanisms to support the City.
- Resolve conflict between the overall objective of maintaining a "small town, quiet atmosphere" and the need/desire for new development: "Small Town" vs. Economic Stability/Economic Development.

The principal recommendations that emerged from the study relevant to ecotourism were that the City should:

- Use Coronado as a model to build an attraction and stage events to attract dollars.
- Develop a northside residential area from 7th Street (along Bay) to 9th as a new single- family (1,600 to 2,000 SF) residences with some custom homes along the bay and a large park at the northeast end of 8th Street or Delaware Street.
- Add an I-5 Highway sign "Estuary Visitor Center," with businesses developing a bird watching theme to promote the City."
- Build a binational park/resort at Border Field State Park.
- Develop a marina in Imperial Beach
- Re-introduce sports fishing from the end of the pier.

The Palm Avenue Commercial Corridor was characterized as a place of thrift businesses, strip malls, and an area lacking major tenants. The vision was that it should be a neighborhood-friendly, active, beautifully landscaped, well-designed, and vibrant commercial corridor, supporting community residents and visitors alike, while generating necessary property tax, sales, tax, and Business Improvement District revenues to support future City Improvements. Specific proposals to implement the Palm Avenue Commercial Corridor vision were to:

- Attract a national chain or special retailers and/or grocery store.
- Redevelop or renovate dilapidated and vacant structures.
- Initiate a commercial facade improvement program.
- Develop entertainment/activity center to attract more visitors/shoppers.
- Channel Business Improvement District funds to the area.

-
- Implement traffic-calming measures.
 - Consider zoning-out fast food restaurants.

The Old Palm Avenue strip, the portion west of 3rd Street, was identified as home to several small retail establishments, a few eating and drinking places, and the Sweetwater Union High School Adult Education Center. The future vision for Old Palm Avenue was to Re-establish Old Palm as the historic, small scale commercial center of Imperial Beach, complete with an enhanced landscaped streetscape, pedestrian-oriented shops, restaurants and boutiques supported by an active and effective Business Improvement District. Specific proposals to implement the Old Palm Avenue vision were to:

- Encourage commercial and retail uses.
- Widen sidewalks to promote pedestrian activity.
- Provide diagonal parking and other measures to slow traffic.
- Develop and implement and historic identify theme (build an identification sign across Palm Avenue).
- Rename Palm Avenue west of the Palm Avenue/SR-75 split to Old Palm Avenue.
- Provide additional off-street parking.

The Seacoast Drive/Waterfront area was described as one of the best attributes of Imperial Beach, but also one of the areas needing most improvement. The vision for Seacoast Drive/Waterfront was to create a quaint, casual, pedestrian-oriented waterfront district along an enhanced streetscape with widened sidewalks, providing residents, visitors and tourists with recreation, shopping, and dining opportunities as well as hotel accommodations with well-designed, low-scale structures that illicit a common, ocean-front theme. Specific proposals to implement the Seacoast Drive/Waterfront vision were to:

- Renovate or redevelop the Seacoast Inn.
- Provide more commercial development to increase tourism.
- Provide wider sidewalks and better crosswalks to support pedestrian activity.
- Explore and implement traffic-calming measures.
- Provide additional off-street parking to support the area.
- Pursue sand replenishment/beachfront erosion prevention efforts.
- Explore the possibility of adding parking meters to increase City revenues.

Outstanding natural resources were the most commonly noted attribute of the City of Imperial Beach and led to a vision for ecotourism and recreation. The vision is for Imperial Beach to become a premier destination for ecotourism – and tourism in general – providing recreation, amenities, and activities for tourists and visitors as well as the City's residents. Specific proposals to implement the ecotourism and recreation vision were to:

- Promote Imperial Beach as the premier destination for ecotourism in San Diego County.
- Develop a comprehensive program to utilize school facilities and other park space as joint-use recreational facilities year-round.

- Promote and expand the Bayshore Bikeway thought the City to connect all open space and recreation areas.
- Encourage tourist related uses in the Bayview area (i.e., new hotels, bed and breakfast, bike paths, etc.).
- Relocate the City's Public Works Yard to Ream Field and develop the site for tourist/recreation uses such as a new park and more defined greenbelt along the bayfront.
- Develop a shuttle/transportation system for better access to beach and refuge areas, the Estuary and to Border Field State Park.
- Pursue sand replenishment/beachfront erosion prevention efforts.

Imperial Beach Bayfront Development Framework:

This document, prepared by students at the Pacific Polytechnic Institute in San Luis Obispo more than a decade ago (November 1993) posited three development scenarios along the bayfront, as illustrated in the table below:

<u>Imperial Beach Bayfront Development Framework</u>		
<u>Concept</u>	<u>Land Use Intensity</u>	<u>Design Elements</u>
Concept 1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetlands preservation • Bayfront linear park
Concept 2	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetlands design and enhancement • Bayfront linear park • Boardwalk • Amphitheater • Nature center • Habitat village
Concept 3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal emphasis on ecotourism and commercial development • Amusement Park • Linear Park • Boardwalk • Nature center • Amphitheater • Tourist railroad, train museum • Multimodal station

Old Palm Avenue Focus Study:

Prepared by the Old Palm Avenue Neighborhood Business District (no date), this study looked at an area that extends along Palm Avenue from 3rd Street west to the Pacific Ocean. Recommendations included:

- Increase human activity
- Create friendly pedestrian environment
- Forge effective working business relationship with local government
- Correct lack of identity, cohesiveness, sense of place
- Correct lack of effective area identification and directional signage
- Correct lack of public funding programs to facilitate revitalization efforts
- Reestablish “Old Palm” Avenue as the historic, small scale commercial centre of Imperial Beach complete with an enhanced, landscaped streetscape, pedestrian-oriented shops, restaurants and boutiques supported by an active and effective Business Improvement District
- Create economic stability – “Sustainability”
- Further revitalization efforts through the vigorous promotion of mixed-use infill development /redevelopment, property improvements, and other quality area enhancements
- Enhance police presence and eyes-on-the-street programming
- Implement code enforcement
- Create public liaison group/association
- Provide public funding programs – e.g. Façade improvement program
- Develop design guidelines

Chula Vista Bayfront Masterplan Overview:

As a summary of the intentions of the City of Chula Vista and the San Diego Unified Port District to develop a master plan for the Chula Vista Bayfront, this document envisions the creation of a “world-class bayfront in Chula Vista.” Completion of the 2½ year master plan process is anticipated in August 2005.

As a consequence of recent actions, the Board of Port Commissioners approved adding 126-acres of property under its jurisdiction to the study area. As a result, master planning is now being conducted for approximately 546 acres. Through joint planning, the concept of a land exchange between Port and mid-bayfront property will be further explored, which may allow residential use to be placed on Port property.

City of Imperial Beach General Plan and Coastal Program:

First adopted by the City of Imperial Beach in October 1994, the *General Plan and Local Coastal Program* includes items of specific relevance to an ecotourism study. Key recommendations are to:

- Retain the quality of life and atmosphere of small beach-oriented town.

-
- Create a realistic bikeway that can be implemented, including a proposed Class I Bikeway parallel to Highway 75, north of Rainbow Drive.
 - Increase the land area for commercial development along Highway 75 to allow an additional 155,000 square feet of commercial building area.
 - Establish mixed-use zones in the Highway 75 and Seacoast areas.
 - Allow residential units on the upper floors in all commercial districts.
 - Retain the beach, bay and estuary as the key City park and recreation areas.
 - Create a new Bayfront Park.

More specific policies are to:

- Develop an ecoroute bikeway linking Imperial Beach's environmental assets including San Diego Bay, the Tijuana River Estuary, the dunes on South Seacoast Drive, the beach, the pier, and the breakwaters. Opportunities for interpretive stations should occur along the route.
- Designate sidewalk bike routes at Palm Avenue between 3rd Street and 7th Street.
- Encourage construction of additional leg of the Bayshore Bikeway paralleling Highway 75 for a distance of approximately 3,000 feet.
- Supports the Tijuana River Natural Estuarine Research Reserve both for its ecological and open space values.
- Encourage the acquisition of the 1.5 acre vacant triangular shaped property on the east side of South Seacoast Drive and adjacent to the National Wildlife Refuge as an expansion of the Refuge. This site could be an ideal location for viewing the Refuge.
- Consider relocating the City Public Works Yard to a non-Bayfront site (alternatives are: Ream Field, sites outside city limits, or splitting the yard into more than one site).
- Insure continued public access to the Imperial Beach Bayfront area and, where possible, provide for additional public access.
- Create a recreational corridor along the Imperial Beach Bayfront incorporating bicycle and pedestrian paths.
- Take direct action to increase the amount of tourist-oriented businesses both along the beachfront and in the San Diego Bayfront.

APPENDIX H

Profiles of Firms on the Consultant Team

KEYSER MARSTON ASSOCIATES, INC.

Keyser Marston Associates, Inc. (KMA) is a real estate and economics advisory firm with over 30 years experience advising both public and private sector clients on a wide range of real estate projects. The firm specializes in redevelopment and in the analysis of market and financial feasibility. KMA has ample experience advising small cities in their efforts to formulate and implement revitalization strategies and has worked with the City of Imperial Beach in the past.



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Team Role

- Project management and interface with City officials
- Market research and analysis
- Evaluation of assets and constraints
- Identification of catalyst development sites/opportunities
- Preparation of implementation plans

URBAN COUNSEL

Urban Counsel will play a major role in this assignment, handling review of planning documents, facilitation of public workshops/outreach, and identification of the coastal trail route and linkages to existing trail systems.



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San Diego, Ca 92101

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Web: www.urbancounsel.com

Team Roles

- Creation of a community outreach program and facilitation of public meetings
- Review/evaluation of City plans and policies for consistency with planning objectives
- Identification of strategic linkages with existing/planned ecological amenities

RECON

RECON is an environmental planning firm with over 30 years local experience. The firm has strong familiarity with Imperial Beach due to past experience working on projects in the area. RECON is currently involved in the preparation of the Visionary Waterfront Plan for San Diego Bay for the Port of San Diego. RECON is also involved in the formation of SANDAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan, which our Team believes is consistent with the objectives of this assignment. One of RECON's key strengths is its ability to translate technical natural resource information into easily understood language for consumption by the general public.



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E-mail: dsteel@recon-us.com
Web: recon-us.com

Team Roles

- Liaison between the KMA Team and resource agencies
- Inventory existing natural resource management plans and synthesize biological resource data
- Identify constraints stemming from potential impacts to natural resources

EPLERWOOD INTERNATIONAL

EplerWood International is headed by Megan Epler Wood. Ms. Epler Wood is recognized as the world's foremost leader on the development and marketing of sustainable ecotourism resorts. She was the founder of the International Ecotourism Society, an organization she led until recently. Ms. Epler Wood has advised clients throughout the world on similar assignments and will provide the team with a unique knowledge of ecotravelers and of Imperial Beach's ability to capture a share of the market. Her presence on the Team is of great value to this assignment.



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Team Roles

- Evaluate the attractiveness of the ecological amenities in the City/environs
- Provide insight into ecotourist demographics and travel preferences
- Creation of ecotourism marketing strategy