PUBLIC NOTICE

US Army Corps of Engineers
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT

Public Notice/Application No.: 200400302-JMB
Comment Period: December 15 through January 15, 2004
Project Manager: Jeannette M. Baker (858) 674-5385 jeannette.m.baker@usace.army.mil

Applicant
Robert Zaino
City of Santee
10601 North Magnolia Avenue
Santee, California 92071-1266

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Location

The Forester Creek Improvement Project is located within unsectioned land in the southwest portion of the City of Santee, San Diego County, California. It is situated between State Route (SR) 125 and SR 67, is northwest of Cuyamaca Street and Prospect Avenue, and southeast of the creek's junction with the San Diego River. (at: lat:32-50-0.9960 lon:116-59-26.9880)

Activity

To permanently impact 0.60 acres and temporarily impact 2.90 acres of wetlands and permanently impact 0.38 and temporarily impact 1.35 acres of waters of the U.S. to modify the extreme downstream potion of Forester Creek from Prospect Avenue to north of Mission Gorge Road. The project will widen the channel and revegetate it with freshwater marsh in the middle and willow scrub on the sides; raise the channel banks along both sides of the widened creek prevent water overflows; extend and bridge Olive Lane over Forester Creek; create a new bike path and rest stop one side of the creek; and extend the Mission Gorge Road bridge. (see attached drawings). For more information see page 3 of this notice.

Interested parties are hereby notified that an application has been received for a Department of the Army permit for the activity described herein and shown on the attached drawing(s). Interested parties are invited to provide their views on the proposed work, which will become a part of the record and will be considered in the decision. This permit will be issued or denied under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972 (33 U.S.C. 1344). Comments should be mailed to:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District
Regulatory Branch - San Diego Field Office
ATTN: CESPL-CO--200400302-JMB
16885 W. Bernardo Drive, Suite 300-A
San Diego, California 92127

Alternatively, comments can be sent electronically to: jeannette.m.baker@usace.army.mil

Evaluation Factors

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof. Factors that will be considered include conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food production and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. In addition, if the proposal would discharge dredged or fill material, the evaluation of the activity will include application of the EPA Guidelines (40 CFR 230) as required by Section 404 (b)(1) of the Clean Water Act.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Preliminary Review of Selected Factors

EIS Determination- A preliminary determination has been made that an environmental impact statement is not required for the proposed work.

Water Quality- The applicant has submitted an application to obtain water quality certification, under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board. Section 401 requires that any applicant for an individual Section 404 permit provide proof of water quality certification to the Corps of Engineers prior to permit issuance.

Coastal Zone Management- For those projects in or affecting the coastal zone, the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act requires that prior to issuing the Corps authorization for the project, the applicant must obtain concurrence from the California Coastal Commission that the project is consistent with the State's Coastal Zone Management Plan. This project is located outside the coastal zone and preliminary review indicates that it will not affect coastal zone resources. A final determination of whether this project affects coastal zone resources will be made by the Corps, in consultation with the California Coastal Commission, after review of the comments received on this Public Notice.

Cultural Resources- Because the timing of this project is tied to the extension of SR 52 and will utilize some Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds, FHWA determined that the project will not adversely effect historic properties. In addition, the State of California Office of Historic Preservation concurred with this determination on July 27, 2001. This review constitutes the extent of cultural resources investigations by the District Engineer, and he is otherwise unaware of the presence of such resources.

Endangered Species- Preliminary determinations indicate that the proposed activity would not affect federally-listed as endangered or threatened species, or their critical habitat. Therefore, formal consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act does not appear to be required at this time.

Public Hearing- Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearing shall state with particularity the reasons for holding a public hearing.

Proposed Activity for Which a Permit is Required

To permanently impact 0.60 acres and temporarily impact 2.90 acres of wetlands and permanently impact 0.38 and temporarily impact 1.35 acres of waters of the U.S. to modify the extreme downstream potion of Forester Creek from Prospect Avenue to north of Mission Gorge Road. The basic project purpose is flood control. The overall project purpose is to provide 100 year flood protection, enhance transportation facilities in the Forester Creek corridor, and improve traffic circulation patterns. The creek can currently handle less than the 10-year flood in this reach. Forester Creek is a highly disturbed aquatic system dominated by disturbed freshwater marsh. The majority of the impacts are to freshwater marsh and open water with some impacts to existing southern willow scrub. The following table illustrates the breakdown of impacts.

Table 1
Proposed Impacts in acres

Project Feature	**DFWM**	**FWM**	**SWS**	**OW**	**Total**
TEMPORARY IMPACTS (To be revegetated)					
Unlined channel	1.12	0.45	1.33	1.35	4.25
Subtotal Temporary Impacts	*1.12*	*0.45*	*1.33*	*1.35*	*4.25*
PERMANENT IMPACTS					
Concrete-lined channel (under Mission Gorge Road bridge)	0	0	0	0	0
Rip-rap	0	0.06	0.02	0.04	0.12
Bicycle rest stop and path	0.04	0.02	0.23	0.28	0.57
Olive Lane extension	0	0.128	0.03	0	0.158
Olive Lane bridge	0	0.01	0.06	0.06	0.13
Open Stabilization downstream of Mission Gorge Road bridge	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal Permanent Impacts	*0.04*	*0.218*	*0.34*	*0.38*	*0.978*
Total Impacts for Proposed Alternative	**1.16**	**0.67**	**1.67**	**1.73**	**5.23**

The following is a more detailed description of the work proposed.

Downstream of Mission Gorge Road Bridge. Downstream of Mission Gorge Road bridge (Figure L-1), the existing concrete lined channel and splitter wall would remain in place. The channel would be widened to a total of 250 feet, and the widened channel bottom would be protected from erosion by installing open stabilization material (e.g., Armorflex or Petraflex) that would allow growth of small plants and percolation of water. The existing energy dissipation structure would be widened to extend across the new channel.

Revegetated Channel from Mission Gorge Road to Prospect Avenue. The widened channel would consist of an earthen and revegetated cross section except under bridges. Under Mission Gorge Road bridge, the existing grouted rip rap would be replaced across the new widened bottom of the channel with a smooth concrete lining to protect existing shallow utilities. The SR 52 bridge to be constructed by Caltrans would have rip rap side slope protection and the channel bottom would remain earthen. The Olive Lane bridge included in the Forester Creek Improvement Project would have open stabilization on the channel sides and bottom for scour protection of the bridge piers. From approximately 15 feet upstream of the Mission Gorge Road bridge to the energy dissipation structure that will extend approximately 200 feet downstream of the existing Prospect Avenue bridge, the widened channel would have a top width varying from 181 feet to 358 feet depending on the location, and side slopes varying from 1:1 to 1:4. The bottom width would vary from approximately 120 feet to 256 feet. The cross section on Figure X-1 illustrates the simple configuration of the channel, which would have no pilot channel or water level control structures. The widened channel would be revegetated with willow scrub and freshwater marsh, to replace and mitigate for existing wetlands temporarily impacted by channel construction. Because there would be no engineered pilot channel or water level control structures, the acreage of open water that may develop cannot be predicted. If groundwater levels remain near current levels, open water is expected to develop naturally through stream meandering.

Approximately 14 acres of freshwater marsh would be created within the unlined channel. Willow scrub would be planted on the edges of the channel bottom on either side of the freshwater marsh, extending approximately 5 feet up the side slopes and creating roughly 3 acres of willow scrub. A total of approximately 17 acres of riparian vegetation would be created with this alternative.

Prospect Avenue Energy Dissipation/Debris Removal Facility. During a 100-year flood event, water velocities upstream of the Prospect Avenue bridge have been estimated to reach approximately 26 feet per second (fps). Therefore, energy dissipation facilities would be constructed at the upstream of the unlined channel to slow water entering from the concrete-lined portion of the channel originating in El Cajon. These facilities would consist of concrete or rip rap structures to slow the 100-year flow in the unlined channel to 3 to 7 fps, incorporating a lined, shallow settling basin to allow collection of sediment and debris. The facility would be approximately 200 feet long, maintained and would be accessed from the concrete lined channel upstream of Prospect Avenue bridge. However, none of this area was included in the compilation of mitigation acreage.

Maintenance of the Proposed Alternative. Channel maintenance would consist mainly of hand clearing of the freshwater marsh and willow scrub. A consistent width of freshwater marsh across the channel bottom would be needed to maintain designed hydraulic capacity. Therefore, trees would not be allowed to grow in the designated freshwater marsh areas. Willow scrub planted on the channel sides and edges would be kept free of invasives by hand clearing. Details on the maintenance activities would be developed during permit discussions with the resource agencies. The maintenance plan is expected to include the following components:

- The existing channel entrance ramp north of Mission Gorge Road would be rebuilt on the west side for access to the widened channel lined with open stabilization material.

- Equipment with an ability to reach out into the channel could be staged on the bicycle path.

- Gates would be provided in the fencing at bridges where existing slope protection would be in place, to allow access for workers who would be doing hand clearing.

- The City would coordinate with property owners if equipment staging were needed along the north side of the channel.

None of these elements would reduce the area of revegetation proposed for the Modified Self-Mitigating Channel.

Bicycle Path and Rest Stop. An 8-foot asphalt or concrete bikeway with a 2-foot minimum graded shoulder would be constructed along the south side of the proposed channel from Mission Gorge Road to Prospect Avenue. In the area where the existing creek bows outward, the existing channel would be filled and a linear bicycle rest stop would be created. The 600-foot long, 100-foot wide area would be landscaped.

Olive Lane Extension. Olive Lane would be extended southward for a distance of approximately 680 feet to Prospect Avenue. The extension would line up with Argent Street. A new bridge would be constructed over Forester Creek to connect Olive Lane with Prospect Avenue. The bridge would be approximately 250 feet long and 92 feet wide. There would be two travel lanes, a 5 feet wide sidewalk on each side, a 5 feet wide bicycle lane in each direction, and a standard median. The bridge structural width would allow striping to be adjusted in the future if traffic levels warrant creation of four travel lanes (anticipated to occur in 2010).

Via Zapador Cul de Sacs. The existing Via Zapador bridge that spans Forester Creek would be demolished and removed. The street would be terminated on either side of the new channel with cul de sacs.

Dip Crossing. The dip crossing located approximately 1,070 feet downstream of the Via Zapador bridge would be removed. Access to the City maintenance yard would no longer be needed because the public works functions would be relocated to a site north of Via Zapador as part of the SR 52 project.

Mission Gorge Road Bridge Extension. In order to pass the newly estimated 100-year flood, the existing bridge at Mission Gorge Road would need to be extended for approximately 123 feet to the west. The extension would consist of a slab type bridge that would match the existing bridge. The new portion would be 8 feet high above the channel bed. The modified bridge would be designed to pass the 100-year flood.

Additional Project Information

SR 52 Coordination

A proximate and impending project within the Forester Creek Improvement project area that necessitates coordination with the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the extension of State Route (SR) 52 through Santee. Caltrans is currently preparing design of this portion of the highway, which is planned to cross the city eastward from the SR 125/SR52 interchange to Cuyamaca Street. Eventually, SR 52 will extend eastward to SR 67. Current Caltrans planning indicates SR 52 would be elevated on bridges and embankments through this corridor, which would lie generally south of Mission Gorge Road and north of Prospect Avenue. Portions of the SR 52 alignment are within the existing Forester Creek 100-year floodplain. Caltrans will have to construct a new bridge over the widened Forester Creek channel as part of the SR 52 project. At this time, the SR 52 bridge over Forester Creek is planned to be 240 feet long, and there would be two sets of two bridge columns for each structure within the channel itself (eight columns total). Caltrans will be responsible for obtaining the appropriate permits from regulatory agencies for this structure. As part of the Forester Creek project, no revegetation is planned under the bridge area, and once the widened Forester Creek channel is

constructed, the area of the construction zone for the future SR 52 bridge would be maintained in a cleared condition. Construction on the SR 52 bridge would be expected to follow within the year after the Forester Creek project is completed.

Evaluation of Alternatives

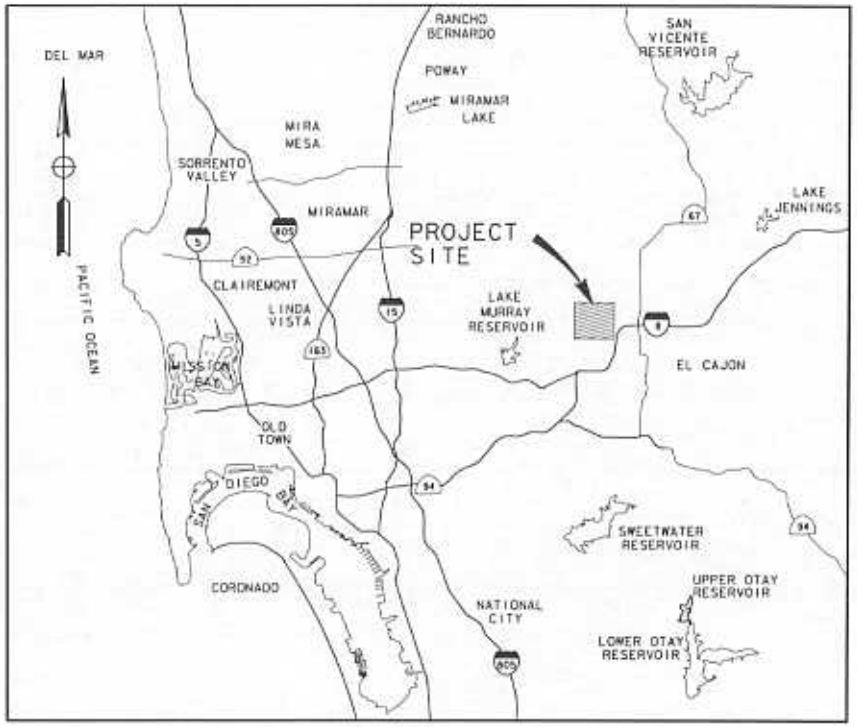
In addition to the proposed project, several other alternatives were included with the preliminary alternatives information provided by the applicant. They are also addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment dated May 2003. This preliminary alternatives information is available on request and can be reviewed at the City of Santee offices.

Proposed Special Conditions

Mitigation

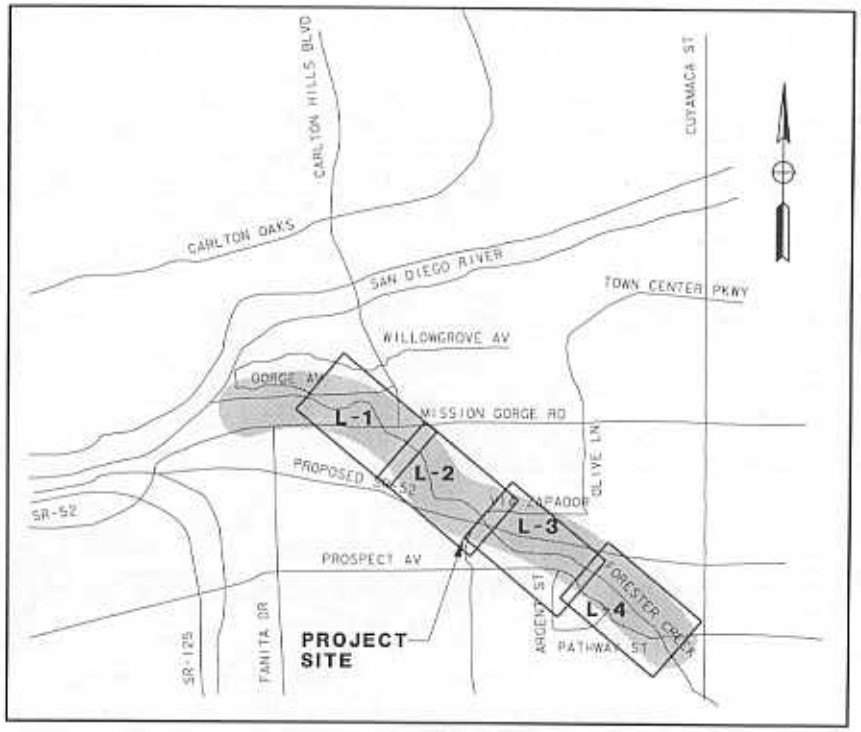
The applicant is proposing to mitigate for the project impacts by restoring the project area itself. Based on the 70 percent design for the revegetation, a total of approximately 14 acres of freshwater marsh and 3 acres of southern willow scrub would be planted in the widened channel. Open water would be allowed to develop naturally through stream meandering, so the acreage of open water cannot be predicted.

For additional information please call Jeannette M. Baker of my staff at (858) 674-5385. This public notice is issued by the Chief, Regulatory Branch



LOCATION MAP

NO SCALE



VICINITY MAP

NO SCALE

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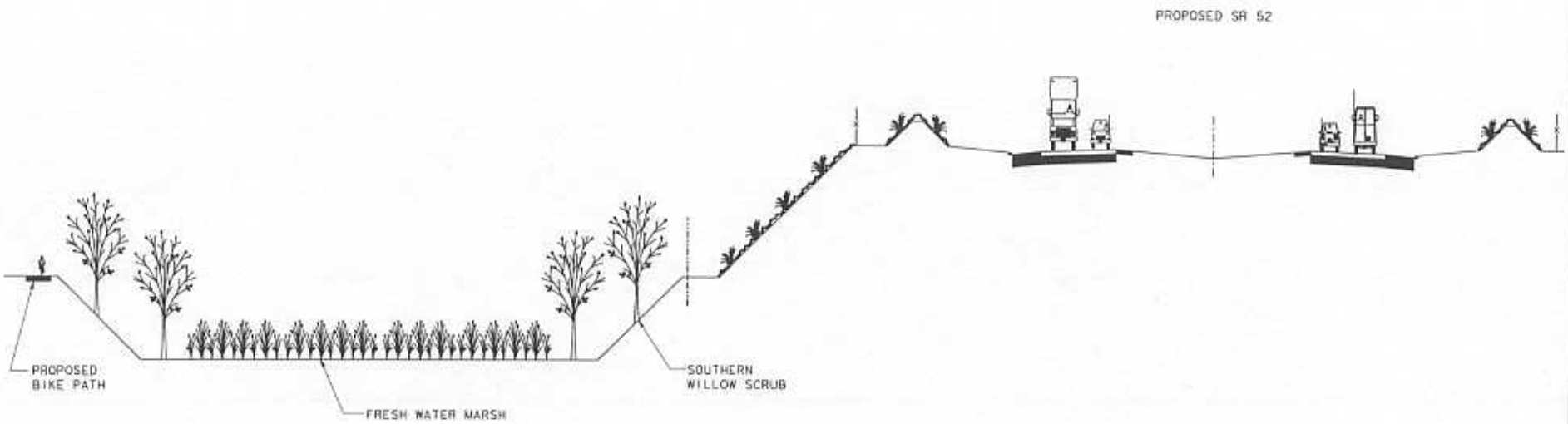
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CITY OF SANTEE
FORESTER CREEK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

LOCATION AND VICINITY MAP

DWG NO

T-1

1 OF 6



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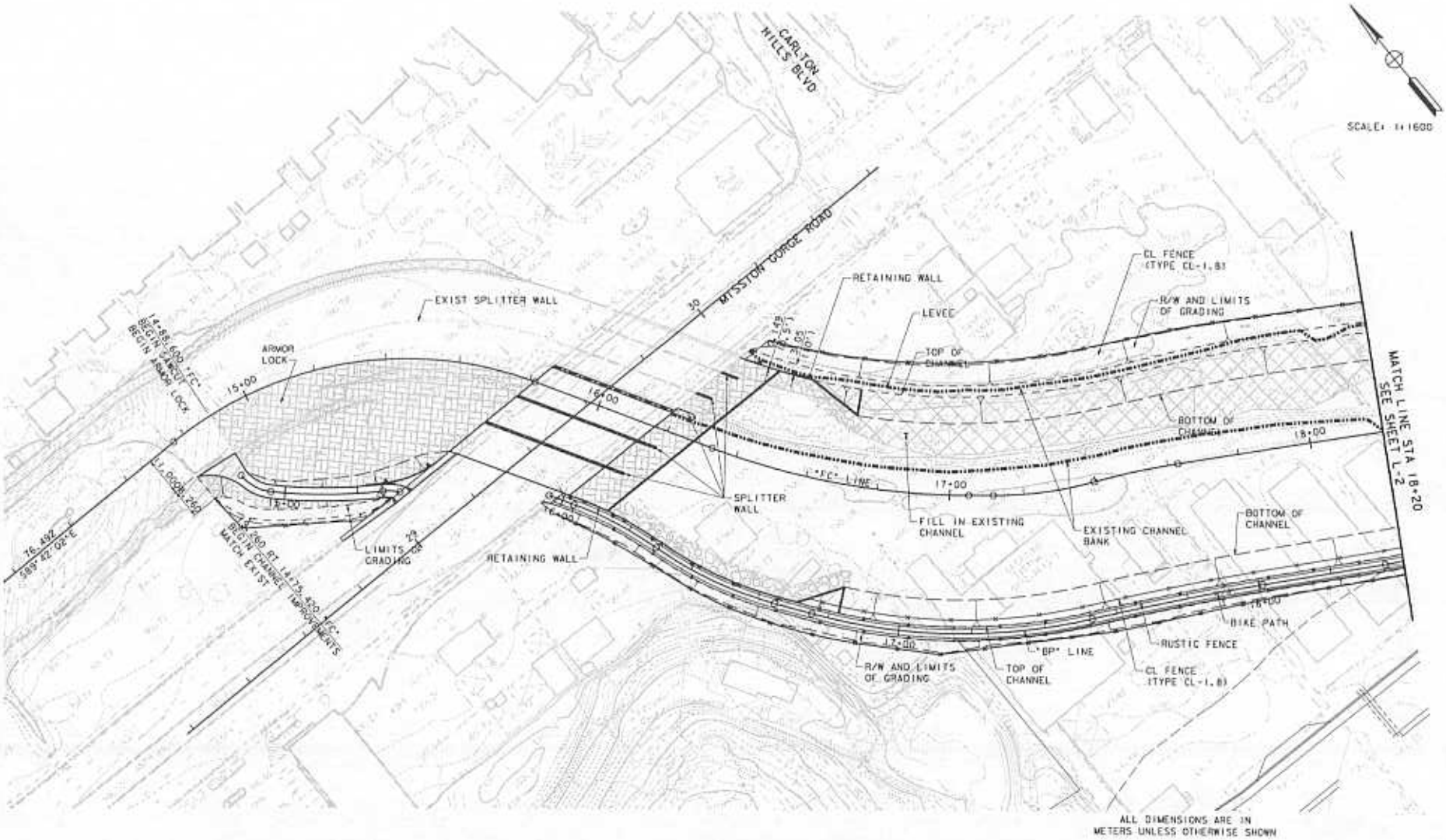
TYPICAL SECTION

DWG NO

X-1

2 OF 6



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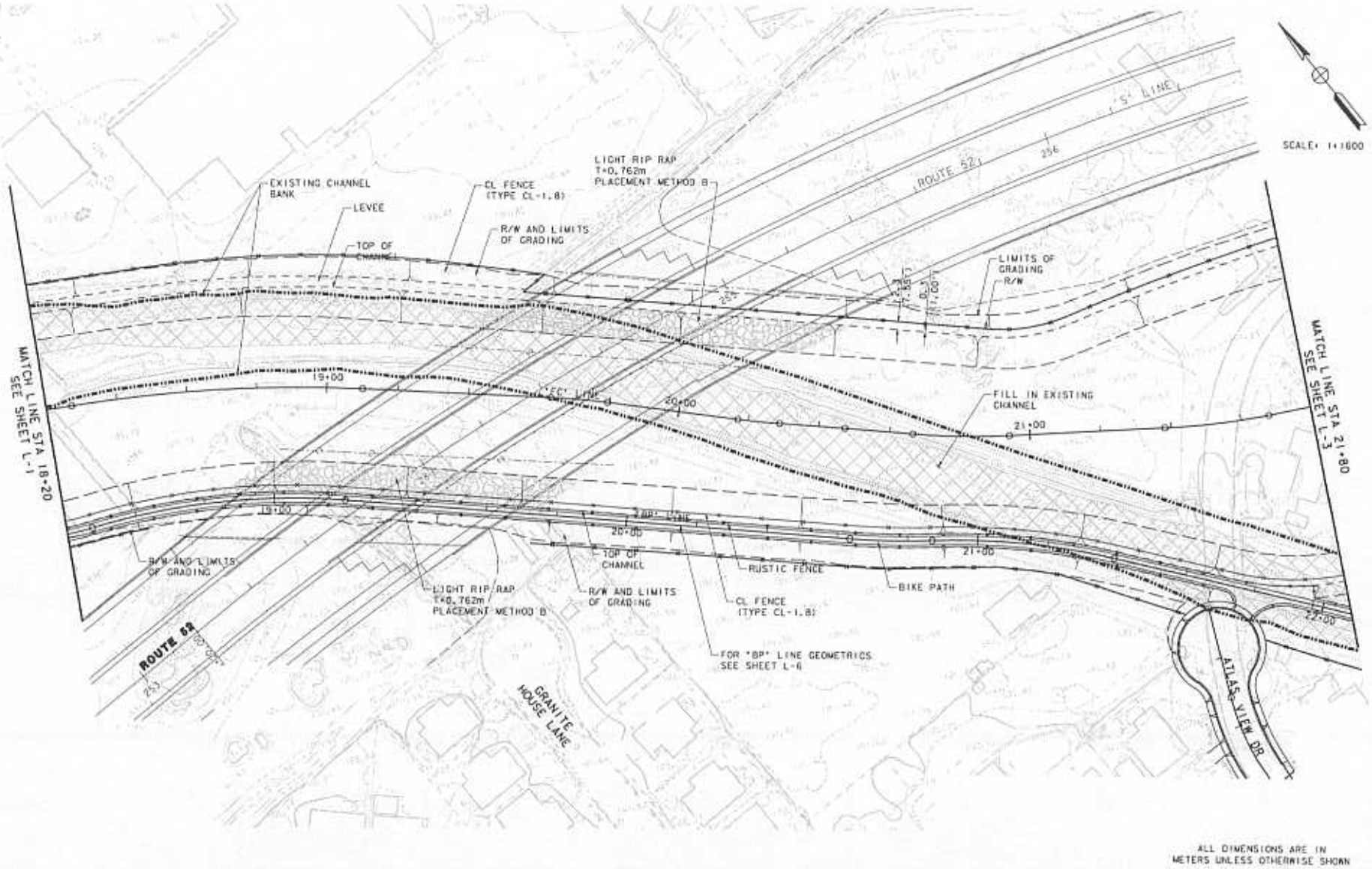
CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

DWG NO

L-1

3 OF 6



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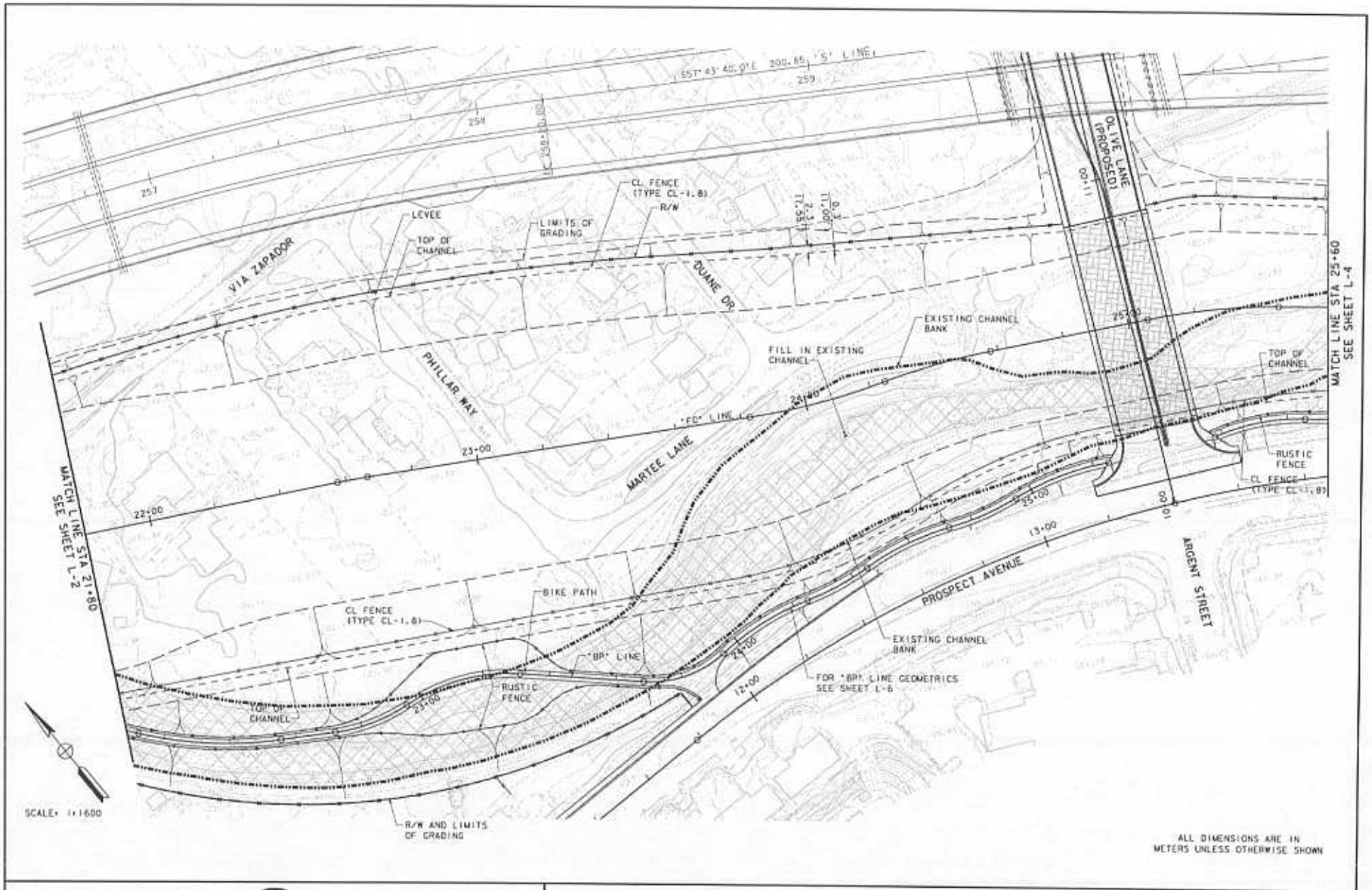
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CITY OF SANTEE
FORESTER CREEK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

DWG NO

L-2



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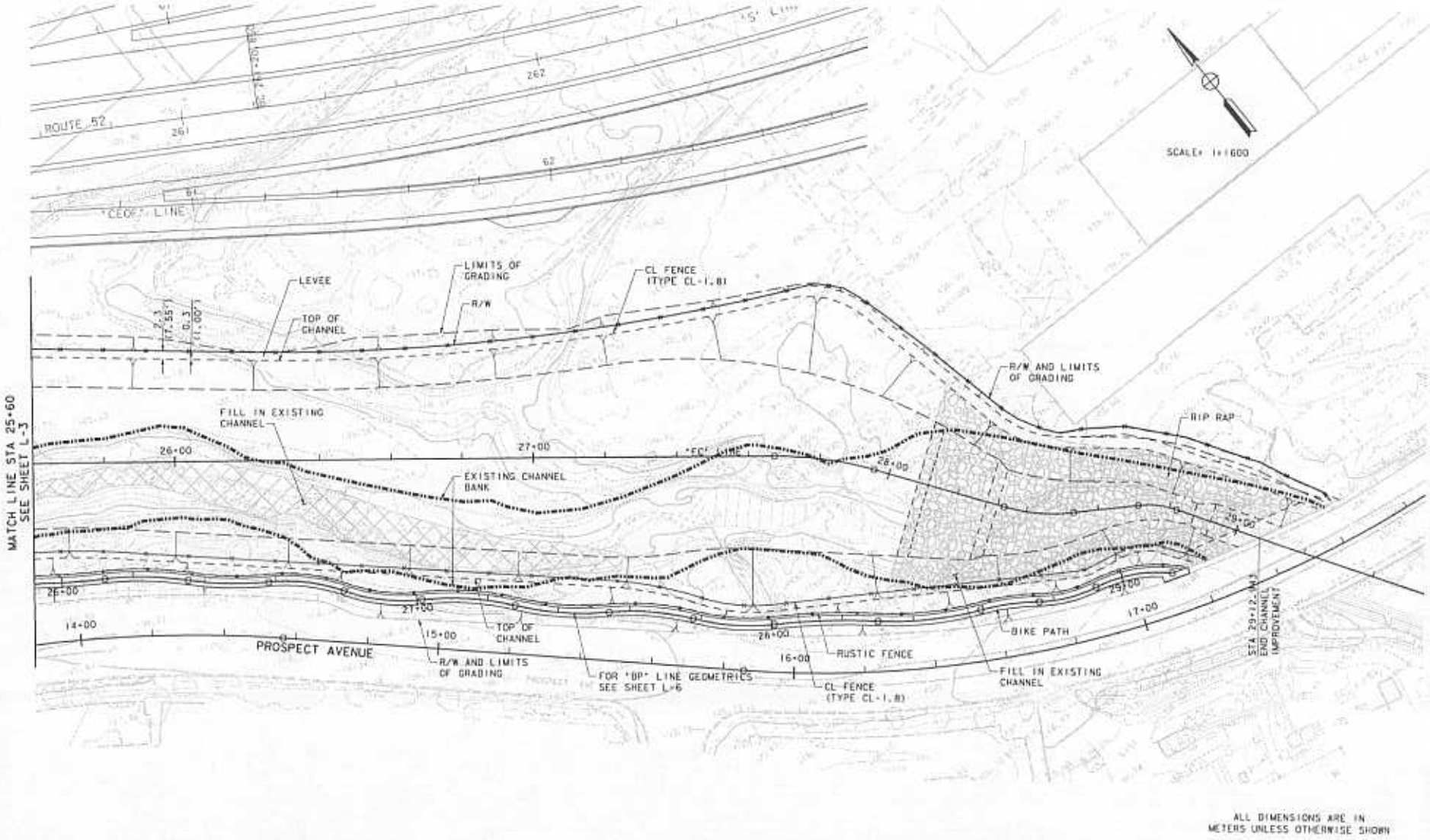
CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

DWG NO

L-3

5 OF 6



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CHANNEL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

DWG NO

L-4

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