Section 4.1 Aesthetics/Visual Resources Comments

pg. 4.1-1 *Surrounding Land Uses*

Comments

• There are at least a dozen residences to the south of the project on 58 and Digger Pine Road as illustrated in Figure MP4.14-2.
• The increasing elevation southward from the proposed quarry on Digger Pine Road places the proposed quarry directly in the view of these residences. This impact has not been adequately addressed in the DEIR.
• The Surrounding Land Uses introduction to this section is the only section within the DEIR that identifies anything more than a few, several, or some residences on Parkhill Road.
• Although the surrounding uses are defined and described by the lead agency, San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building, there is no standard, or uniform description, of these uses by the various consultants.

Figure MP4.1-3

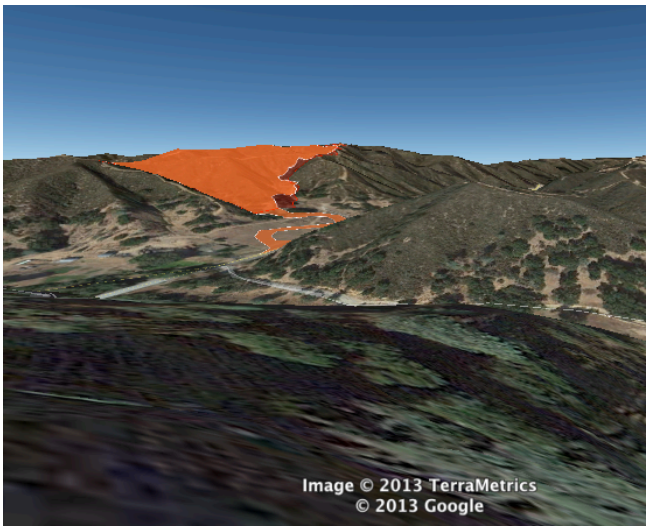

Figure MP4.1-4 view from north side of residence @ 070-154-019

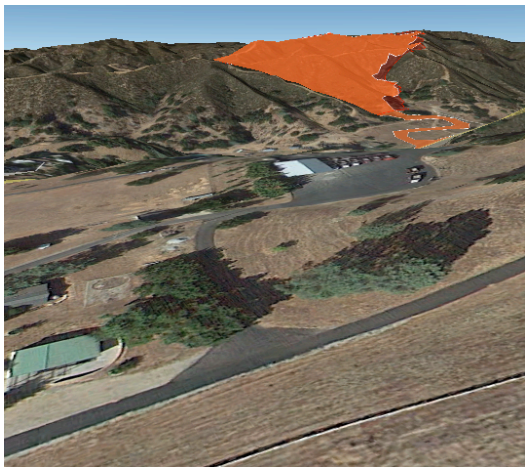

Figure MP4.1-5 Overview taken at 070-154-022.

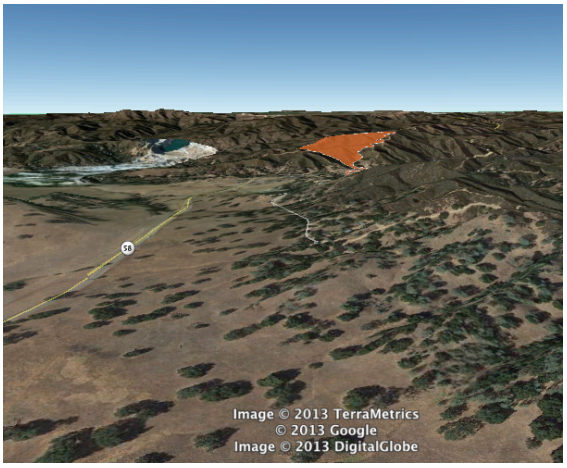

Figure MP4.1-6 Looking north along ridge parallel to Digger Pine Road.

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pg. 4.1-3 *Regulatory Setting*

Comments

• This section begins with a description of the EX1 Energy and Extractive Resource Combining Designation, a topic well covered in other sections of the DEIR.
• The existence of the EX1 Extractive Resource Combining Designation provides no special protection from the fundamental purpose of planning to address compatibility between uses or any compatibility considerations ordinarily applicable to a CUP application.
• Combining designations are applied in addition to other requirements within a particular land use category
• The existence of the EX1 Extractive Resource Combining Designation does nothing to circumvent the intention of the COSE.
• As indicated initially in Section 2.0, reference to the EX1 Combining Designation lacks relevance and should be removed from any and all further dicussions, descriptions, and related DEIR materials.

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pg. 4.1-4 *Policy Consistency Analysis*

Comments

• Table 4.1-1 addresses several COSE Visual Resource Policies
• No specific timeframe is provided for arriving at consistency to VR 2.1
• No specific timeframe is provided for arriving at consistency to VR 2.2
•Is there a specific timeframe associated with the intent of COSE policy in these areas?
• VR 3.1 thru VR 5.2 are preliminarily determined as Not applicable to project specific analysis.
    • If goals and objectives are not applicable when specific projects are before us, when will they be applicable and how will they be implemented?
• VR 7.0 is presumably relative to security lighting as no nighttime operations are being proposed.
    • We suggest a minimum, a locked entrance gate in lieu of lighting to mitigate impacts of nighttime security lighting, given the rural nature of the surroundings.
    • Ideally, considering the proximity to residential uses, the entire proposed site boundary would be secured with a barrier (i.e., fencing or solid barrier) to mitigate any need for security lighting.
• MN 3.3 - Refer to comments in section 6.0 regarding Need for additional aggregate sources.

• **We strongly support and encourage adhering to the language, intentions of, and policies within the San Luis Obispo County Open Space Element.**

According to the COSE, The intent of the visual resource goals, policies and implementation strategies is to protect the visual character and identity of the county while respecting private property rights, in order to: 1) maintain a sense of place recognized by residents, 2) preserve scenic landscapes that are highly valued by residents and visitors, and 3) maintain a high quality visual environment that enhances tourism, real estate values and economic growth. The visual resources chapter guides the appropriate placement of development so that 1) the natural landscape continues to be the dominant view in rural parts of the county, and 2) in urban areas, visual character contributes to a robust sense of place.

Pg. 4.1-7 *- The primary visual resource considered in this analysis is the SR 58 corridor, and the associated views of steep hillsides covered with natural chaparral vegetation that contribute to the identification of this area as a suggested scenic corridor in the COSE.*

Figure 4.1-2a DEIR depiction of exisiting conditions

Figure 4.1-2c DEIR depiction of proposed quarry

Comment - Figure 4.1-2c

• The precise location (PM) of this photo rendering is not denoted.

• We would place it at approximately PM 4.3, just southwest of the Digger Pine Rd. juncture.

• The camera lens and it's lower than eye level position creates the illusion that a shoulder in the road exists. The width of the shoulder at this location is equal to the width it appears to be tapering to (towards the vanishing point of the perspective) two tenths of a mile in the distance. Shoulders generally do not exist along the proposed haul route.

• No background methodology or description of tools used in developing renderings is offered in the DEIR.

• The cumulative visual impacts of the entire operation, the double hopper gravel haulers, fuel trucks, equipment haulers, explosive deliveries, and other industrial vehicle activity related to industrial operations associated with a quarry of this scale.

• Figure MP4.1-8 originates at Digger Pine Rd. (PM 4.5), about one quarter of a mile east of the rendering within the DEIR. Shot from eye level, this photo and the subsequent rendering placed on it accurately illustrates the topography of the road and the visual impacts of the proposed quarry at this location.

Figure MP 4.1-8

Comments MP 4.1-8 (pg. MP4.1-5)

• The visual impact and blight on the rural character resulting from the relentlessly constant presence of an average of 273 truck trips daily is equal in magnitude to the scar on the mountainside to which every eastbound traveler would be subject to for up to the next 58 years.
• This would be in addition to the visual impacts and blight already imposed on the region by the operations and traffic associated with the existing Hanson Quarry
• Blight and compromise of our rural character has not been applied to the significant visual impacts already identified as a result of the proposed quarry operation?

Figure 4.1-3b DEIR depiction of proposed quarry at Phase 1B

Figure 4.1-3c

Comments - Figures 4.1-3b and c (Phase 1B and Phase 3B)

1. Phase 1A has the greatest visual impact.
   - The mountaintop is slowly being nibbled away at that stage.
   - By skipping this phase, the mountaintop has disappeared without the impacts associated being portrayed.
2. Area of fill on entrance road is shown fully re-vegetated.
   - This will take many, many years to achieve and may never look as natural as is being shown here.
   - The visual scars and dust associated with the entrance road will be around for a long time.
   - The entrance road itself is the only paved area.
3. Area of fill on entrance road is shown fully re-vegetated.
   - This will take many, many years to achieve and will never look as natural as depicted.
   - The visual scars and dust associated with the entrance road will be around for a long time.
4. The engineered drawings depict cuts as if a bulldozer can perform surgery on the mountain.
   - The over-disturbance amounts to significantly more than predicted or this drawing illustrates.
   - The blends into the surrounding, yet to be disturbed, areas will not be clean nor will they be aesthetically pleasing and have not been depicted.

- They will be around for many, many years before any re-vegetation will provide any cover.
- The impacts of this activity are of aesthetic significance as noted in the DEIR.
- The totality of the impacts of de-nuding the mountaintop introduces impacts into Section 4.5 Biological Resources, and Section 4.15.1 Cultural Resources, that have not been adequately identified or addressed in the DEIR.

The Entrance Road

• The entrance road is windy and steep. Major sections of it are at a 10 percent grade.
• The entrance road is incapable of serving the staging function it has been assigned on pg. 2-9 of the DEIR*; If it is necessary for rapid delivery of aggregate in conjunction with specific contracts, however, there are several areas within the project site that can accommodate short-term parking of trucks. In the early phases in completing Phase 1A, there will be some area in the vicinity of the scale house where about six trucks could be parked. In addition, t**he paved access road within the project site could accommodate another 20 trucks along the entrance lane.** As Phase 1A is completed, the flatter areas around the scale house will be larger, and more trucks could be staged in this area.*

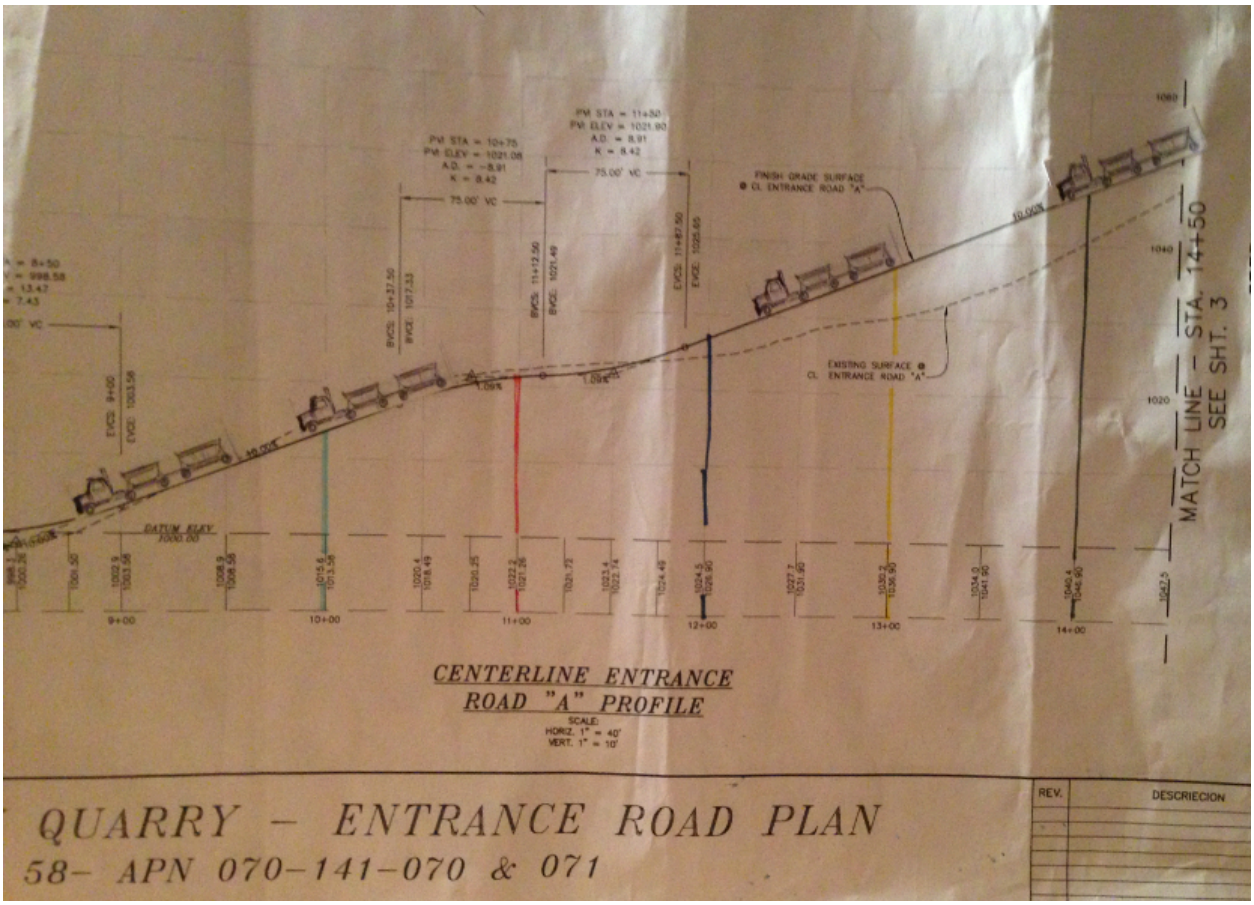

Figure MP4.1-9

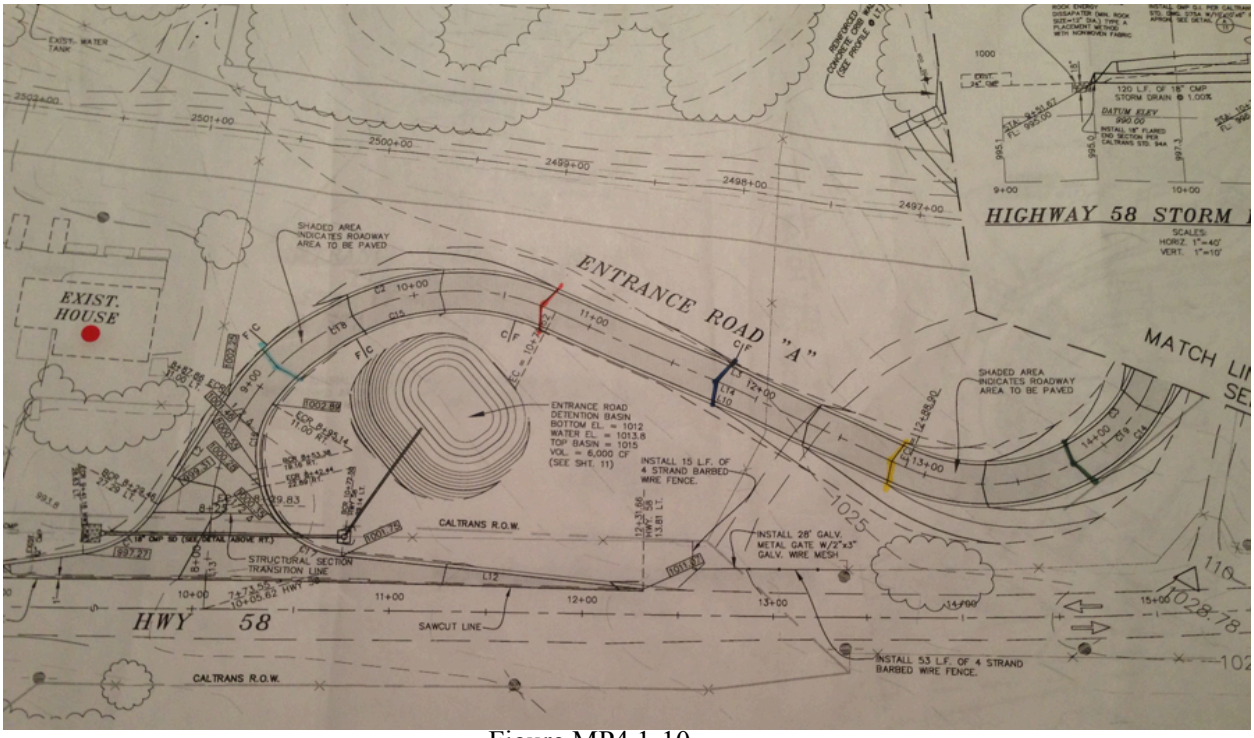

Figure MP4.1-10

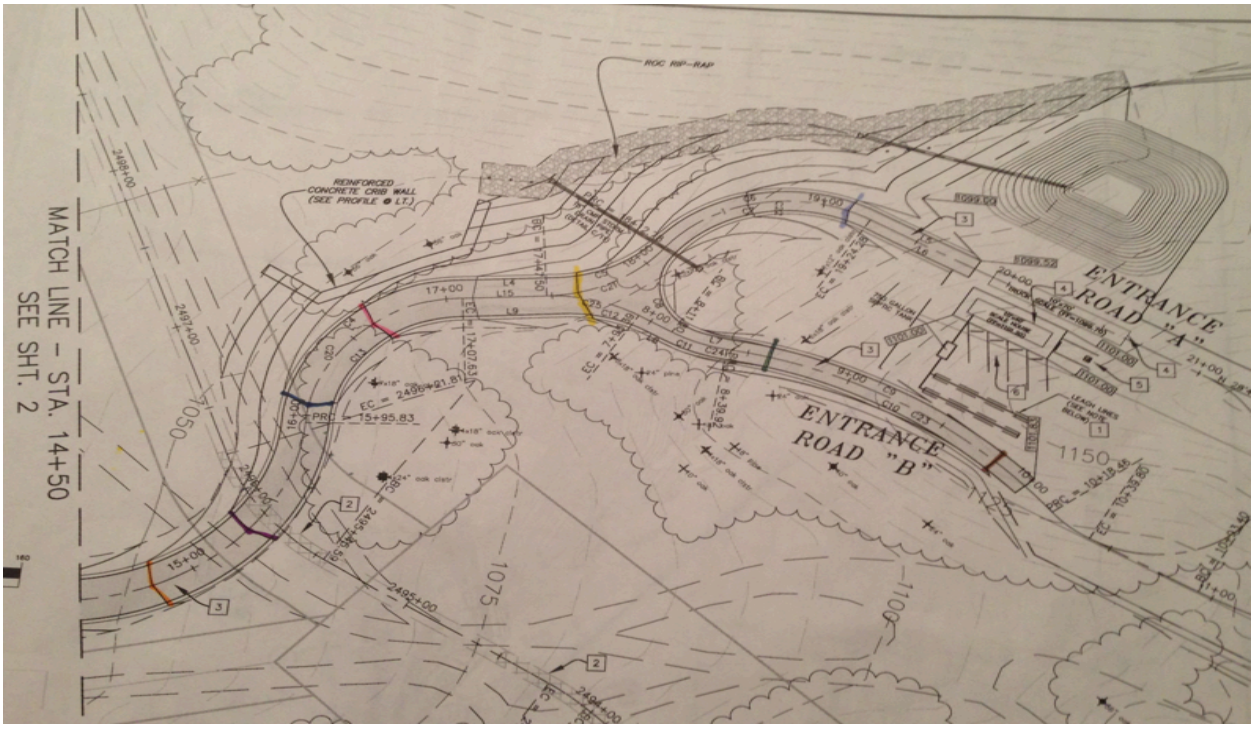

Figure MP4.1-11

Comments - Figure MP4.1-10 and 11

• Figure MP4.1-10 is the upper section of the entrance road from Match Line -STA. 14 + 50 to the scale house, and Figure MP4.1-11 is the lower section from Hwy. 58 to Match Line -STA. 14 + 50.
• Multiple factors, including line of sight off Hwy. 58 and a specific location to cross the Coastal Branch of the California Aqueduct, constrain the entrance road placement into a less than ideal location.
• The accumulation of trucks caused by actively staging in the uphill inbound lane of the entry road brings up a number of logistical issues.
- The approximately 700' length snakes through several 90 degree bends at steep incline.
- Trucks cannot pass one another in the sharp turns due to the geometry of off-tracking.
- The entrance road, as currently designed and submitted, will not accommodate 20 trucks as stated in the DEIR.

• Specific and detailed descriptions (i.e., drawings), showing the location of the 20 double-hopper gravel haulers trucks to demonstrate the carrying capacity of this staging area must be included in the EIR. Such drawings should consider adequate spacing for safe starting, stopping and movement of these 20 queued vehicles, many of them presumably loaded with "materials for recycling"
• Impacts associated with the deficient staging plan and steepness of the access road will affect trucks idling in and out of town, air quality, noise (compression/jake brakes down hillside) , and circulation issues.
• How will these additional impacts be accounted for?
• An additional aspect of the insufficiency of staging being overlooked is the blight on the rural character of Santa Margarita.
• The applicant must clearly demonstrate its ability to operate fully within the boundaries of the proposed project.
• The surrounding community should not bare the burden (i.e., trucks staging in any area other than the proposed project site) for inadequacies associated with a proposed project.

Additional Comments Section 4.1

1. Although Visual Impacts on Hwy. 58 have been classified as significant, the impacts have not been adequately presented visually.
2. Two perspectives are insufficient to visualize the entirety of the impacts.
   • Visual renderings reveal non-visual impacts often overlooked when expressed only in words.
3. Visual renderings provided in the DEIR do no include the presence of trucks as part of the viewshed analysis.
4. The highest elevation of the mountaintop on the proposed quarry site is over 1475'.

• Due to this elevation, the cut is visible from a number of other corridors not included in the DEIR.
• No objective evidence has been provided to demonstrate this proposed project would not be visible from the US 101 corridor; when in fact, our analysis suggests that it will. The EIR must address these inconsistencies.

Figure MP4.1-12