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**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING
STAFF REPORT
Tentative Notice of Action**

MEETING DATE December 11, 2015	CONTACT/PHONE Schani Siong (805) 781-4374	APPLICANT Caltrans	FILE NO. DRC2014-00095
LOCAL EFFECTIVE DATE December 28, 2015			
APPROX FINAL EFFECTIVE DATE January 15, 2015			

SUBJECT
A request by **CALTRANS** for a Minor Use Permit/Coastal Development Permit (DRC2014-00095) to allow construction of left-turn channels from Highway 1 onto Sheridan Road. The road widening construction will occur on the north side of Highway 1 centerline and approximately 1,250 feet eastward and westward from Sheridan Road along Highway 1. No work is proposed on the south side of the centerline stripe. Road construction 1,250' eastward from Sheridan Road to Ralcoa Way will also bring the northbound roadway up to current standards by providing a 12' lane, 8' shoulder and improved turning radius at Sheridan and Ralcoa Way. The project includes extension of the two existing 12' cross culverts by 6' (to total 18') and removal of a number of eucalyptus trees (29% reduction of existing grove) and other fixed objects along the northern edge of Sheridan Road to create a 20' clear recovery zone on the northbound side. The proposed project is located within the Highway 1 right-of-way, in the village of Callendar-Garrett, in the South County Planning Area.

RECOMMENDED ACTION
Approve Minor Use Permit DRC2014-00095 based on the findings listed in Exhibit A and the conditions listed in Exhibit B.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION
Caltrans, as the lead agency, issued a Categorical Exemption Class 1 pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21084, for the purpose of compliance with CEQA.

LAND USE CATEGORY State Highway Right-Of-Way (adjacent to Residential Suburban)	COMBINING DESIGNATION NA	ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER 091-174-060 and 091-401-082 (property frontages on Sheridan Road)	SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) 4
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PLANNING AREA STANDARDS:
NA

LAND USE ORDINANCE STANDARDS:
Local Coastal Program, Air Pollution Control District (APCD) Review
Does the project conform to the Land Use Ordinance Standards: Yes - see discussion

FINAL ACTION
This tentative decision will become the final action on the project, unless the tentative decision is changed as a result of information obtained at the administrative hearing or is appealed to the County Board of Supervisors pursuant Section 23.01.042 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance; effective on the 10th working day after the receipt of the final action by the California Coastal Commission. The tentative decision will be transferred to the Coastal Commission following the required 14-calendar day local appeal period after the administrative hearing.
The applicant is encouraged to call the Central Coast District Office of the Coastal Commission in Santa Cruz at (831) 427-4863 to verify the date of final action. The County will not issue any construction permits prior to the end of the Coastal Commission process.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & BUILDING AT:
COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER γ SAN LUIS OBISPO γ CALIFORNIA 93408 γ (805) 781-5600 γ FAX: (805) 781-1242

LAND USE ORDINANCE STANDARDS:

23.06.082 – Air Pollution Control District (APCD) Review

Notification of the county APCD applies to any discretionary application filed, which includes major transportation projects such as roadway construction and expansion projects.

Staff comments: This project was referred to APCD. At the request for APCD, an Air Quality Study Report was prepared by Caltrans to evaluate the anticipated air quality effects of the proposed project. The results of the emissions estimated for a sixty day construction phase do not exceed the guidelines in the APCD's 2012 CEQA Handbook (Air Quality Study Report, Caltrans, June 2015).

23.07.120 – Local Coastal Program Area (LCP)

The project site is located within the California Coastal Zone as determined by the California Coastal Act of 1976 and is subject to the provisions of the Local Coastal Plan.

COASTAL PLAN POLICY DISCUSSION:

Shoreline Access:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Recreation and Visitor Serving:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Energy and Industrial Development:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Commercial Fishing, Recreational Boating and Port Facilities:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Environmentally Sensitive Habitats:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Agriculture:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Public Works:	Policy No: 7
Coastal Watersheds:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Visual and Scenic Resources:	Policy No(s): 5 and 7
Hazards:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Archeology:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Air Quality:	Policy No: 1

Does the project meet applicable Coastal Plan Policies: Yes, as conditioned

COASTAL PLAN POLICY DISCUSSION:

Public Works:

Policy 7: Permit requirements. A permit is required for projects within the coastal zone.

Staff comment: The applicant is requesting approval of a Minor Use Permit / Coastal Development Permit, consistent with the requirements of this policy.

Visual and Scenic Resources

Policy 5: Landform Alterations. Grading, earthmoving, major vegetation removal and other landform alterations within public view corridors are to be minimized. Where feasible, contours of the finished surface are to blend with adjacent natural terrain to achieve a consistent grade and natural appearance.

Policy 7: Preservation of Trees and Native Vegetation. The location and design of new development shall minimize the need for tree removal.

Staff comments: As proposed, Caltrans will remove the minimum trees necessary to provide adequate construction areas to improve operational standards at Highway 1 and Sheridan Road intersection. When completed, the project will add left-turn channels for both directions on Highway 1 at Sheridan Road, and upgrade the northern roadway of Highway 1 (between Ralcoa and Sheridan Road) to current traffic standard with a 12' travel lane, 8' shoulder and 20' clear recovery zone for proper sightlines at these intersections.

The existing eucalyptus grove between Ralcoa Way and Sheridan Road is approximately 1,200 feet long and extend about 60 feet back from the highway. The eucalyptus trees are growing in a loose grid pattern in second and third-growth clumps, remnants from the once-extensive eucalyptus plantations on the Nipomo Mesa. The existing grove covers approximately 2.3 acres. Approximately 0.67 acres of this grove (29%) will be removed, starting with 36 feet from the edge of highway at Sheridan Road and reducing to 20 feet towards Ralcoa Way. Removal will not diminish the length of the grove. Once completed, the finished surface of roads will remain similar to existing natural terrain with improved drainage. The natural appearance of the site and vicinity is preserved with the remaining eucalyptus trees (71% of grove). This project meets these standards.

Air Quality

Policy 1: Air Quality. The County will provide adequate administration and enforcement of air quality programs and regulations to be consistent with the county's Air Pollution Control District and the State Air Resources Control Board.

Staff comments: Short term construction impacts such as noise, traffic, and air pollutants are anticipated from various construction activities during this project. Caltrans prepared an Air Quality Study Report which concludes that the estimated 60-day construction operation emissions do not exceed emission thresholds per SLO APCD's CEQA 2012 Handbook (Caltrans, June 2015). As a CEQA lead agency, Caltrans had conducted its own environmental determination and issued a Categorical Exemption Class 1 for this project.

Caltrans acknowledges that the project site is partly within the CDF dust plume influence zone, as defined by APCD (APCD, March 18, 2015). The CDF zone is one of the four zones defined by APCD to experience impacts of elevated particulate matter levels due to windblown dust from the open sand areas at the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA). The particulate matter levels are increased by off road vehicle activity on the dunes. The CDF zone receives the most significant impacts from the dust plumes.

This project does not create a new source of air pollutants nor contribute to the increase of particulate matters originating from the dunes. It is possible that the rows of trees help reduce air-borne dust from the dunes by capturing sand particles on leaves and branches. Trees removed are the most inward row, downwind from the prevailing southeasterly wind. Therefore, reduction of the air filtering is considered minimal. Given the state moratorium on drought, tree replanting is not an option for Caltrans to minimize the reduction of air filtering. Caltrans has agreed to donate to another conservation project in the CDF zone to assist with dune vegetation

stabilization and restoration (Caltrans, November 3, 2015). The chosen recipient project, Kathleen Canyon Overlook Conservation Park is managed by The Land Conservancy and is planned to be implemented Fall 2015 (Land Conservancy, October 27, 2015). The conservation project includes planting native, drought tolerant plant species, as well as placing interpretive displays educating public about local air quality issues in the vicinity. Caltran's good faith effort is consistent with APCD's preferred alternative choice for off-site conservation programs in the CDF zone.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP COMMENTS: The South County Advisory Council discussed this project on March 23, 2015 and recommends that Caltrans maintain as many Eucalyptus trees as possible to mitigate noise and dust for adjacent landowners.

AGENCY REVIEW:

Public Works- *Per referral comments (Glenn Marshall, March 13, 2015)*

Air Pollution Control District – *Per referral letter (Gary Arcemont, March 18, 2015)*

County General Services/ Parks– *Per referral comments (E.Kavanaugh, March 18, 2015).*

Cal Fire – *Per referral comments (Travis Craig, March 13, 2015)*

Oceano Community Services District – *No response.*

Coastal Commission – *No response.*

Staff report prepared by Schani Siong and reviewed by Steve McMasters, Supervising Planner.