



# Monterey County Zoning Administrator

## Agenda Item No. 1

Legistar File Number: ZA 17-040

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August 10, 2017

Introduced: 8/2/2017

Version: 1

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Matter Type: ZA

### PLN150732 - KAISER (VERIZON WIRELESS)

Public hearing to consider action on the establishment of a wireless communication facility with a 55 foot tall mono-eucalyptus wireless communications pole and the relocation of an 8-inch oak tree.

**Project Location:** 457 Carpenteria Road, Aromas

**Proposed CEQA action:** Exempt per 15303

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Zoning Administrator:

- 1) Find the project categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines;
- 2) Approve a Use Permit to allow the establishment of a wireless communications facility consisting of:
  - a. construction of a 55-foot tall mono-eucalyptus wireless communications pole
  - b. equipment shelter
  - c. standby diesel generator
  - d. 8-foot tall security fence enclosure; and
- 3) Approve a Tree Removal Permit to allow the relocation of an 8-inch oak tree.

The attached resolution includes findings and evidence for consideration (**Exhibit C**). Staff recommends that the Zoning Administrator adopt the resolution approving PLN150732 subject to 14 conditions of approval.

### PROJECT INFORMATION:

**Agent:** Matt Norton, Verizon Wireless

**Property Owner:** Kaiser Terrance Ray Tr Et Al

**APN:** 267-191-045-000

**Parcel Size:** 0.9 acres

**Zoning:** "LDR/1" or Low Density Residential, 1 acre per unit

**Plan Area:** North County Area Plan

**Flagged and Staked:** No

### SUMMARY:

The subject property is located within a rural residential area of north Monterey County. The parcel fronts along Carpenteria Road, which is a light to moderately traveled roadway. Across the street is the Aromas Fire District fire station. Residential lots abut the property on the north and south and a private lane, Arlon Way, abuts the property on the west. The unincorporated community of Aromas is less than one mile north of the property and Highway 101 is approximately 2.5 mile to the southeast. Access to the property exists through a driveway off Carpenteria Road. Existing development consists of a single family dwelling, a detached garage

and two detached sheds. The site rises in elevation by approximately 25-feet from east to west. Vegetation consists of several trees scattered on the site and grasses.

The project is a request to establish a wireless communication facility (WCF) on the northwest corner of the property, 50-feet from Arlon Way. The WCF will consist of a 460 square foot lease area containing a 55-foot tall wireless communication pole disguised as a eucalyptus tree, equipment shelter, and a 30kw standby diesel generator, enclosed within an 8-foot tall security fence. The applicant, Verizon Wireless, requests establishment of a WCF on the subject property in order to close a gap in coverage in order to reliably transmit, receive, and/or maintain both voice and data connection to their customers.

The 2010 General Plan and North County Area Plan includes policies to ensure new developments are consistent with the residential use of the area. Furthermore, the Monterey County Zoning Ordinance include regulations, standards, and circumstances for the siting, design, construction, and maintenance of WCFs.

Based on the project application materials and staff's analysis, the project is found to be consistent with the General Development Standards for site location and design review criteria contained in the Monterey County Code for WCFs (Section 21.64.310.H). The proposed location of the WCF meets the required setbacks for non-habitable accessory structures within the Low Density Residential District. The proposed height of 55-feet exceeds the maximum height limit of the district; however, approval of the Use Permit entitlement would allow for the exceedance. The subject property is not located within the public viewshed or in a scenic corridor. Photosimulations of the project indicate that due to topography, assortment of vegetation types, and existing structures, establishment of the WCF would not detract from the neighborhood character when seen from the most commonly traveled roadway, Carpenteria Road. The WCF would be most noticeable when seen from Arlon Way, which is a private road not commonly traveled by the general public as it only serves access to four residential lots. The 55-foot tall wireless communications pole has been designed to resemble eucalyptus tree, which was identified as the most acceptable in this case for more than one reason. First, regarding tree shape, the configuration of an oak tree would be low and wide and simulating the large bends and twists of the trunk and branches would be difficult; and although a pine tree would be tall and narrow, pine needles would not obscure antennas as adequately as the long flat leaves of a eucalyptus. Second, existing vegetation in the area includes eucalyptus trees, along with the oak trees, cypress trees, and other non-native ornamental trees. Therefore, the addition of the mono-eucalyptus is appropriate and consistent with the mixed vegetation type of the area. Although the project has the potential to impact private views, there will be no impact to the public viewshed. Furthermore, the projected radio frequency emittance for the WCF is within the exposure limits established by the Federal Communications Commission, co-location of existing facilities as well as the potential for future co-location on the site have been explored, and an alternative site analysis provided by the applicant indicates that the proposed location better meets the needs of the applicant to reduce a gap in coverage.

The project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15303 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines. This section exempts the construction of small facilities or new structures. Based on staff's review, the project is consistent with this exemption.

Staff recommends the Zoning Administrator approve the project. This recommendation is supported by the detailed discussion provided in **Exhibit B** and the findings and evidence, conditions of approval, and project plans found in **Exhibit C**.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The following agencies have reviewed the project, have comments, and/or have recommended conditions:

Environmental Health Bureau  
RMA-Public Works  
RMA-Environmental Services  
Water Resources Agency  
North County Fire Protection District

The proposed project was reviewed by the North County LUAC on February 15, 2017. A motion to deny the project was made but voted against with 1 aye and 5 noes (**Exhibit D**). Concerns relative to devaluing of neighboring properties, disruption of private views, and creation of noise impacts were expressed by members of the public. To address these concerns, it was suggested that there were at least two other viable locations. Staff has addressed these concerns in the recommended findings and conditions.

FINANCING:

Funding for staff time associated with this project is included in the FY16-17/17-18 Adopted Budgets for RMA-Planning.

Prepared by: Anna V. Quenga, Associate Planner, x5175  
Reviewed by: Brandon Swanson, RMA Planning Services Manager  
Approved by: Carl Holm, AICP, RMA Director

The following attachments are on file with the RMA:

Exhibit A Project Data Sheet  
Exhibit B Discussion  
Exhibit C Draft Resolution including:

- Conditions of Approval
- Project Plans

Exhibit D North County LUAC Minutes  
Exhibit E Proposed Base Station Radio Frequency Compliance Report  
Exhibit F Site Coverage Justification  
Exhibit G Alternative Site Analysis  
Exhibit H Photosimulations  
Exhibit I Vicinity Map

cc: Front Counter Copy; Zoning Administrator; Brandon Swanson, RMA Services Manager; Matt Norton, Verizon Wireless, Agent; Kaiser Terrance Ray Tr Et Al, Owner; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); LandWatch (Executive Director); Project File PLN150732