



# Monterey County Zoning Administrator

## Agenda Item No. 6

Legistar File Number: ZA 18-076

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### PLN180318 - ROBLES (AT&T WIRELESS)

Public hearing to consider the installation of a 100-foot tall monopole wireless communication facility and equipment shelter.

**Project Location:** 2380 Alisal Road (Don Elias Tequila), Salinas (Assessor's Parcel Number 137-121-015-000, Greater Salinas Area Plan.

**Proposed CEQA action:** Exempt per Section 15303(c) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Zoning Administrator:

- a) Find that the project for a new wireless communication facility qualifies for a Class 1 Categorical Exemption per Section 15303(c) of the CEQA Guidelines, and there are no exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2; and
- b) Approve a Use Permit to allow the installation of a 100-foot tall monopole wireless communication facility and support equipment consisting of twelve (12) panel antennas, twenty-one (21) remote radio units, and four (4) DC surge compressors, enclosed by a 40 feet x 40 feet, 6-foot high chain link fence.

The attached resolution includes findings and evidence for consideration (**Exhibit A**). Staff recommends approval subject to 10 conditions of approval.

### PROJECT INFORMATION:

**Agent:** Tom Johnson, TSJ Consulting Inc (AT&T Mobility)

**Property Owner:** Joaquin Robles

**APN:** 137-121-015-000

**Parcel Size:** 10.05 acres

**Zoning:** F/40 (Farmlands 40 - 160 acre minimum)

**Plan Area:** Greater Salinas Area Plan

**Flagged and Staked:** No

### SUMMARY:

The Applicant is requesting approval of a Use Permit to construct and operate a 100-foot tall monopole wireless communication facility and support equipment (Wireless Facility). The proposed Wireless Facility will consist of 12 panel antennae, 21 remote radio units and 4 DC surge compressors enclosed by 40 foot x 40 foot, 6-foot high, chain link fence. The project location is at 2380 Alisal Road (Don Elias Tequila) along the northwest area of the property. The area is rural with primary activities involving trucking, storage and farm production. On September 16, 2018, RMA Staff conducted a site visit and observed workers performing a variety of these duties (**Exhibit E**). The

proposed project will not create an adverse visual impact from any common public viewshed, scenic corridor, or impact any identified environmentally sensitive areas. The proposed project is also consistent with all the zoning regulations and design guidelines and will require approval of a Use Permit and public hearing by the Zoning Administrator.

### DISCUSSION

The property site is approximately 10 acres and includes on-site agriculture, farm and trucking activities, and includes storage of equipment. A nursery production plant operation is adjacent to the property. Farming and agricultural use and activity also operates adjacent to the property where the proposed monopole wireless communication facility and support equipment is located (Robles property/Don Elias Tequila production). The proposed Wireless Facility is located on the northwest side of the Robles property and facing Alisal Road. The table below identifies the land uses immediately surrounding the project site.

Location View	Land Use Activity	Zoning Community Plan
North	Ag/Farming F/40-160	Greater Salinas
South	Ag/Farming F/40-160	Greater Salinas
East	Ag/Farming F/40-160	Greater Salinas
West	Ag/Farming F/40-160	Greater Salinas

Once constructed and operational, the proposed Wireless Facility will provide 24-hour service to customers seven (7) days a week. The Wireless Facility will be unmanned and require periodic maintenance once amonth. Beyond this intermittent service, AT&T requested 24-hour access to the proposed Wireless Facility to ensure that technical support is immediately available in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

The Applicant evaluated alternative site locations at 1555 Old Stage Road, and 1572 Old Stage Road. In the first instance, the property owner was interested in pursuing a Wireless Facility, however, AT&T's radio frequency engineer determined that a facility located at 2380 Alisal Road would provide better coverage. In the second instance, 1572 Old Stage Road, the candidate was ruled out due to a lack of interest.

The proposed Wireless Facility was located to provide seamless coverage service between existing AT&T cellular sites. There are three existing AT&T cellular sites that range in distance from 3 to 5 miles from the proposed location (**Exhibit C**). The proposed Wireless Facility will expand and improve in-building and in-transit wireless service to the surrounding rural area and enhance public safety. The proposed Wireless Facility has also been designed in a manner that will structurally accommodate additional antennae allowing co-location in the future. RMA Planning Staff has included a condition of approval that will encourage co-location by other wireless carriers on this tower (**Condition No. 5**).

The site is flat and has historically been used for agricultural and farming purposes. There is not a designated public viewing area, scenic corridor, or any identified environmentally sensitive areas or nearby resources. As described, the applicant evaluated the feasibility of locating the proposed facility at nearby existing facilities, but could not provide the necessary coverage for the identified proposed

coverage area.

Generally, a wireless communications facility is not a traditional use that is inherently compatible with the character of the surrounding area. However, the current use is agriculture and farming; and a project site that receives trucking, packing, harvesting, storage, and heavy equipment storage to support agricultural and farming operations. The Applicant's proposal to install monopole design will not be a substantial visual impact for the area. RMA Planning Staff has included a condition that will allow the Applicant to incorporate new advances in technological equipment. New advances in technology may result in better design standards to further minimize visual impacts in the future. **(Condition No. 6).**

The Applicant has submitted a coverage map that depicts current cellular service for the area. The coverage map identifies a Living Unit Polygon (AT&T term) that describes existing wireless cell sites and the proposed wireless cell sites. The proposed Wireless Facility site is within the Living Unit Polygon and will close communication coverage gaps **(Exhibit E)**.

The Applicant submitted photo simulations showing a standard monopole design **(Exhibit A)**. RMA Planning Staff supports a standard monopole design based on the fact that no negative visual impacts will occur to the immediate and surrounding area.

On June 15, 2018, the Applicant completed a Radio Frequency - Electromagnetic Energy Compliance Report (RF-EME Report) prepared by EBI Consulting Engineers **(Exhibit D)**. The RF-EME Report concluded that the proposed Wireless Facility meets FCC standards.

#### CEQA EXEMPTION

The project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines. The project is a small structure, which qualifies for a Class 3 Categorical Exemption per Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines and does not meet any of the exceptions under Section 15300.2. The project involves the installation of a 100-foot tall monopole wireless communication facility. Therefore, the proposed development is consistent with the parameters of this exemption. The technical reports prepared for the project do not identify any potential significant or cumulative impacts, and no evidence of significant adverse environmental effects was identified during staff review of the development application.

#### 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
- Monterey County Regional Fire District

There is no Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) for the Greater Salinas Area Plan therefore the project was not reviewed. The Agricultural Advisory Committee declined to review the project.

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Reviewed by: Brandon Swanson, RMA Planning Services Manager  
Approved by: John M. Dugan, FAICP, RMA Deputy Director Land Use and Community  
Development

The following attachments are on file with the RMA:

- Exhibit A Draft Resolution
- Exhibit B Vicinity Map
- Exhibit C Site Coverage Map
- Exhibit D Radio Frequency-Electromagnetic Energy Report
- Exhibit E Site Tower Simulations

cc: Front Counter Copy; Zoning Administrator; Brandon Swanson, RMA Services Manager, AT&T Mobility, Agent; Tom Johnson, Owner; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); LandWatch (Executive Director); Project File PLN180318