



Monterey County Zoning Administrator

Agenda Item No. 1

Legistar File Number: ZA 18-078

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January 10, 2019

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Current Status: Agenda Ready

Matter Type: ZA

PLN180178 - DURAN (SAC Wireless d/b/a Verizon)

Public hearing to consider the installation of a wireless communications facility designed as a 70-foot high mono-pine faux tree, with nine (9) antennas, all associated transmission cables; outdoor cabinets, and fenced perimeter.

Proposed Location: 135 Allison Road, Pajaro

Proposed CEQA Action: Categorically Exempt per section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Zoning Administrator:

- a. Find 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;
- b. Approve a Use Permit to allow the installation of a 70-foot high wireless communications facility disguised as a mono-pine faux tree with nine (9) panel antennas, all associated transmission cables, outdoor cabinets, and a 30'x 30' square foot fencing perimeter (8' high chain-link).

A draft resolution, including findings and evidence, is attached for consideration (**Exhibit B**).

Staff recommends approval subject to eleven (11) conditions.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Owner: Edward & Sonia Duran

APN: 117-402-003-000

Agent: SAC Wireless d/b/a Verizon

Zoning: Farmlands (F/40)

Plan Area: North County Area Plan

Flagged and Staked: Photo-simulations Provided

SUMMARY:

The applicant requests approval of a Use Permit to allow development of a wireless communications facility (WCF) disguised as a mono-pine faux tree on a 3.37 acre parcel in the Farmlands Zoning designation. The proposed site is in a rural area of northern Monterey County, approximately 2 miles west of Highway 1, situated off Allison Road (public county road). Most of the project parcel is developed with a light industrial building and a ranch style residence. The industrial structure is used for agriculture and farming, as well as providing a storage and a cooling facility for the strawberries. The applicant submitted visual simulations showing the 70 foot mono-pine from the surrounding areas. The proposed mono-pine will be visible from neighboring properties as well as from Allison Road and San Juan Road but, not visible from Highway 1. The mono-pine design is appropriate with the rural

nature of the surrounding area.

DISCUSSION:

Setting:

The parcels bordering this site are primarily zoned Farmland (F). Surrounding uses in the area include farming related structures and residential homes. The subject 3.37 acre parcel, has a single family residence and a light industrial building (storage/cooler facility). The proposed mono-pine and associated equipment will be placed approximately 130 feet from the residence in the southeast corner of the lot. Access to the leased WCF would be through an existing paved 40-foot wide private driveway from the first half of the property and the remaining half portion would be through an undeveloped flat dirt area which will remain unimproved.

Visual Resources and Design:

The subject site is not in a designated Visually Sensitive area. From Allison Road, the existing view is of utility poles and buildings. There are a few trees in the immediate surrounding area consisting of various species, including pines and a mature palm tree at the adjacent property. A simple monopole would be sufficient for the area; however, the aesthetic of a mono-pine is visually more pleasing since there are no particular group of dominant tree species in the area.

The applicant submitted photo simulations (Exhibit F) of the standard mono-pine design, the basic mono-pine design is visible, but better blends with the existing surrounding area. The proposed facility has been designed at its minimal functional height and needs to be a total of 70 feet to reach its intended service area. A height verification condition has been included to ensure that the final structure is no taller than 70 feet (Condition No. 10)

Location, Alternative Site Analysis, & Co-Location:

Since there is currently no Verizon WCF in this region (Exhibit D), the proposed facility will allow coverage (approximately within 1.5 mile radius) surrounding the east portion of Watsonville Junction area. The proposed location will help provide coverage between Salinas Road and west of Carlton Road, south of East Riverside Road and north of Vega Road.

AT&T and Sprint are the only providers with a WCF in the vicinity for cell phone coverage as detailed in the applicant submitted Alternative Site Analysis (Exhibit D). Existing nearby sites were considered for co-location, but were deemed unsuitable since there are no existing towers that are inside or close to the targeted coverage area. Therefore, co-location was not an option to meet the objectives of this site. The new proposed site will have capacity for co-location in the future. The location was selected as the best option to minimize visual impacts while achieving Verizon's coverage objectives for the area.

Radio Frequency

The applicant has submitted a statement that the proposed facility was evaluated by Hammett & Edison, Inc. (Exhibit E). The report finds that the facility will comply with prevailing Federal Communications Commission (FCC) standards for limiting public exposure to radio frequency energy. The highest calculated level in publicly accessible areas is much less than the prevailing standards allow for exposures of unlimited duration. This finding is consistent with measurements of actual exposure conditions taken at other operating base stations.

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

LUAC:

The project was not referred to the North County Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) for review. Based on the LUAC Procedure guidelines adopted by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, this application did not require referral to the LUAC because the proposed project does not require CEQA review (i.e. did not require an initial study); the project does not involve a lot line adjustment with conflicts; the project did not include a variance; and the project is not solely a Design Approval subject to the review of the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission. Additionally, staff did not decide to refer the project since it does not have any land-use issues and no public concerns were brought to staff's attention. Furthermore, the project is in a rural farmland area, not visible from any scenic highways and is not part of a Design District.

Prepared by: Son Pham-Gallardo, Associate Planner
Reviewed by: Brandon Swanson, RMA Planning Services Manager
Approved by: John M. Dugan, FAICP, RMA Deputy Director of Land Use and Community Development

The following attachments are on file with the RMA:

Exhibit A Project Data Sheet
Exhibit B Draft Resolution, including:

- Recommended Conditions of Approval
- Site Plan and Elevations

Exhibit C Vicinity Map
Exhibit D Coverage Map & Alternative Sites Analysis
Exhibit E Radio Frequency Study
Exhibit F Photo Simulations

cc: Front Counter Copy; Brandon Swanson, RMA Planning Services Manager; Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real, Property Owner, Precision Site Development d/b/a Sprint c/o Complete Wireless Consulting Attn: Jeremy Jordan (Applicant/Agent); The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); LandWatch (Executive Director); John H. Farrow; Janet Brennan; Project File PLN180178.

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