

Staff recommends approval subject to 9 conditions.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Agent: Ben Hackstedde, Sequoia Development Services for Verizon Wireless

Property Owner: BRAY ALBERT L TR ET AL

APN: 422-281-001-000

Parcel Size: 102 acres

Lease Space: 625 square feet

Zoning: "HI" (Heavy Industrial Mineral Extraction)

Plan Area: South County Area Plan

Flagged and Staked: No

SUMMARY:

The subject application is for a 65-foot high lattice tower transceiver along with associated equipment cabinets, emergency generator, and meter that will be housed within an eight foot high chain link enclosure. Sequoia Development Services, Inc., on behalf of Verizon Wireless, submitted an application for the construction of an unmanned wireless communication facility (WCF) that will be constructed on a long 103-acre parcel oriented lengthwise north-south. The northernmost three-quarters of the parcel are zoned Farmland and Permanent Grazing with a minimum parcel size of 40 acres. The WCF is in the southernmost quarter of the parcel that is zoned Heavy Industrial (Mineral Extraction). The parcel is in a rural area of farming and grazing lands. Access to the proposed WCF is along an existing road that runs along an existing utility easement. The power pole approximately 100 feet north of the facility will serve operational power to the project. The wireless facility would provide coverage within an existing coverage gap along Highway 101 for voice over LTE (VoLTE). The experience for the user is expected to be both improved connectivity and fewer dropped calls.

DISCUSSION

Consistency and Site Suitability

Verizon prefers to pursue co-location opportunities; in this instance, there were no suitable co-locatable sites. Alternative sites in the area (Exhibit F) were analyzed by Verizon's RF engineers for viability of location, including the following four parcels:

- SBA San Ardo, 59877 Paris Valley Rd. - Initially, an existing lattice tower at the same height on this parcel was the most suitable candidate for the proposed WCF. However, the ground lease would have expired within ten years, not a long enough lease period to justify the investment at this location.
- Toeppen, 59020 Paris Valley Rd. - Lease issues.
- Ochoa, APN 422-091-066-000 - Not viable.
- Ansberry, APN 422-091-009-000 - Not viable.

Radiofrequency (RF) electromagnetic fields (EMF)

In order to provide full disclosure regarding the possible effects of RF EMF exposure, the following report was prepared:

"Verizon Wireless Proposed Base Station (Site No. 291698 'Paris Valley Road')" (LIB180203) prepared by Hammett & Edison, Inc., San Francisco, CA, 28 December 2017.

The location on the subject property is at the portion of the parcel that is most removed from Highway 101, approximately half a mile southwest from the highway. Placement of the base station is aligned with the power poles at a distance consistent with the approximate 300 feet between each power pole.

The FCC assigns short wavelength frequencies for wireless services, requiring antennae to have line-of-sight paths for their signals to broadcast suitably. This characterization results in transceivers needing installation high above the ground. Antennae are designed to concentrate their energy toward the horizon, with very little energy wasted toward the sky or ground. Operational emissions shall comply with prevailing standards for limiting public exposure to RF energy. Therefore, mitigation measures are not necessary to comply with the FCC public exposure guidelines.

Design

As mentioned previously, the base station is located approximately half a mile from Highway 101 and is at a distance from, and in alignment with, the power poles on the subject property. The visual effect is that the lattice tower integrates with the visual impact of the line of power poles. Chain link fencing at 8 feet high is proposed around the base station and would be fully screened from public view by topography.

The vertical visual effect of a 65-foot tall structure in this setting is not a feasible candidate to either integrate or screen; however, appropriate design of the structure could make a favorable visual impact. Staff determined that staking and flagging would be an excessive action for the purpose of visualizing the mass and form of the project; and it is not required because the project is not in “D” or “VS” zoning district, is not ridgeline development, and does not include a variance to height restriction. A photo-simulation of the proposed windmill design shows consistency with the rural grassland character of the surroundings. Placement on the site is optimal for connection to an existing power pole on the parcel.

CEQA:

Pursuant to Section 15303 of CEQA Guidelines, new construction of a small facility is exempt from environmental review. None of the exceptions to a categorical exemption contained in 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines apply.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

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

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

Prepared by: Jaime Scott Guthrie, AICP Candidate, Associate Planner, ext. 6414

Reviewed by: Brandon Swanson, Planning Services Manager

Approved by: John Dugan, FAICP, Deputy Director of RMA Planning and Development Services

The following attachments are on file with the RMA:

- Exhibit A Project Data Sheet
- Exhibit B Draft Resolution, including:
 - B1 Conditions of Approval
 - B2 Site Plans, Elevations
 - B3 Photo simulations
- Exhibit C Vicinity Map
- Exhibit D Report: Hammett & Edison, Inc. (LIB180203) 28 December 2017
- Exhibit E Coverage Plots
- Exhibit F Map of Alternative Sites

cc: Front Counter Copy; Jacqueline R. Onciano, Chief of RMA-Planning, Ben Hackstedde, Agent; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); LandWatch (Michael DeLapa, Executive Director); Project File PLN170802.