



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: ZA 19-122, **Version:** 1

PLN190039 - NAVARRO (AT&T WIRELESS) (Continued from August 29, 2019)

Public hearing to consider approving a Use Permit to allow the installation of a 65-foot tall wireless communication facility disguised as a pine tree.

Project Location: 41652 Maple Avenue, Greenfield (Assessor's Parcel Number 109-092-011-000), Central Salinas Valley

Proposed CEQA action: Exempt per 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines

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 (New Construction or Conversion of Small structures), and there are no exceptions to Section 15300.2; and
- 2) Approve a Use Permit to allow the establishment of a wireless communications facility consisting of construction of a 65-foot tall mono-pine wireless communication pole, and 112 square feet equipment shelter, a back-up diesel generator all located within a 24 square foot, 8-foot tall security fence enclosure.

The attached resolution includes findings and evidence for consideration (**Exhibit C**). Staff recommends that the Zoning Administrator adopt the resolution approving PLN190039 subject to nine (9) conditions of approval.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Agent: Tom Johnson, AT&T Wireless

Property Owners: Juan & Mary Navarro

APN: 109-092-011-000

Parcel Size: 4.8 acres

Zoning: F/40-UR (Farmland 40, acres per unit Urban Reserve)

Plan Area: Central Salinas Valley Plan

Flagged and Staked: No

SUMMARY:

The applicant (Tom Johnson) representing (AT&T Wireless) is requesting approval of a Use Permit to construct and operate a wireless communication facility camouflaged as a 65-foot pine tree, and associated equipment consisting of (12), six-foot wall panel antennas, twenty four (24) remote radio units, four (4) DC surge compressors, one (1) microwave dish antenna, and one (1) back-up Diesel Generator. The proposed AT&T wireless facility will be located at the southeast boundary located within a 1,350 square foot leased area enclosed by a seven (8-0) foot high chain-link fence.

Once constructed and operational, the proposed facility will provide 24-hour service customers seven (7) days a week. Apart from initial construction activity, an AT&T technician will be service the facility periodically. It is reasonable to expect that routine/inspection of the facility will occur about once a month during normal working hours. Beyond this intermittent service, AT&T requires 24-hour access to the proposed facility to ensure that technical support is immediately available if and when warranted.

AT&T objective in locating a wireless communication facility at this site is to provide improved serviceable in-building and in-transit wireless coverage within Greenfield city limits and unincorporated areas of Monterey County. The proposed Facility is necessary to close a significant service coverage gap (**Exhibit E**) area roughly bounded Walnut Avenue and Espinosa Road. The proposed facility will provide coverage to the surrounding manufacturer, residential, and agricultural areas that are present within this zone that currently have no AT&T mobile service.

PROJECT LOCATION SETTING:

The property site, approximately 4.8 acres, is currently occupied by single-family house including a detached accessory barn structure. The project site is located at the southeast corner of the lot adjacent to Elm Avenue near the City of Greenfield. Once constructed and operational, the proposed facility will provide 24-hour service to customers seven (7) days a week.

Co-Location and Site Analysis:

Monterey County Code (MCC) Section 20.64.310 encourages co-location of wireless facilities when possible. The applicant evaluated an alternative site 216 Oak Ave (APN 109-091-022-000) located within Greenfield City limits. This tower was evaluated as a co-location opportunity. Due to the available antenna position at approximately 35', it was determined that this tower would not offer the desired coverage objective that is needed for this area. If AT&T were to collocate on this existing tower an additional facility would need to be constructed to accomplish the coverage needs of the network see (**Exhibit D**). The proposed tower location at 41652 Maple Avenue (APN 109-092-011-000) will double the coverage area, expanding the in-building cellular service within the immediate area and enhancing service for the residents of Greenfield. The alternative collocated site would provide 50% less coverage than the proposed site. In order to provide coverage to the desired area without having gaps, AT&T would need to construct a new facility between 0.25 and 0.5 miles of the existing tower area. In addition to the wireless service gap issues; AT&T is in the process of deploying its 5G LTE service residents of the County of Monterey. The proposed tower will employ 5G LTE mobile networks and the technology that is being developed to significantly increase data speeds and support the development of other technologies, such as smart phones, autonomous vehicles, and wireless internet services.

Visual Resources and Design:

The site is relatively flat and has been historically been used for agricultural purposes. There are no designated public viewing areas, scenic corridors, or any identified environmentally sensitive areas near the site. As described, the applicant evaluated the feasibility of locating the proposed facility at nearby existing facilities, but could not provide the desired coverage. Generally, a wireless communication facility is not a use that is inherently compatible with the character of the surrounding rural/ agricultural uses; however, the proposed mono-pole will be disguised as a pine tree similar to the existing mono-pine located at 216 Oak Ave.

The applicant submitted photo simulations (**Exhibit C**) and (**Exhibit G**) of the standard monopole design as well as a monopole disguised as a -pine tree. Both options are attached to the staff report. Staff has reviewed the proposed design options and recommends the pine tree design as a means of disguising the tower and antenna and minimizing visual impacts of the proposed tower. As conditioned, the applicant will be required to provide specification on the mono-pine to ensure that it is as natural appearing as possible.

The proposed project complies with the Monterey County General Plan, Farmland 40, acres per unit Urban Reserve (F-40-UR), Wireless Facilities Design Guidelines (Findings), and other development standards and design guidelines. Wireless communication facilities are considered a use allowed in the Farmland zoning district with a Use Permit. Staff has reviewed the plans and determined that the criteria to grant a Use Permit

has been met in this case. The development meets all applicable regulations of the wireless communications facilities chapter. Co-location options have been explored. The proposed facility has been determined to be in an appropriate location to provide service in the target area while minimizing visual impact to the extent feasible. The area is predominately surrounded by agricultural uses such as crop farming, manufacturer buildings, and scattered residential subdivisions. Due the project location, developed areas incorporated by the City of Greenfield, and existing mature trees at the highway location, the proposed monopole will not be visible from Highway 101, County scenic roads, designated scenic areas, or critical viewsheds. No lighting is required for the pole and the disturbance area including access to the site is minimized. The tower will be constructed on non-flammable material and will be disguised as a pine tree.

Radio Frequency

The applicant has submitted a Radio Frequency compliance report prepared by EBI Consulting Engineers on February 04, 2019 (**Exhibit F**). The report finds that the facility will comply with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards for limiting public exposure to radio frequency energy, including the installation of all proper required (FCC) signage and/or barriers. The site is adequate for the proposed development of the wireless communication facility and the applicant has demonstrated that is the most adequate for the provision of services as required by the (FCC).

CEQA EXEMPTION

The project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15303 of the California Environmental Quality Act 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. 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 as identified during staff review of the development application. The project involves that installation to allow the installation of a 65-foot tall wireless communication facility disguised as a pine tree.

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
- Greenfield Fire Protection District
- City of Greenfield

The proposed project was not referred to a Land Use Advisory Committee because there is no Land Use Advisory Committee for the Central Salinas Valley Area Plan.

The project was referred to the City of Greenfield for review and comment because the wireless facility will be located within the sphere of influence for the City. The City reviewed the proposal and had no comments.

Prepared by: Kenny Taylor, Associate Planner, x5096

Reviewed by: Craig Spencer, 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 - Vicinity Map

Exhibit C - Draft Resolution, including;

- Draft Conditions of Approval
- Plans

Exhibit D - Project Description/Coverage Justification

Exhibit E - Site Coverage Map

Exhibit F - Radio Frequency Compliance Report

Exhibit G - Photo Simulations

Cc: Front Counter Copy; Zoning Administrator; Craig Spencer, Interim RMA Services Manager; Brandon Swanson Interim RMA Chief of Planning; Kenny Taylor, Project Planner; Att&t Wireless, Agent; Tom Johnson, Owner; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); LandWatch (Executive Director); Project File PLN190039