

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

FILE: S14-0008

PROJECT NAME: Alibi Verizon Wireless Cell Site (El Dorado)

NAME OF APPLICANT: Verizon Wireless

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO.: 331-270-01

SECTION: 25 T: 10N R: 10E

LOCATION: Site is on the south side of Union Mine Road, approximately one mile southeast of the intersection with U.S. Highway 49 and Union Mine Road in the El Dorado area.

- GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT:** **FROM:** **TO:**
- REZONING:** **FROM:** **TO:**
- TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP** **SUBDIVISION TO SPLIT** **ACRES INTO** **LOTS**
SUBDIVISION (NAME):
- SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW:** The construction of a wireless telecommunication facility consisting of a 107.5 foot monopine tower with six panel antennas at the 99.5 foot level, a 192 square foot equipment shelter, and a 132 gallon standby generator all within an approximately 1,010 square foot chain link fenced lease area. A new 350 foot long, gravel access drive will be built to access the facility.
- OTHER:**

REASONS THE PROJECT WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

- NO SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS WERE IDENTIFIED DURING THE INITIAL STUDY.**
- MITIGATION HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED WHICH WOULD REDUCE POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.**
- OTHER:**

In accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), State Guidelines, and El Dorado County Guidelines for the Implementation of CEQA, the County Environmental Agent analyzed the project and determined that the project will not have a significant impact on the environment. Based on this finding, the Planning Department hereby prepares this **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**. A period of thirty (30) days from the date of filing this negative declaration will be provided to enable public review of the project specifications and this document prior to action on the project by COUNTY OF EL DORADO. A copy of the project specifications is on file at the County of El Dorado Community Development Agency, Planning Division, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, CA 95667.

This Negative Declaration was adopted by the Planning Commission on December 11, 2014.

Executive Secretary



**COUNTY OF EL DORADO PLANNING SERVICES
2850 FAIRLANE COURT
PLACERVILLE, CA 95667**

**INITIAL STUDY
ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM**

Project Title: S14-0008 - Alibi Verizon Wireless Monopine

Lead Agency Name and Address: County of El Dorado, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, CA 95667

Contact Person: Joe Prutch, Project Planner

Phone Number: (530) 621-5355

Property Owner's Name and Address: Melvin and Helen Outlaw, PO Box 1044, El Dorado, CA 95623

Project Applicant's Name and Address: Epic Wireless, c/o Mark Lobaugh, 8700 Auburn Folsom Rd, Ste 400, Granite Bay, CA 95746

Project Agent's Name and Address: Epic Wireless, c/o Mark Lobaugh, 8700 Auburn Folsom Rd, Ste 400, Granite Bay, CA 95746

Project Location: South side of Union Mine Road, one mile east of the intersection with U.S. Highway 49 in the El Dorado area. 4870 Union Mine Road.

Assessor's Parcel Number(s): 331-270-01

Zoning: RE-5 (Residential Estate, Five-Acre Minimum)

Section: 35 **T:** 10N **R:** 10E

General Plan Designation: MDR (Medium-Density Residential)

Description of Project: Special Use Permit to allow the construction of a wireless telecommunication facility consisting of a 107.5 foot monopine tower with six panel antennas at the 99.5 foot level, a 192 square foot equipment shelter, and a 132 gallon standby generator all within an approximately 1,010 square foot chain link fenced lease area. A new 350 foot long, gravel access drive will be built to access the facility.

Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:

	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>General Plan</u>	<u>Land Use</u> (e.g., Single Family Residences, Grazing, Park, School)
Site:	RE-5	MDR	Single Family Residence
North:	RIA	MDR	Single Family Residences
	R1	HDR	Single Family Residences
South:	AE	MDR	Undeveloped Agricultural Land
East:	RE-10	MDR	Single Family Residences
West:	AE	MDR	Undeveloped Agricultural Land

Briefly describe the environmental setting: The cell tower facility sits at an elevation of 1,810 feet above mean sea level on an 8.51 acre property with an elevation range of 1,710 to 1,840 feet. Heavy vegetation consists mostly of various oaks and some foothill pines, with a relatively open understory with various grasses and forbs. The majority of the 8.51 acre property is composed of montane hardwood-conifer woodland. Approximately 6.21 acres of oak canopy, therefore the site has a total oak canopy coverage of 73 percent.

Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.):

CDA Building Division and Environmental Management

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

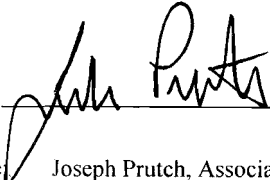
The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

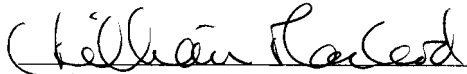
	Aesthetics		Agriculture Resources		Air Quality
	Biological Resources		Cultural Resources		Geology / Soils
	Hazards & Hazardous Materials		Hydrology / Water Quality		Land Use / Planning
	Mineral Resources		Noise		Population / Housing
	Public Services		Recreation		Transportation/Traffic
	Utilities / Service Systems		Mandatory Findings of Significance		

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.
- I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect: 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards; and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described in attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects: a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, pursuant to applicable standards; and b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature:  Date: 10-21-2014
 Printed Name: Joseph Prutch, Associate Planner For: El Dorado County

Signature:  Date: 11-5-14
 Printed Name: Lillian Macleod, Principal Planner For: El Dorado County

EXISTING AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The site is currently developed with a single family home and detached garage, consistent with the rural residential zoning and character of the surrounding area.

The proposed project is a special use permit to allow installation of a 102.5 foot tall monopine with three sectors containing two antennas each, for a total of six antennas at the 99.5 foot level. With manufactures pine tree branches atop the pole the monopine will have an ultimate height of 107.5 feet. The monopine is tall enough to accommodate two additional carriers to collocate antennas and microwave dishes. A 46 by 22 foot compound will enclose a 12 by 16 foot concrete equipment shelter, emergency standby generator with 132 gallon diesel fuel tank, and cell tower all surrounded by a six-foot tall chain link fence topped with one foot of barbed wire. A new turnout will be constructed along the existing paved driveway midway between Union Mine Road and the residence. A new 350 foot long aggregate surface road will be built from the end of the existing driveway to the cell tower site with a hammerhead turnaround near the end of the road per fire regulations. The equipment shelter will be connected to the monopine by underground power and telecommunication cables and an ice bridge.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The project site is not in an Important Biological Corridor. The project site does not contain riparian features, habitat, federally protected wetlands, or known mineral resources. No fish and wildlife species listed as protected by the State or federal government pursuant to the 2004 General Plan EIR were found on site; however, the biological survey (Foothill Associates, 05/09/14 and 10/16/14) indicated the project will result in the removal of eight oaks trees at the site; three black oaks, one interior live oak, and four small blue oaks. Removal of these trees will have no significant effect in the quality of oak woodland habitat in and around the project site. The project will remove 0.03 acres, or 0.5 percent, of the existing oak woodland canopy, with a total canopy coverage of 73 percent. Since more than 70 percent of the oak woodland habitat will be preserved, the project complies with General Plan Policy 7.4.4.4.

The proposed installation of the cell tower facility will include two HVAC units in the equipment shelter and one emergency standby generator running off a 132 gallon diesel fuel tank. Any noise generated from installation of the cell tower facility will be subject to General Plan Policy 6.5.1.11 reducing any noise impacts from temporary construction to less than significant. Operational noise from air conditioning units in the equipment shelter will generate noise levels of 50.0 dB at the nearest property line to the west (Bard, 6/26/14), which is below the 55 dB nighttime, 60 dB evening, and 70 dB daytime thresholds from Table 6.2 of the General Plan. The generator will create noise levels of 56.8 dB at the nearest property line that is above the nighttime threshold but below the evening and daytime thresholds. Since periodic testing of the generator would only occur during daytime hours, no noise mitigation measures would be warranted for the project. Noise from the facility is not likely to be heard by nearby residences, which are over 500 feet away.

A two-state system will provide continuous wireless communication coverage in case of a power outage. It will consist of a back-up battery that can run the facility for a few hours and a emergency standby generator that would automatically start and continue to run the site after the batteries are depleted. The proposed diesel generator and 132 gallon fuel tank meet UL certification. The equipment shelter will contain a fire extinguisher and the cell tower facility will contain a fire alarm connected to a nation-wide alerting system. The access road will be constructed to support and provide adequate turn-around for an emergency fire vehicle. As such, impacts from fire hazards will be less than significant.

The cell tower facility is proposed for installation over 50 feet from the nearest property line to the west and approximately 450 feet from the nearest public road. The existing vegetation will screen the equipment compound and most of the tower from view from public roads. Photosimulations indicate the monopine will blend in with the heavily treed area but will stand taller than most of the trees surrounding the pole. However, the pole will be covered with manufactured pine tree branches with socks over the antennas so that the monopine will have less than significant impacts on the visual quality of the site or its surroundings.

The cell tower facility will be installed on a site that has Auburn Series soils (AxD) where surface runoff is slow to medium and the erosion hazard is slight to moderate. El Dorado County does not appear on the Alquist-Priolo list so that the potential for earthquake or ground shaking activity is low in the region. However, any potential impact caused by installing the cell tower facility in the project area would be offset by compliance with the Uniform Building Code earthquake standards.

A complete records search was conducted to assess the potential historic and archeological impacts from construction of the cell site, turnout, and access road. According to the records search, there is a moderate potential for locating prehistoric-period cultural resources and a low potential for identifying historic-period cultural resources in the project area. Standard conditions of approval would ensure protection of any accidental discovery of historic or archeological resources. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

The cell site, turnouts and access road account for approximately 7,700 square feet of disturbance, which equate to only four percent of the drainage shed area. Of the 7,700 square feet of disturbed area, approximately 300 square feet will be new impervious area, accounting for less than 0.2 percent of the drainage shed area (Bennett Engineering Services, 4/18/14). However, this impervious area could increase if areas of the gravel access road exceed 15 percent slope and require paving. Compliance with the County Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control Ordinance would ensure that grading for the cell site, turnouts, and access road would protect drainage patterns in the project area, reducing erosion or loss of topsoil to less than significant.

The existing drainage patterns will not be changed, Storm water for the grading of the access road will be collected in a roadside ditch and discharged to existing drainage facilities. Rock energy dissipaters will be included in the design of the access road ditch where appropriate to alleviate potential erosion. Based on the *Drainage Impacts* report, storm water runoff increases will be negligible, if any. Therefore, there will be negligible impacts downstream.

Based on the radiofrequency electromagnetic (RFE) compliance assessment (Waterford, 7/02/14), the tower antennas are predicted to contribute less than five percent of the Maximum Permissible Exposure limits. As concluded in the assessment, the cell tower facility will be compliant with Federal Communication Commission (FCC) Rules and Regulations upon implementation of proper signage at the site. Hazards to the public and carrier personnel from RFE exposure will be less than significant.

Traffic impacts will consist of a temporary increase from construction and installation activities. Once completed, the cell tower facility will be unmanned. Ongoing maintenance will require a technician to visit the site one to two times per month. Any increase in traffic from installation and operation of the cell tower facility will be less than significant.

MANDATORY FINDINGS

- a. No impacts have been found that would reduce potential wildlife or plant habitat on the site, reduce wildlife or plant populations below self-sustaining levels, or restrict the range or migratory habits of a rare or endangered animal. Any oaks removed for construction of the facility will be replanted at a 1:1 ratio per General Plan policy 7.4.4.4. Any cultural or archeological resources discovered during construction shall be protected with the standard condition requiring cessation of the activity until determination of the value and disposition of the resource has been made by a qualified specialist.
- b. No cumulative impacts from the proposed stand-alone cell tower facility have been determined to exist.
- c. Any radiofrequency emissions effects that could possibly cause substantial adverse effects on human beings have been analyzed against FCC requirements for direct and indirect impacts and found to be well below the thresholds of significance. The monopine will blend in with the surrounding vegetation reducing its visual impact on the public

SUPPORTING INFORMATION SOURCE LIST

The following documents are available at El Dorado County Planning Services in Placerville.

El Dorado County General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report
Volume 1 of 3 – EIR Text, Chapter 1 through Section 5.6
Volume 2 of 3 – EIR Text, Section 5.7 through Chapter 9
Appendix A
Volume 3 of 3 – Technical Appendices B through H

El Dorado County General Plan – A Plan for Managed Growth and Open Roads; A Plan for Quality Neighborhoods and Traffic Relief (Adopted July 19, 2004)

Findings of Fact of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors for the General Plan

El Dorado County Zoning Ordinance (Title 17 - County Code)

County of El Dorado Drainage Manual (Resolution No. 67-97, Adopted March 14, 1995)

County of El Dorado Grading, Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance (Ordinance No. 3883, amended Ordinance Nos. 4061, 4167, 4170)

El Dorado County Design and Improvement Standards

El Dorado County Subdivision Ordinances (Title 16 - County Code)

Soil Survey of El Dorado Area, California

Interim Interpretive Guidelines for El Dorado County General Plan Policy 7.4.4.4. (Option A) (Adopted 11/9/06; Amended 10/12/07)

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statutes (Public Resources Code Section 21000, et seq.)

Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (Section 15000, et seq.)

Tree Survey, Preservation, and Replacement Plan for the Alibi Verizon Site, Foothill Associates, May 9, 2014 and October 16, 2014.

On-Site Radio Frequency Emissions Compliance Report for Epic Wireless Group, Waterford, July 2, 2014.

Records Search Results for 4870 Union Mine Road, North Central Information Center, May 6, 2014.

Drainage Impacts, Verizon Alibi Cell Site & Access Road, Bennett Engineering Services, April 18, 2014.