

## NEGATIVE DECLARATION

**FILE:** S14-0009

**PROJECT NAME:** AT&T Cell Tower Skyline Drive (South Lake Tahoe)

**NAME OF APPLICANT:** New Cingular Wireless, LLC AT&T

**ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO.:** 081-102-01

**SECTION:** 28 T: 12N R: 18E

**LOCATION:** Site is on the south side of Skyline Drive, approximately one mile northeast of the intersection with U.S. Highway 50 and Pioneer Trail in the South Lake Tahoe 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 113 foot monopine tower with nine panel antennas, equipment shelter, related ground equipment, HVAC units, sound barrier walls, and solid wood fence.
- OTHER:**

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**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.**

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Executive Secretary

# EXHIBIT H



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

**INITIAL STUDY  
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FORM**

**Project Title:** S14-0009 – AT&T Cell Tower Skyline Drive

**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:** Philip and Susan Cianci, PO Box 16113, South Lake Tahoe, CA 95706

**Project Applicant's Name and Address:** New Cingular Wireless, LLC AT&T, c/o John Pek, 124 Amaya Drive, Folsom, CA 95632

**Project Agent's Name and Address:** Same as Applicant

**Project Location:** South side of Skyline Drive, one mile northeast of the intersection with U.S. Highway 50 and Pioneer Trail in the South Lake Tahoe area. 1697 Skyline Drive.

**Assessor's Parcel Number(s):** 081-102-01

**Zoning:** TR-1 (One-Family Residential - Tahoe)

**Section:** 28      **T:** 12N **R:** 18E

**General Plan Designation:** Adopted Plan (AP) - Tahoe Regional Plan, Plan Area Statement 120, Tahoe Paradise Meadowvale, Residential Land Use Classification

**Description of Project:** Special Use Permit to allow the construction of a wireless telecommunication facility consisting of a 113-foot monopine tower with nine panel antennas at the 106 foot level, tower light at the top three feet, a 138 square foot equipment shelter with two HVAC units underneath a corrugated metal roof, and two 10 foot tall block sound barrier walls on either side of the HVAC units, all within a 900 square foot wood fenced lease area. Fence to be six feet tall with an eight foot wide gate opening to the utility easement. Three pine trees will be removed for the cell site and three pine trees within 35 feet of the tower on the subject property will be trimmed to 85 feet maximum height.

**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:	TR-1	AP-PAS120	Single Family Residence
North:	TR-1	AP-PAS120	Single Family Residences
South:	TR-1	AP-PAS120	Single Family Residences and Water Tank
East:	TR-1	AP-PAS120	Single Family Residences
West:	TR-1	AP-PAS120	Single Family Residence with Cell Tower

**Briefly describe the environmental setting:** The proposed cell tower property sits at an elevation of 6,530 feet above mean sea level on a 0.32 acre property with an elevation range of 6,520 to 6,533 feet. The property contains a 1,600 square foot single family home with deck, paved parking area, and various pine trees. The lot includes a 15 foot wide public utility easement along the entire west property line that leads to a water tank behind the property and a cell tower on an adjacent property. The easement includes an eight foot wide paved access road.

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

CDA Building Division, TRPA

**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: 11-4-2014  
 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 deck, consistent with the residential zoning and character of the surrounding area.

The proposed project is a special use permit to allow the installation of a 113 foot tall monopine with three sectors containing three antennas each, for a total of nine antennas at the 106 foot level. The monopine is tall enough to accommodate two additional carriers' antennas at the 80 and 90 foot levels. A 30 by 30 foot compound will enclose a 12 by 12 foot equipment shelter and tower all behind a six-foot tall staggered wood screen fence. Two ten foot tall block sound barrier walls will be constructed on the east and west sides of the HVAC units, and a corrugated metal roof will be placed over the HVAC units. An eight foot wide wood gate will provide access to the compound from the existing utility easement. Three pine trees will be removed for the ground equipment and three pine trees within 35 feet of the tower and on the subject property will be trimmed to 85 feet maximum height. 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 are indicated at the project site pursuant to the 2004 General Plan EIR, Exhibits 5.12-4, 5.12-6, and 5.12-7. The project will remove three pine trees and trim three other trees at the 85 foot level. The removal of pine trees 14 inches diameter at breast height or less is an exempt activity per the Tahoe Regional Planning Area (TRPA) Code of Ordinances. If the trees are larger than 14 inches DBH then a TRPA permit would be required.

The proposed installation of the cell tower facility will include two HVAC units on the north side of the equipment shelter with two concrete-block projections at the two corners closest to the HVAC units to attenuate sounds levels toward the adjacent property owners. Operational noise from air conditioning units in the equipment shelter will generate noise levels of 43.2 dBA at the nearest property line 13 feet to the west (Hammett & Edison, Inc., 6/30/14), which is below the 55 dBA daytime, 50 dBA evening, and 45 dBA nighttime thresholds from Table 6.2 of the General Plan. This noise level is below the TRPA Plan Area Statement 120, Tahoe Paradise Meadowvale maximum community noise equivalent level of 43.3 dBA (equivalent to 50 CNEL). With the block sound wall, noise generated by the HVAC units will not be significant to nearby residents. 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.

A back-up battery system that can run the facility for a few hours will provide continuous wireless communication coverage in case of a power outage. A standby emergency generator is not proposed with this project. 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 existing utility road will support and provide adequate access for emergency vehicles. As such, impacts from fire hazards will be less than significant.

The cell tower facility is proposed for installation just 13 feet from the nearest property line to the west, approximately 100 feet from the nearest public road, and approximately 1,500 feet from U.S. Highway 50. The existing pine trees and wood fence 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. A tower light will be placed on the top three feet of the pole per FAA regulations. However, the pole below the tower light will be covered with manufactured pine tree branches and the antennas will be covered with antenna socks so that the monopine will have less than significant impacts on the visual quality of the site or its surroundings.

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. According to the records search, dated August 15, 2014, there is a low potential for locating prehistoric-period and 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 will account for approximately 230 square feet of new impervious surface area within a 900 square foot lease area. The applicant proposes ground cloth and gravel ground cover within the entire lease area to help with increases in drainage caused by the additional hard surfaces. Compliance with the County Grading, Erosion, and Sediment Control Ordinance would ensure that grading for the cell site would protect drainage patterns in the project area, reducing erosion or loss of topsoil to less than significant.

The radiofrequency electromagnetic (RF) analysis dated April 11, 2014, by Hammett & Edison, Inc., found that for a person anywhere at ground level, the maximum RF exposure level due to the proposed facility was calculated to be 2.3 percent of the applicable public exposure limit. The maximum calculated level at the second floor of the nearest residence was 2.9 percent of the applicable public exposure limit. The report validates the figures based on the FCC Regulations for measurements identifying quantitative standards for human exposure limits based on radio frequency emissions. Therefore, hazards to the public and carrier personnel from RF 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 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 pine trees reducing its visual impact on the public to less than significant.

### **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.)

*Statement of Hammett & Edison, Inc. – Sound Levels*, Hammett & Edison, Inc., June 30, 2014.

*Statement of Hammett & Edison, Inc. – Radio Frequency Electromagnetic Fields*, Hammett & Edison, Inc., April 11, 2014.

*Records Search Results for CVU6214*, North Central Information Center, August 15, 2014.