

FINDINGS

Conditional Use Permit S17-0019/AT&T CAF II Project (Auburn Lake Trails) Planning Commission/June 14, 2018

Based on the review and analysis of this project by staff and affected agencies, and supported by discussion in the staff report and evidence in the record, the following findings can be made:

1.0 CEQA FINDINGS

- 1.1 El Dorado County has considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration together with the comments received during the public review process. The Mitigated Negative Declaration reflects the independent judgment of the County and has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is adequate for this project.
- 1.2 No significant impacts to the environment as a result of this project were identified in the initial study.
- 1.3 The documents and other materials which constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based are in the custody of the Planning and Building Department - at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, CA, 95667.

2.0 GENERAL PLAN FINDINGS

2.1 The project is consistent with General Plan Policy 2.2.1.2.

General Plan Policy 2.2.1.2 establishes an appropriate range of land use types and densities within the County. The Low-Density Residential (LDR) land use designation establishes areas suitable for single-family residential development in a rural setting.

Rationale: The project has an LDR General Plan Land Use Designation. The project is surrounded rural residential development. Although the project will result in a commercial use, it has been designed to visually blend in with existing landscape, and will require vehicle trips only for the construction of the facility and for monthly facility maintenance. The project will be compatible with surrounding uses and will provide wireless high speed internet and enhanced wireless network coverage, which the area currently lacks.

2.2 The project is consistent with General Plan Policy 5.1.2.1.

General Plan Policy 5.1.2.1 requires a determination of the adequacy of the public services and utility to be impacted by that development.

Rationale: The project was reviewed by the El Dorado County Department of Transportation for adequate public services capacity. The project will connect

to existing electrical facilities and public services currently within the parcel. The operation of the facilities will require no water, sewer, or solid waste service as they are unmanned facilities. No new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities would be required. Operation and continued maintenance of the monopine tower and ground equipment shelters would not generate solid waste.

2.3 The project is consistent with General Plan Policy 5.1.2.2.

General Plan Policy 5.1.2.2 requires that adequate quantity and quality of water for all uses, including fire protection, be provided with proposed development.

Rationale: The proposed project is located within very high fire hazard area. The El Dorado County Fire Protection District was given the opportunity to comment and had no additional conditions of approval to apply to the project. The facilities will not require the use of potable water, as they are unmanned facilities and no plumbing is proposed for the facility.

2.4 The project is consistent with General Plan Policy 6.2.3.2.

General Plan Policy 6.2.3.2, Adequate Access for Emergencies, requires that the applicant demonstrate that adequate access exists, or can be provided to ensure that emergency vehicles can access the site and private vehicles can evacuate the area.

Rationale: In compliance with Policy 6.2.3.2, the project will utilize existing gravel driveways and roads accessed off public roads. The El Dorado County Transportation Department and the El Dorado County Fire Protection District reviewed the application materials and do not require additional site access or improvement to the existing roads. The site plans were reviewed for emergency ingress and egress capabilities and building plans will be additionally reviewed by El Dorado County and the El Dorado County Fire Protection District for compliance with County and fire codes during the plan check process.

2.5 The project is consistent with General Plan Policy 7.4.4.4.

General Plan Policy 7.4.4.4 requires all new development projects that would result in soil disturbance on parcels that are over an acre and have at least one percent total canopy cover shall adhere to the tree canopy retention and replacement standards.

Rationale: The project site is over an acre with over one percent area of oak tree canopy. Approximately 40% of the project site has an existing tree canopy cover. The lease area is situated away from the existing oak trees. No oak trees are proposed for removal and no oak trees will be adversely affected by this project. Two almond trees are proposed for removal. Consistent with General

Plan Policy 7.4.4.4 Option A, the project will retain at least 80% of the existing canopy.

3.0 ZONING FINDINGS

3.1 The project is consistent with Section 130.40.130(A).

Section 130.40.130(A) minimizes the number of communication facilities by encouraging the joint use of towers and service providers are encouraged to employ all reasonable measures to site their antenna equipment on existing structures, to co-locate where feasible, and development of new sites that are multi-carrier.

Rationale: The project applicant provided an alternative site analysis (Exhibit J) with a search radius of approximately one mile. Another alternative site was initially considered for this project; however an agreement with the applicant and property owners of that property were not able to take place. This current site was identified as the most optimum in providing additional services and capacity to the area. It will also have the capacity to serve as a co-location site for additional future carriers. The two other alternative sites were not chosen due to Alternative Site B not being able to meet the living unit coverage requirements and Alternative Site C having greater impacts to oak resources.

The alternative site analysis identified one potential co-location opportunity approximately one-third of a mile to the east of the project search radius. The existing Verizon Wireless tower is 82 feet tall with antennas located at 70 feet and future microwaves planned at heights of 62 and 53 feet, leaving a potential colocation of 43 feet. At 43 feet approximately 75 percent of the targeted living units would lose coverage. The existing tower could be expanded to allow for a new antenna at 84 feet, which would see the project lose approximately 56 percent of the targeted living units. Both the 43 foot and 84 foot heights on the existing tower would be insufficient to fulfill the living unit targets as delineated by the Federal Communications Commission and would not fill the significant gap in coverage for the Auburn Lake Trails area.

3.2 The project is consistent with Section 130.40.130(B)6.

Section 130.40.160.(B)6 requires that proposed towers or monopoles in zones other than commercial, industrial, and research and development zones, be subject to Planning Commission approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

Rationale: This project is proposed within a residential zone; therefore is subject to review by the Planning Commission, the decision-making body.

3.3 **The project is consistent with Section 130.40.130(C-H).**

Section 130.40.130(C-H) of the Zoning Ordinance requires that all wireless communication facilities meet certain criteria. Below is an analysis of these standards:

C. *Visual simulations of the wireless communications facility (including all support facilities) shall be submitted. A visual simulation can consist of either a physical mock-up of the facility, balloon simulation, computer simulation or other means.*

Rationale: The project applicant submitted photo-simulations of the proposed facility (Exhibit H). These photos demonstrate how the facility will blend with the surrounding area thereby minimizing its visual impacts.

D. *Development Standards: The following provisions shall apply in all zone districts. All facilities shall be conditioned, where applicable, to meet the following criteria:*

1. *Screening. All facilities shall be screened with vegetation or landscaping. Where screening with vegetation is not feasible, the facilities shall be disguised to blend with the surrounding area (trees, barns, etc.) The facility shall be painted to blend with the prevalent architecture, natural features or vegetation of the site.*

Rationale: The project site is located in a previously disturbed area. The surrounding area consists of low density residential development rolling hills interspersed with oak canopy and pine trees. The project has been designed such that the monopine would blend in with adjacent trees. The monopine “trunk” will be painted a Kelly Moore Log Cabin Brown or similar and the branches will have a pine green color. The tower has a manufacturer-applied non-reflective coating to prevent glare.

2. *Setbacks. As set forth in each applicable zoning district, except where locating the facility inside those setbacks is the most practical and unobtrusive location possible on the proposed site. Setback waivers shall be approved through the minor use permit process.*

Rationale: The site is located within the Residential Estate 5-Acre (RE-5) zone, which identifies 30-foot front, rear, and side setbacks. The lease area is approximately 93 feet from the front (south P.L.), 167 feet from the left side (west P.L.), 235 feet from the right side (east P.L.), and 350 feet from the rear (north P.L.); thus complying with the setback standards of the RE-5 zone.

3. *Maintenance. All improvements associated with the communication facility, including equipment shelters, towers, antenna, fencing, and landscaping shall be properly maintained at all times. Colors of towers and other improvements shall be maintained to ensure the appearance remains consistent with approved conditions relating to color.*

Rationale: The project has been conditioned (Condition of Approval 1) to ensure that the colors and materials of the equipment building, tower, and ground support equipment will be maintained at all times and will be consistent with the features depicted in the visual simulations and elevations (Exhibits F and H).

- E. *Radio Frequency (RF) Requirements. The application for a discretionary permit shall contain a report or summary of the estimates of the non-ionizing radiation generated by the facility. The report shall include estimates of the maximum electric and magnetic field strengths in all directions from the facility to the property lines of the facility site.*

Rationale: A submitted RF analysis report confirms compliance with the applicable FCC Regulations under 47 C.F.R Section 1.1307(b) (3) and 1.1310 (Radio Frequency Radiation Exposure Limits) (Exhibit J).

- F. *Availability. All existing communication facilities shall be available to other carriers as long as structural or technological obstacles do not exist.*

Rationale: The proposed monopine tower is intended to be designed to accommodate future co-location of other carriers. Any separate future collocation would require a revision to this conditional use permit and/or building permit, subject to review by the County.

- G. *Unused Facilities. All obsolete or unused communication facilities shall be removed within six months after the use of that facility has ceased or the facility has been abandoned. The applicant shall notify the Department at the time of abandonment. All site disturbance related to the facility shall be restored to its pre-project condition.*

Rationale: The project has been conditioned to comply with this requirement (Condition of Approval #6).

- H. *Permit Application Requirements. In order to protect the visual character of established neighborhoods and to protect school children from safety hazards that may result from a potentially attractive nuisance, in addition to the noticing requirements of Article 5, the following notification shall occur:*

1. *School district Notification. If the proposed wireless facility is located within 1,000 feet of a school, the appropriate school district shall be notified during the initial consultation.*

Rationale: Not applicable. The proposed wireless facility is not located within 1,000 feet of a school.

2. *Homeowners Association Notification. For facilities proposed to be located on residentially-zoned land, the applicant shall identify any homeowners association which might govern the property and homeowners associations that are adjacent to the property. Any that are identified shall be notified during the initial consultation.*

Rationale: Not applicable. The proposed wireless facility and adjacent properties are not within a Homeowners Association. The project was distributed to the Cool/Pilot Hill Advisory Committee for review and no comments or conditions were provided to the County.

4.0 CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FINDINGS

4.1 The issuance of the permit is consistent with the General Plan.

The proposed use is consistent with the policies and requirements in the General Plan as discussed in the General Plan section of the Staff Report. The proposed use is consistent with all applicable policies as set forth in Finding 2.0 above.

4.2 The proposed use would not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare, or injurious to the neighborhood.

The use will not significantly conflict with the adjacent uses as the ground-support equipment and towers are buffered from view by existing trees. As conditioned, the project is anticipated to result in insignificant environmental impacts to neighboring residents. The proposed use is not anticipated to create hazards that would be considered detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare, or injurious to the neighborhood based on the data and conclusions contained in the staff report. In the Radio Frequency Emissions Compliance Report for AT&T Mobility dated October 12, 2017 submitted for this project, the maximum predicted power density level of exposure from all operations of this telecommunication facility is less than 1% of the FCC General Population limits. Therefore, the proposed operation will not expose members of the general public to hazardous levels of RF energy and the risk of exposure to RF emissions is remote.

4.3 **The proposed use is specifically permitted by Conditional Use Permit.**

The proposed use complies with the requirements of Zoning Ordinance Section 130.40.130.C through H (development standards/conditions), the communication facility is a specifically permitted use with an approved Conditional Use Permit.