

**COUNTY OF EL DORADO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**



Agenda of: March 11, 2021

Staff: Matthew Aselage

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

FILE NUMBER: CUP20-0006/Oak Ridge High School Verizon Wireless Cell Tower

APPLICANT /AGENT: Verizon Wireless c/o Epic Wireless Group/Sara King

PROPERTY OWNER: El Dorado Union School District

REQUEST: Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction and operation of a new wireless telecommunications facility consisting of the following: 1) Removal of two existing 55-foot tall stadium light standards; 2) Construction of two replacement 80-foot stadium light standards. One of these light standards will contain nine antennas within a 175 square foot lease area. The second light standard will only include stadium lights; 3) Construction of a new 320 square foot lease area, located approximately 240 feet from the tower lease area, housing cell tower ground equipment; and, 4) Upgrades to ancillary utility lines in support of proposed facilities within an existing easement.

LOCATION: Oak Ridge High School on the south side of Harvard Way, approximately 300 feet west of the intersection with Silva Valley Parkway, in the El Dorado Hills area, Supervisorial District 1 (Exhibit A).

APN: 121-190-022 (Exhibit B)

ACREAGE: 38.09 acres

GENERAL PLAN: Public Facility (PF) (Exhibit C)

ZONING: Single-unit Residential (R1) (Exhibit D)

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT: Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommending the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Find the project Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures); and
2. Approve Conditional Use Permit CUP20-0006 based on the Findings and subject to the Conditions of Approval as presented.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approval of this Conditional Use Permit would allow for the removal of two existing 55-foot tall stadium light standards to be replaced by two 80-foot tall stadium light standards. Both light standards to be replaced reside on the eastern side of the football stadium. One of the proposed light standards will house nine antennas along with stadium lights and speakers within a 175-foot lease area. The second light standard will include stadium lights and speakers only. An additional 320 square foot lease area will house cell tower equipment including four equipment cabinets, a 132-gallon back-up generator, and other standard cell tower equipment concealed by a six foot tall chain link fence with green privacy slats. Both lease areas will be within the Oak Ridge High School football field. There will be no grading or removal of oak trees as a result of this project (Exhibit F). Staff has determined that the proposed project is consistent with the El Dorado County General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance requirements, as discussed in the findings.

BACKGROUND

One special use permit has been previously approved resulting in the construction of one wireless facility at the Oak Ridge High School football stadium. Special Use Permit S05-0045 was approved by the Development Services Director on December 14, 2006. S05-0045 allowed for the removal of two 60-foot tall stadium light standards to be replaced with the installation of one 80-foot tall light standard to include two stadium light arrays of five lights each and one speaker panel on the southwestern end of the football stadium bleachers; and, an 80-foot tall light standard including the same number of stadium light arrays and speaker panels as well as three cell tower antenna arrays including three antennas each and a supporting equipment facility area on the northwestern end of the football stadium bleachers. The current proposal has been submitted under a separate use permit and will therefore be the original approval for this proposed Verizon Wireless cell tower site.

EXISTING CONDITIONS/SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Site Description

The proposed project site of a combined 495 square foot total cell tower lease area consisting of a small portion of the Oak Ridge High School football stadium located at the property identified as APN 121-190-022 in the El Dorado Hills Community Region on the southwest corner of the intersection between Harvard Way and Silva Valley Parkway. Access to the football stadium is from a private drive aisle which encroaches onto Harvard Way approximately 100 feet west of the intersection with Silva Valley Parkway. This drive aisle, which provides the centerline for a twelve-foot non-exclusive access and utility easement, continues south ending at a parking lot adjacent to the football stadium. Beyond the end of the drive aisle, a varied width non-exclusive access and utility easement continues south and ends at the location of the existing cell tower site. The site includes a currently existing 80-foot tall stadium light standard with three cell tower antenna arrays, two stadium light standards containing five lights each, and one stadium speaker panel on the northwest corner of the football stadium bleachers; and, an 80-foot tall light standard with two stadium light standards containing five lights each, and one stadium speaker panel on the southwest corner of the football stadium bleachers as approved under S05-0045. The currently existing cell tower on site is a collocation between T-Mobile and Sprint. The existing cell site includes a 260 square foot lease area containing standard ground mounted equipment concealed by a six-foot high chain link fence with green slats. Additionally, the eastern side of the football stadium currently contains two 55-foot tall stadium light standards which have two stadium light standards and one stadium speaker panel each. The perimeter of the high school property contains fencing as well as landscaping which includes several rows of mature trees along Silva Valley Parkway which provides screening for the football stadium (Exhibit E).

Adjacent Land Uses

	Zoning	General Plan	Land Use/Improvements
Site	Single-unit Residential (R1)	Public Facility (PF)	Oak Ridge High School
North	Single-unit Residential (R1)	High Density Residential (HDR)	Residential/Single family residences.
South	Single-unit Residential (R1)	Area Plan (AP) and Public Facility (PF)	Residential/Single family residences.
East	Single-unit Residential (R1)	Area Plan (AP)	Residential/Single family residences.
West	Single-unit Residential (R1)	High Density Residential (HDR)	Residential/Single family residences.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes the installation of a new cell tower for the purpose of providing wireless high-speed internet and enhanced wireless network coverage 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To meet this goal the following development activities will occur:

Two existing 55-foot tall stadium light standards- which sit on the eastern side of the football stadium bleachers- along with associated light arrays and speakers will be removed. Both stadium light poles will be replaced with an 80-foot tall stadium light standard. Each light standard will stand at a total of 85 feet tall due to the light standard mounts having been integrated within each end of the stadium bleachers adding an additional five feet of height. The currently existing light arrays, each containing five lights, will be installed on the two new poles at a height of approximately 76 feet and 80 feet. The currently existing stadium speaker panels will each be installed on their respective new standards at a height of 40 feet. There are no proposed cell tower uses for the stadium light standard installed on the northeastern corner of the bleachers. The stadium light standard installed on the southeastern corner of the bleachers will include three antenna arrays at a height of 61 feet. Each array will contain three Verizon Wireless antennas, three radio units, and one surge protector. This cell tower stadium light pole will sit within a 175 square foot lease area. An additional 320 square foot lease area will reside to the south of the cell tower site. This additional lease area will house cell tower equipment including four cabinets and other standard cell tower equipment to be concealed by a six-foot tall chain link fence with green privacy slats.

Both lease areas will be connected by a six-foot wide non-exclusive Verizon Wireless Access and Utility Route easement which will contain a six-inch underground conduit with two hybrid trunk cables running between both lease areas. Existing transportation access to the football stadium is from a private drive aisle which encroaches onto Harvard Way, approximately 100 feet west of the intersection with Silva Valley Parkway. Underground conduit for dark fiber will be installed starting from a proposed underground vault for a dark fiber “meet me” point adjacent to the drive aisle encroachment onto Harvard Way, then following the non-exclusive easement line ending at the location of the proposed 320 square foot equipment lease area. Underground conduit for dark fiber will connect the proposed 320 square foot lease area to an existing underground telco box on the northwest side of the football stadium. Electric utility access will be provided via underground connections to both an existing on-site electrical building and from an existing wood utility pole adjacent to Silva Valley Parkway (Exhibit F).

Existing perimeter fencing and landscaping, including several rows of mature trees along Silva Valley Parkway, will help conceal the cell tower antennas from view off-site. The stadium light arrays- aimed directly down at the stadium- will be in view from Silva Valley Parkway. However, street light standards along Silva Valley Parkway will aid in blending the new stadium light standards within the currently existing urban infrastructure surrounding the site (Exhibit I).

STAFF ANALYSIS

General Plan Consistency

The project is consistent with all applicable General Plan policies including Policy 2.2.1.2 (Public Facilities Land Use Designation), Policy 2.2.5.2 (General Plan Consistency), Policy 2.2.5.21 (Compatibility with Adjoining Land Uses), Policies TC-Xa through TC-Xi (Transportation and Circulation Element), Policy 5.1.2.1 (Adequacy of Public Services and Utilities), Policy 5.2.1.2 (Adequate Quantity and Quality of Water for all Uses, Including Fire Protection), Policy 6.2.3.2 (Adequate Access for Emergencies), Policy 6.5.1.2 (Noise Impacts), and Policy 6.5.1.7 (Noise Mitigation).

Zoning Ordinance Consistency

Staff has determined that the proposed project, as conditioned, is consistent with all applicable standards and requirements of Title 130 of the County Ordinance Code (Zoning Ordinance). The project Parcel is zoned One-Family Residential (R1) and the project has been analyzed in accordance with all applicable development standards for this zone district. The site plan identifies the lease area boundaries and contains no development proposal which will encroach beyond the allowed buildable area. Setbacks are provided for the rear and secondary front yard property lines only as the project site is situated in the far southeastern corner of the parcel. Therefore, the cell tower site is located much further than required from front and side yard property lines. The height of each proposed stadium light pole is substantially more than allowed within the zoning code. However, these two proposed stadium light poles will be equivalent in height to the stadium light poles currently existing on the west side of the football stadium.

The proposal meets the required development standards as illustrated in the table below and described in the Findings. Further, the project as proposed meets the standards for Communication Facilities as outlined within Section 130.40.130 of the County Zoning Ordinance. An alternative site analysis was provided for this project and details four other potential sites and why they were not acceptable per the objective of this project. A Radio Frequency Report conducted on February 5, 2019, shows that the project as proposed is compliant with radio frequency radiation requirements as outlined within the FCC's RF Safety Guidelines.

Table One
Development Standards from Table 130.24.030 (Residential Zones Development Standards)

Development Attribute	Zone District: R1	Proposed Telecomm Tower
Height (in feet)	40	80
Setbacks (in feet) Front	20	N/A
Secondary Front	15	22'5"
Side	5	N/A
Rear	15	30

AGENCY COMMENTS

The project was distributed to all applicable local, County and state agencies for review and comment. Comments were received from the El Dorado Hills Fire Department. The County Department of Transportation, County Environmental Management Division, and Pacific Gas and Electric verified that they have found no issues or concerns with this project as proposed.

El Dorado Hills Fire Department

The El Dorado Hills Fire Department reviewed the project and determined that standard conditions of approval be placed on this project. These conditions will ensure fire safety access to the cell tower site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Conditional Use Permit CUP20-0006 has been found Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) of the CEQA Guidelines, applying to projects which consist of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures, including accessory structures appurtenant to a primary structure. The project proposes the development of one new, small cell tower facility alongside accessory structures appurtenant to the small cell tower facility. The project as proposed is consistent with the Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines and is therefore eligible for the categorical exemption, requiring no further CEQA review.

Filing of a Notice of Exemption is required in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15062 to initiate a 35-day statute of limitations on legal challenges to the County's decision that the project is exempt from CEQA. The applicant shall submit a \$50.00 recording fee to Planning Services in order for the County Recorder to file the Notice of Exemption.

SUPPORT INFORMATION

Findings
Conditions of Approval

Exhibit A..... Location/Vicinity Map
Exhibit B..... Assessor’s Parcel Map
Exhibit C..... General Plan Land Use Designation Map
Exhibit D..... Zoning Map
Exhibit E..... Aerial Map
Exhibit F..... Project Plans
Exhibit G..... Alternative Site Analysis
Exhibit H..... Radio Frequency Report
Exhibit I..... Photosimulations
Exhibit J..... Elevation Plans