

PLANNING & REDEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING SEPTEMBER 11, 2008

Prepared by: Joanna Cucchi, Associate Planner

ITEM V-B. CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT – 1111 SMITH LANE – METRO PCS TOWER EXTENSION – FILE #2008PL-086 (PROJECT # CUP-000053)

REQUEST

The applicant requests approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a 15-foot extension and three 12-foot tall cellular stealth antennas to be placed on top of an existing 61-foot tall tower. A Conditional Use Permit is required for towers that exceed sixty feet in height.

Applicant – Karen Lienert, Metro PCS Property Owner – Mitchell and Diane Mosher

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Redevelopment Department recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

- A. Adopt the three findings of fact for the Conditional Use Permit; and
- B. Approve the Conditional Use Permit with seven (7) conditions of approval.

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES

There are no outstanding issues associated with this request. The applicant has reviewed and is in agreement with the recommended conditions of approval.

BACKGROUND

The project site is located at 1111 Smith Lane in the Infill Area. The site is located adjacent to the eastbound lanes of I-80. The subject parcel is currently vacant with the exception of a two-sided billboard and a 61-foot tall AT&T tower and associated equipment enclosure. A wooden monopole and a 336 square foot equipment enclosure were approved through a Site Review Permit in February 1993. A DRP Modification was approved in October 2001 to replace the wooden monopole with a steel monopole and add a 240 square foot equipment enclosure for Verizon. The tower has existing antennas for AT&T and Verizon. The existing antennas are attached at a height of approximately 49 feet and 60 feet and utilize a standard antenna array (see Figure 2). The standard antenna array has a diameter of 12 feet. The proposed antennas will be stealth mounted at approximately 76 feet requiring a 15-foot extension. The diameter of the proposed stealth array is 4 feet.

The current request is to increase the height of the existing AT&T tower from 61 feet to approximately 76 feet. The applicant proposes to locate three antennas atop the tower and locate associated seven foot tall facility support equipment below. The equipment will be located on a 160 square-foot lease area and within the existing seven foot tall chain link fence. A Conditional Use Permit is required for telecommunication towers that exceed 60-feet in height.

Figure 1: Zoning



FINDINGS & EVALUATION

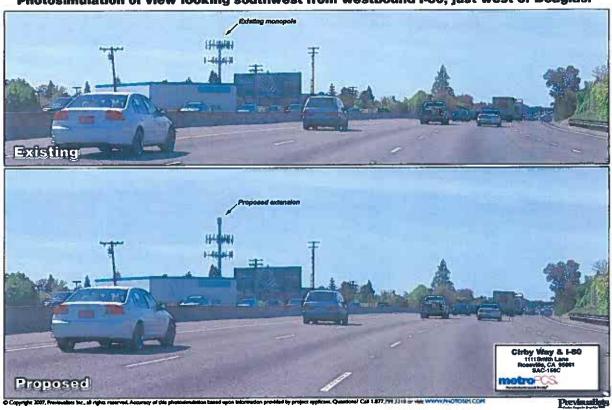
The City encourages co-locating antennas on existing towers wherever feasible; as facility and site sharing results in minimal impacts to the surrounding properties, while also providing the necessary improvements needed to enhance service capacity.

Section 19.78.060(A) of the Zoning Ordinance requires that three (3) findings be made in order to approve a Conditional Use Permit. The required findings are listed below in bold italics, followed by an evaluation.

1. The proposed use or development is consistent with the City of Roseville General Plan.

Telecommunication facilities are allowed in every land use designation as a public service. The proposed facility will be designed and constructed in a manner consistent with adopted land use policies and appropriate design guidelines to the extent possible. The existing AT&T cellular tower, proposed antennas, and telecommunication facility are consistent with the General Plan. The General Plan relies on the Zoning Ordinance for the appropriate location and design of telecommunication facilities through the Conditional Use Permit process

Figure 2: Photo Simulation



Photosimulation of view looking southwest from westbound i-80, just west of Douglas.

2. The proposed use or development conforms with all applicable standards and requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

Telecommunications facilities are allowed in all zoning districts subject to conformance with general standards. The pertinent standard is that telecommunications facilities should be designed to promote facility and site sharing in order to minimize visual impacts. The intent is that by sharing towers, fewer towers need to be constructed, resulting in fewer visual impacts.

The following standards from the Zoning Ordinance Section 19.34.030 apply to all antennas and telecommunication facilities.

a. Building mounted antennas are encouraged, provided that the wireless communication facility is compatible with the building design and does not negatively impact the surrounding area.

No building mounted antennas are proposed, as there are no buildings in the vicinity that would provide the desired level of service coverage.

b. Where building mounting is not possible, an attempt should be made to screen new monopoles from public view and to co-locate new antennas on existing monopoles.

The applicant proposes to co-locate three antennas on an existing tower and locate the associated ground equipment within the existing enclosure. The proposed location is appropriate because it allows for co-location and joint use of the site which will result in an increase of the tower height by approximately 15 feet.

c. In order to minimize overall visual impact, wireless communication facilities should be designed to promote facility and site sharing.

The antenna panels will be mounted atop the existing tower to reduce the visual impact. The antennas will be stealth antennas and will appear as a seamless extension of the existing tower structure.

As part of the staff review of this project, staff requested that the owner (AT&T) and tenant (Verizon) convert the existing antennas on the tower to stealth mounted, similar to the proposal from Metro PCS. Based on discussion with AT&T and Verizon, stealth mounting results in fewer antennas per sector and staff's proposal would result in a reduction in coverage for their customers. For this reason, they were not agreeable to replacing the existing array with stealth panels. Based on discussion with the applicant, PCS is using this site to fill a small hole in their service. AT&T and Verizon are using this facility as one of their main service sites in the area, requiring more antennas.

The proposed equipment shelter for the Metro PCS antennas is seven feet tall. This is taller then the maximum height of six feet permitted by the Zoning Ordinance. However, the proposed equipment will be located behind an existing seven foot tall slatted chain link fence and will be entirely screened from view. There will be no new visual impacts associated with the Metro PCS equipment shelter.

d. No facility should be installed on an exposed ridgeline, in or at a location readily visible from a public trail or other recreation area, or scenic area unless it is satisfactorily screened or made to appear as a natural environmental feature.

The proposed antennas will be placed on an existing cellular tower, which will minimize the visual impact from adjacent views. The tower is in a commercial area of the City along I-80 and not in a recreational or scenic area.

e. Wireless communication facilities should be painted color(s), which are most compatible with their surroundings.

Condition 3 has been included to require the antenna panels and all visible appurtenances be painted a uniform low-gloss medium gray color to blend with the surrounding transmission towers.

f. Innovative design should be used whenever the screening potential for the site is low. For example, designing structures, which are compatible with surrounding architecture, or appear as a natural environmental feature, could help mitigate the visual impact of a facility.

The proposed extension's design will allow for maximum service capacity, while presenting the least visible impact to surrounding properties. There are no surrounding architectural or environmental features that could be used to help mitigate the visual impact.

g. Wireless communication facilities and all other equipment, such as emergency generators and air conditioners, must be designed to be consistent with the City noise standards when in proximity to sensitive receptors.

The site is zoned commercial with neighboring parcels zoned for commercial and multi-family residential. The closest sensitive receptor (apartment building) is approximately 160 feet away from the tower. In addition, the applicant indicates that the equipment will generate minimal noise output (comparable to a household refrigerator).

h. A professional telecommunications expert shall perform an evaluation of the radio frequency certifying that the frequency levels meet Federal standards and that the facility will not interfere with the City's or other public entities emergency broadcast systems.

Condition 7 requires the applicant to provide documentation that the telecommunications facility will not interfere with public safety amplification signals.

i. Telecommunication Facilities located on a lot adjacent to a residential zone district shall be set back from the residential zone by two (2) feet for each one (1) foot of total height. The required setback shall be measured at its widest potential position.

The existing tower does not conform to the zoning ordinance requirement for setback from residentially zoned properties. The subject lot and existing pole are adjacent to two multi-family (R-3) parcels. The tower is approximately 100 feet from the nearest R-3 zoned property. However, the R-3 parcels closest to the existing tower are currently developed with commercial uses. The closest residential use is approximately 160 feet from the tower.

3. The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the use or development is compatible with and shall not adversely affect or be materially detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of persons residing or working in the area, or be detrimental or injurious to public or private property or improvements.

Location: The proposed antennas will be located on an existing transmission tower to minimize the need and impact of additional towers. The location will not be detrimental to the health, safety or welfare of persons working in the area.

Size and Design: The applicant proposes to install three antennas on an existing tower and locate two unmanned equipment cabinets and support equipment within a 160 square-foot area (see Exhibit A). The equipment cabinets will be located within an existing chain link enclosure.

Hazards to Public Safety: The Fire Department included **Condition 5**, requiring the applicant to comply with safety precautions for handling of hazardous materials. The applicant is aware of the conditions and will provide the required information to the Fire Department.

SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

Staff has reviewed the plans and concluded that the location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed telecommunication facility will be compatible with the area. The proposed equipment area will be adequately screened; and although the antennas will be visible from adjacent views, the impact will not be significant due to the use of stealth mounted antennas. Based on the evaluations above, staff believes that the Planning Commission can make the required findings and approve the Conditional Use Permit.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

This project is categorically exempt from the environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(e) pertaining to existing facilities.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Redevelopment Department recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

- Adopt the three findings of fact as stated in the staff report for the CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT – 1111 SMITH LANE – METRO PCS TOWER EXTENSION - 2008PL-086; and
- B. Approve the CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 1111 SMITH LANE METRO PCS TOWER EXTENSION 2008PL-086 with eight (8) conditions of approval.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP-000053)

- 1. The project is approved as shown in Exhibit A and as conditioned or modified below. (Planning)
- 2. This conditional use permit approval shall be effectuated within a period of two (2) years from this date and if not effectuated shall expire on **September 11, 2010**. Prior to said expiration date, the applicant may apply for an extension of time, provided, however, this approval shall be extended for no more than a total of one year from **September 11, 2010**.
- 3. The antenna panels and all visible appurtenances shall be painted a uniform low-gloss medium gray color to match the transmission tower. (Planning)
- 4. The project is subject to the noise standards established in the City's Noise Ordinance. In accordance with the City's Noise Ordinance project construction is exempt between the hours of seven a.m. and seven p.m. Monday through Friday, and between the hours of eight a.m. and eight p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Provided, however, that all construction equipment shall be fitted with factory installed muffling devices and that all construction equipment shall be maintained in good working order. (Building)
- 5. Use or storage of hazardous materials, liquids, gases and/or chemicals shall meet the requirements of the Chapter 6.95 of the Health and Safety Code, the Roseville Fire Department and the National Fire Codes. Submit a complete plan set and the Hazardous Materials Business Plan, including names and amount of any hazardous materials that will be stored or used, to the Bureau of Fire Prevention for review and approval. A permit application shall also be provided at the time of submittal. Contact Steve Anderson of our Hazardous Materials Division within the Fire Department at (916) 774-5821 to initiate the process. (Fire)
- 6. The design and installation of all fire protection equipment shall conform to the California Fire Code and the amendments adopted by the City of Roseville, along with all standards and policies implemented by the Roseville Fire Department. (Fire)
- 7. Prior to improvement/building plan approval, the applicant shall provide radio coverage documentation indicating that this cellular facility will not interfere with public safety amplification signals to the satisfaction of the City. (Fire)

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Photo Simulation (view from Smith Lane)
- 2. Photo Simulation (view from westbound I-80)

EXHIBITS

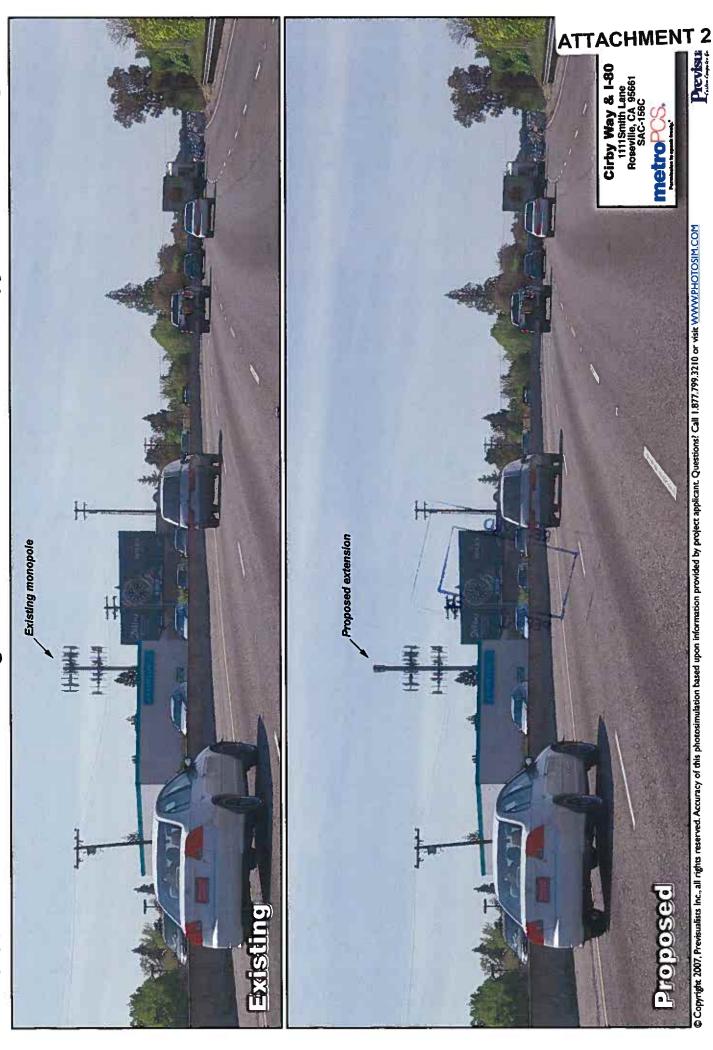
A. Project Plans

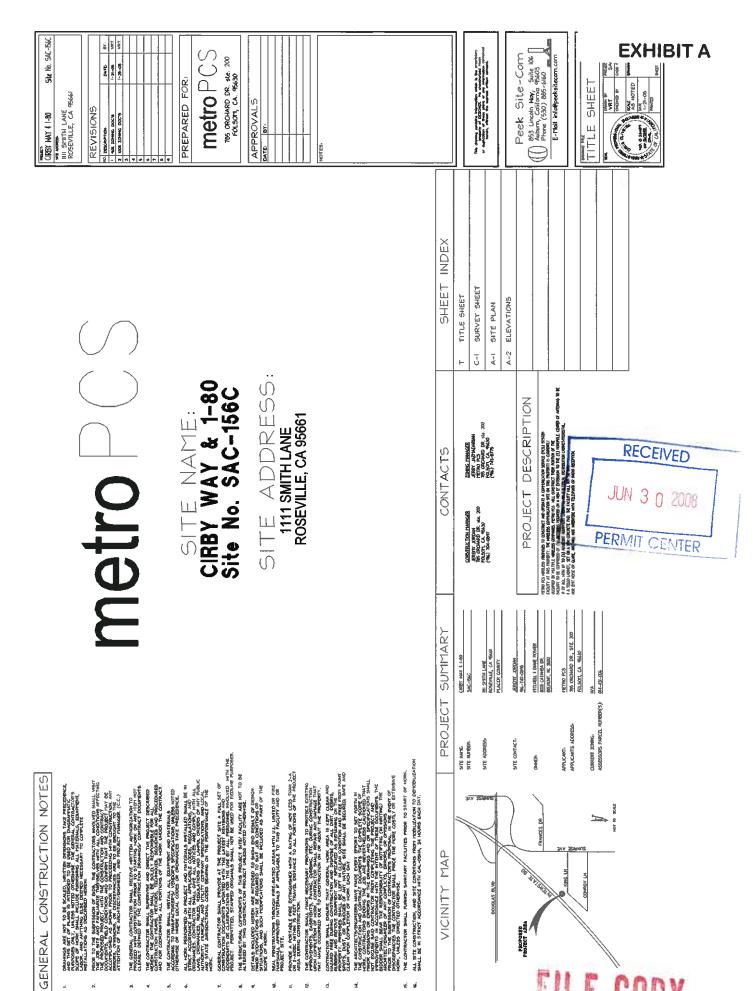
Note to Applicant and/or Developer: Please contact the Planning & Redevelopment Department staff at (916) 774-5276 prior to the Commission meeting if you have any questions on any of the recommended conditions for your project. If you challenge the decision of the Commission in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues which you or someone else raised at the public hearing held for this project, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning & Redevelopment Director at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Photosimulation of view looking northwest from Smith Lane.



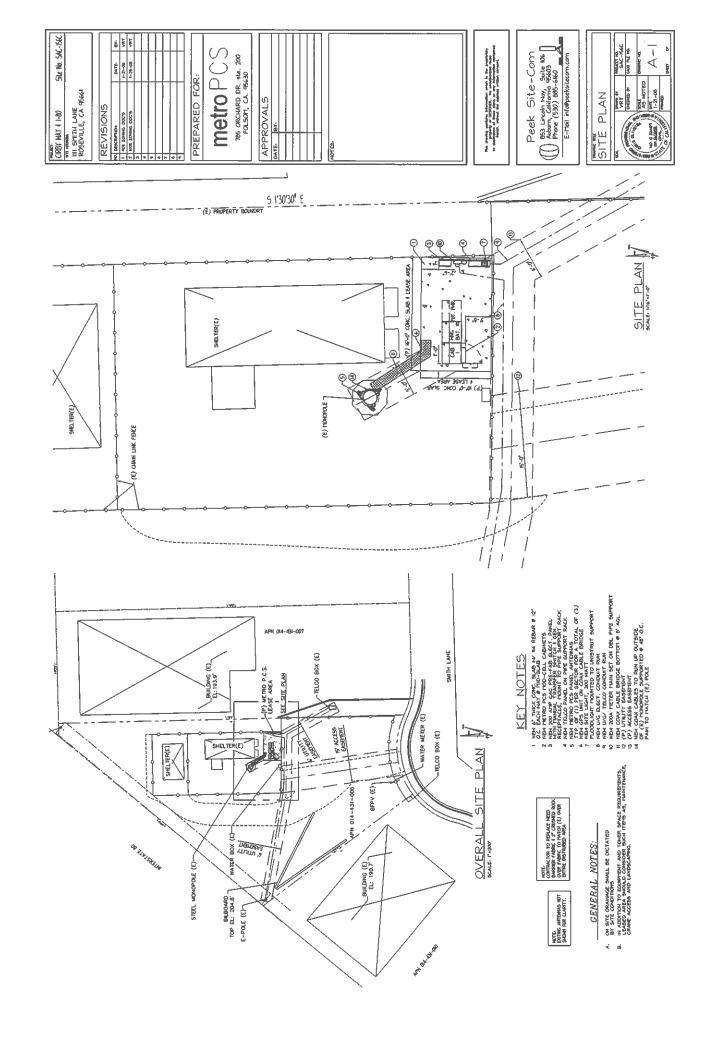
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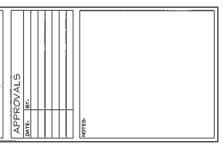


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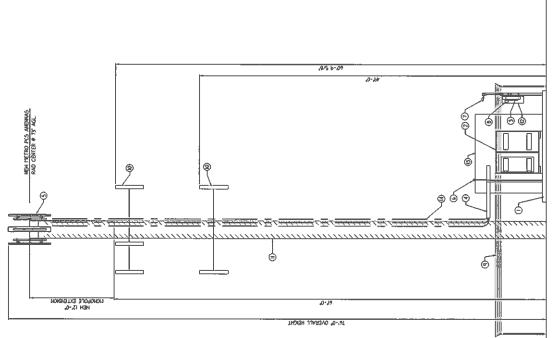


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