

**EL DORADO COUNTY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
STAFF REPORT**



Agenda of: October 7, 2009
Item No.: 4.a.
Staff: Jonathan Fong

SPECIAL USE PERMIT- REVISION

FILE NUMBER: S96-0004-R/ T-Mobile Telecommunication Pole-Gold Nugget Way

AGENT: Applied Wireless Consulting, Sara Wilson

APPLICANT: T-Mobile

ENGINEER: Peek-Wireless Consulting

REQUEST: Revision to Special Use Permit S96-0004 to allow relocation of three (3) existing wireless antennae and to add three (3) new wireless antennae. The antennae would be re-located onto new antennae mounts mounted at approximately 60 feet on the existing monopole. One (1) new equipment cabinet would be located within the existing lease area.

LOCATION: On the east side of Gold Nugget Way, south of the intersection with Forni Road in the Placerville Area, Supervisorial District III (Exhibit A).

APN: 325-290-06 (Exhibit B)

ACREAGE: 10.3 acres

GENERAL PLAN: Medium Density Residential (MDR) (Exhibit C)

ZONING: One-Acre Residential (R1A) (Exhibit D)

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT: Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Zoning Administrator take the following actions:

1. Find the project is Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures); and
2. Approve Special Use Permit S96-0004-R based on the findings in Attachment 2 and subject to the conditions in Attachment 1.

BACKGROUND: Special Use Permit S96-0004 was approved by the Planning Commission on May 9, 1996 to allow the installation of a wireless cellular facility and lease area consisting of a 62'6" tall telecommunication monopole with four (4) antenna panels mounted on three (3) antenna arrays mounts within a 400-square foot lease area. Associated ground mounted equipment was also permitted within the lease area. A 24 inch microwave dish was approved to be mounted at 44 feet on the monopole. To date, three (3) antennae have been installed on the three (3) permitted antenna arrays mounts with ground mounted equipment.

The proposed Special Use Permit would add three (3) additional antennae beyond the original project approval and is subject to a Revision approved by the Zoning Administrator.

Approval of S96-0004 was subject to nine (9) conditions of approval. These conditions have been included in Attachment 1 of the Staff Report. Additions have been indicated as underline items. Fulfilled or no longer applicable conditions have been indicated as ~~strikethrough items~~.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Project Description: T-Mobile is requesting a minor revision to the Special Use Permit to relocate the three (3) existing antennae and install three (3) new antennae for a total of six (6) on the monopole. The six (6) antennae would be installed on three (3) new antenna array mounts. The proposed new mounts would be located at the same height of the existing mounts. The three (3) new antennae would be installed on the new mounts. One new equipment cabinet would be located within the existing 400 square foot lease area. The proposed revision would not increase the height of the existing monopole or enlarge the 400 square foot lease area.

Site Description: The wireless facility lease area is located on a residential parcel located directly adjacent to Gold Nugget Way. The site is located at approximately 1,900 feet above mean sea level. The wireless facility is currently in operation with three wireless antennae and associated ground mounted equipment.

Adjacent Land Uses:

	Zoning	General Plan	Land Use/Improvements
Site	R1A	MDR	Single-family residence
North	R1A	MDR	Single-family residence
South	R1A	MDR	U.S. Highway 50

East	R1A	MDR	Single-family residence
West	PVILLE	Placerville	County Jail

The wireless cellular facility was approved as part of S96-0004 which determined compatibility in the surrounding area upon the installation of fencing to screen the equipment shelter and fast growing trees to screen the facility from view. The proposed revision would expand the facility and allow the installation of three new antennae. The revision would not substantially alter the existing facility or result in new uses which would be inconsistent with the surrounding land uses.

General Plan: The project site is designated Medium Density Residential (MDR) on the El Dorado County General Plan Map. **General Plan Policy 5.6.1.4** of the General Plan requires approval of a Special Use Permit for wireless telecommunication facilities in residential areas. The aesthetic and compatibility issues of the wireless facility were addressed during review of the initial Special Use Permit application. Conditions were required to screen the facility from view along Gold Nugget Way with fencing and existing vegetation. The proposed revision would add two additional antennae and relocate the existing antennae on new antennae panels. The revision would not substantially expand the facility nor result in additional impacts to the surrounding land uses. Therefore, staff finds that the project as conditioned would be consistent with the General Plan.

Zoning: Wireless facilities are permitted within the One-Acre Residential (R1A) Zone District, pursuant to Section 17.14.210(D) of the County Code. Co-locations onto existing facilities are regulated by Section 17.14.210(D) 4 of the County Code. A co-location may be approved through a minor use permit by the Zoning Administrator provided the co-location meets the following requirements:

- a. *New antennae shall be located at or below the topmost existing antenna array, either on the same pole or a replacement pole at the same height and within the approved lease area;*

The new antennae and panels would be located at the same height of the existing antennae. No increase in height of the existing monopole or expansion of the lease area would occur as part of this revision.

- b. *New antennae shall not extend out horizontally from the pole more than the existing widest projection. Use of designs similar to existing antenna array are encouraged;*

The proposed revision would allow for the expansion of the facility resulting in the installation of three (3) new antennae and relocation of the three (3) existing antennae. The antennae would be relocated onto three (3) new antenna array mounts. The new antennae would be painted to match the existing antennae. The new antennae and relocation would not extend beyond the existing horizontal projection of the existing antennae.

- c. *All equipment shelters, cabinets, or other ancillary structures shall be located within the building being utilized for the communication facility, or designed to blend with surrounding architecture, or on the ground screened from public view;*

No additional equipment cabinets would be proposed as part of this revision.

- d. The antennae and pole or tower shall be designed to match the existing facility, natural features or vegetation of the site;*

As discussed above, the revision would be conditioned to require the new antennae and antennae mounts be designed to match the existing antennae on-site.

- e. Additional antenna arrays added above the existing approved antenna array or that requires the tower height to be increased shall be considered a new tower and shall be subject to the provisions of subsection (D) (5), below.*

The revision would remove the existing antennae array mounts and install new mounts at the same height. No expansion or increase in height would occur as part of the revision.

Development Standards: Section 17.14.210 E through J of the County Code requires that all wireless communication facilities meet certain criteria. Below is an analysis of these standards.

- E. **Visual:** The proposed project would relocate the three (3) existing antennae and install three (3) new antennae. The antennae would be installed on new antennae array mounts. As shown on the submitted visual simulations, the new antennae and antennae mounts would be design to match the existing monopole. The photo-simulation would be used during the plan check permit process to ensure that the project adequately reflects approval of the Zoning Administrator and as part of the exhibits approved with the application. Photo-simulations of the wireless facility are included as Exhibit G.

F. **Development Standards:**

1. **Screening:** The existing trees and fencing a large portion of the existing monopole. The new antennae and replacement antennae would not create a significant negative visual impact to the surrounding area. The project has been conditioned to require that all colors match the existing facility.
2. **Setbacks:** The wireless facility was determined to comply with the setback requirements of the R1A Zone District. The facility was sited to maintain a minimum setback of 30 feet from all property lines. No alteration to the existing monopole would occur that would be inconsistent with the R1A Development Standards. The proposed equipment shelter would be located within the existing lease area and would meet the setback requirements of the R1A Zone District.
3. **Maintenance:** The site is required to be maintained at all times. Conditions of Approval have been included which would require the applicant to maintain the wireless facility, fencing and associated landscaping. Any unused equipment would be required to be removed from the site.

- G. **Radio Frequency (RF) Requirements:** Section 17.14.210(G) of the County Code requires that the applicant submit a report of the electromagnetic radiation generated by the facility operating at full strength and maximum electric and magnetic field strengths at the edge of the facility site, as regulated by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC).

T-Mobile has submitted a report indicating that the maximum power density at ground level operations would be 72.526 microwatts per square centimeter ($\mu\text{W}/\text{cm}^2$), or 7.25 percent of the applicable public 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.

- H. **Availability:** Section 17.14.210(H) of the County Code requires that all existing communication facilities be available to other carriers as long as structural or technological obstacles do not exist. The project has been conditioned to allow for continued opportunities for co-location on this facility. Future co-locations would require approval of a minor use permit by the Zoning Administrator in accordance with Section 17.14.210 of the County Code.

- I. **Unused Facilities:** Section 17.14.210(I) of the County Code requires that all obsolete or unused communication facilities be removed within six months after the use of that facility has ceased or the facility has been abandoned. Conditions of Approval would be included which would require

- J. **Other Permit Requirements:** Section 17.14.210(J) of the County Code states certain notification requirements for projects located within 1,000 feet of a school or in subdivisions governed by CC&Rs. The lease area is not located 1,000 feet near a school or is governed by CC&R's which would prohibit the proposed revision.

Conclusion: After review of the submitted project plans, including site plan, elevations, and visual simulations, it has been determined that the proposed Special Use Permit Revision meets the standards contained in Section 17.14.210E through J of the County Code.

Agency and Public Comments: At the time of the preparation of this report, staff had not received any comments from the public. New issues may arise as a result of the public notice of the hearing which will be discussed at that time.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The Telecommunications Act of 1996 became effective on February 8, 1996. This act preserves the authority of the State or local government over decisions regarding the placement, construction, and modifications of personal wireless services, subject to two limitations. Section 704(7) B (iii) requires any denials to be in writing and supported by "substantial evidence." Section 704(7) B (iv) prohibits denial on the basis of radio frequency emissions if those emissions are compliant with Federal regulations.

The American National Standards Institute and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) have published a standard called ANSI/IRRR C95.1-1992, which until recently set

recommended maximum power density levels for radio frequency (RF) energy originating from communications sites and other sources. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has also produced its own guidelines, which are more stringent and supersede the ANSI standard. The FCC rules categorically exclude certain transmitting facilities from routine evaluations for compliance with the RF emission guidelines if it can be determined that it is unlikely to cause workers or the general public to become exposed to emission that exceed the guidelines. The following table represents the FCC limits for both occupational and general population exposures to different radio frequencies:

Frequency Range (F) (MHz)	Occupational Exposure (mW/cm ²)	General Public Exposure (mW/cm ²)
0.3-1.34	100	100
1.34-3.0	100	180/F ²
3.0—30	900/F ²	180/F ²
30-300	1.0	0.2
300-1,500	F/300	F/1500
1,500-100,000	5.0	1.0

Based on the submitted RF study, the maximum public RF exposure from the site with all channels on antennas operating at full capacity would be 7.25 percent of the general public safety standard established by the ANSI and the FCC. Therefore, the risk of release of hazardous materials or emissions to the public is remote.

This project has been found to be Categorical Exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines which states that minor alterations to existing structures would not be subject to the CEQA Guidelines. A \$50.00 administrative processing fee is required by the County Recorder to file the Notice of Exemption.

SUPPORT INFORMATION

Attachments to Staff Report:

- Attachment 1 Conditions of Approval
- Attachment 2 Findings

- Exhibit A Location Map
- Exhibit B Assessor’s Parcel Map
- Exhibit C General Plan Land Use Map
- Exhibit D Zoning Map
- Exhibit E Site Plan
- Exhibit F Elevations
- Exhibit G Photo Simulations

ATTACHMENT 1

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Special Use Permit Revision
S96-0004-R/ T-Mobile, Telecommunication Monopole- Gold Nugget Way
Zoning Administrator/ October 7, 2009

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. This Special Use Permit Revision is based upon and limited to compliance with the project description, the Staff Report exhibits marked Exhibits E through G and conditions of approval set forth below. Any deviations from the project description, exhibits, or conditions must be reviewed and approved by the County for conformity with this approval. Deviations may require approved changes to the permit and/or further environmental review. Deviations without the above described approval will constitute a violation of permit approval.

Special Use Permit S96-0004 allows the following:

One 62'6" monopole located within a 400 square foot lease area including ground mounted equipment. The monopole allows a total of four (4) antennas to be located on three (3) antennae array mounts at a height of 60'0". A six-foot tall wooden fence shall be located around the lease area to screen the ground equipment from view. One 24 inch microwave dish may be located at 44 feet on the monopole.

This revision to Special Use Permit S96-0004-R allows the following:

The replacement of the three (3) existing antennae array mounts with three (3) new mounts. The new mounts shall be painted to match the existing monopole and shall be installed at the same height as the existing mounts. The new antennae mounts shall not project beyond the existing mounts. The three (3) existing antennae shall be relocated onto the new mounts. Three (3) new antennae shall be located on the new antennae array mounts. The new panel shall match the color of the existing panels and shall be located at the same height of the existing panels. One new BTS equipment cabinet shall be installed within the existing 400 square foot lease area.

No increase in height of the monopole or expansion of the lease area shall be authorized by this permit revision.

The grading, development, use, and maintenance of the property, the size, shape, arrangement, and location of structures, parking areas and landscape areas, and the protection and preservation of resources shall conform to the project description above and the hearing exhibits and conditions of approval below. The property and any portions thereof shall be sold, leased or financed in compliance with this project description and the approved hearing exhibits and conditions of approval hereto. All plans must be submitted for review and approval and shall be implemented as approved by the County.

Planning Services

1. ~~The applicant shall submit a site improvement/grading plan to the Department for review and approval. The plan shall be in conformance with the County of El Dorado *Design and Improvement Standards Manual*, the *Grading, Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance*, the *Drainage Manual*.~~
2. ~~The applicant shall be subject to a grading permit fee commensurate with the scope of the proposed project.~~
- 3.2. Due to the infrequent intended use of this facility, the on-site access driveway shall be a 10-foot minimum width and surfaced with a minimum of 2 inches of asphalt concrete over four inches of aggregate base. The hard surfacing is required by the State Fire Safe Regulations for roads and driveways steeper than 15 percent. Compaction of the sub-grade shall be at 90 percent, and compaction of the aggregate base shall be 95 percent. The road shall be graded at a 2 percent cross slope toward the cut side with a roadside ditch for drainage. A cross culvert may be needed at the low point of the road. An adequate turnaround shall be constructed at the project site.
- 4.3. The applicant is subject to any and all requirements of the El Dorado County Fire District prior to obtaining a building permit. The turnaround indicated in Condition 3 above is subject to fire district approval.
- 5.4. The applicant shall assume full responsibility for resolving television reception interference cause by the operation of this facility. The applicant shall take corrective action within 30 days of the receipt of any written complaint.
- 6.5. The applicant shall obtain a building permit from the El Dorado County Building Department.
- 7.6. The applicant shall construct a 6-foot-tall wooden fence, or chain link fence with wooden slats, around the entire perimeter of the 400-square-foot facility for safety reasons. Landscaping in the form of fast-growing columnar trees shall be planted on the northern and western outside perimeter of the fence that faces Gold Nugget Way and the homes to the north to facilitate screening in the long term. Irrigation shall also be provided. An irrigation and three-year replacement plan shall be prepared to the satisfaction of the Planning Department. All of the above shall be completed prior to issuance of a building permit.
- 8.6. Existing tree coverage that functions as screening shall be maintained and/or replaced to prevent greater visual exposure to the tower.
- 9.7. The 28" oak located in proximity to the proposed driveway shall not be removed to simplify construction of the driveway but shall remain to facilitate screening of the facility.
8. Co-locations may be administratively approved on the monopole subject to review and

approval by the Development Services Director. The co-locations shall be consistent with design of the monopole as described in permit S96-0004 or as referenced in Condition 1 of this permit. Any expansion of lease area or major alteration of the monopole shall require approval of a revision to this use permit from the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission.

9. Due to the ever-changing technology of wireless communication systems, this special use permit shall be reviewed by the County Development Services Department every five years. At each five-year review, the permit holder shall provide the Development Services Department with a status report on the then current use of the subject site and related equipment. Development Services shall review the status and present that report to the approving authority with a recommendation whether to:

- a. Allow the facility to continue to operate under all applicable conditions; or
- b. Hold a public hearing to determine whether to modify the conditions of approval in order to reduce identified adverse impacts; or initiate proceedings to revoke the special use permit, requiring the facility's removal if it is no longer an integral part of the wireless communications system.

By operation of this condition, it is the intent of County to reserve the right to modify or add new conditions, consistent with the language specified above. The failure of the County to conduct or complete a five-year review in a timely fashion shall not invalidate the Special Use Permit. The applicant shall pay a fee determined by the Development Services Director to cover the cost of processing a five-year review on a time and materials basis.

10. Prior to commencement of any use authorized by this permit, the applicant shall provide a written description, together with appropriate documentation, showing conformance of the project with each condition imposed as part of the project approval. The applicant shall also schedule an inspection by Planning Services for verification of compliance with applicable conditions of approval. The operator shall pay Planning Services for the time spent reviewing the site on a time and materials basis. All future development plans shall include this condition on the submitted plans.

11. The operator (lessee) and property owner (lessor) are responsible for complying with all conditions of approval contained in this Special Use Permit. Any zoning violations concerning the installation, operation, and/or abandonment of the facility are the responsibility of the owner and the operator.

12. All Development Services fees for processing this application shall be paid in full prior to issuance of a Building Permit.

13. In the event of any legal action instituted by a third party challenging the validity of any provision of this approval, the applicant and landowner agrees to be responsible for the costs of defending such suit and shall hold County harmless from any legal fees or costs County may incur as a result of such action.

The applicant and land owner shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless El Dorado County and its agents, officers, and employees from any claim, action, or proceeding against El Dorado

County or its agents, officers, or employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul an approval of El Dorado County concerning a Special Use Permit.

The County shall notify the applicant/owner of any claim, action, or proceeding and County will cooperate fully in the defense.

El Dorado County Fire Protection District:

14. The applicant shall submit site plan review fee of \$ 150.00. The District shall review and approve the improvement plans prior to issuance of a building permit.
15. Provide a high-priority “Knox Box” to access the cabinets (if not already provided). The District shall verify the installation of the ‘Knox Box’ prior to issuance of a building permit.
16. Provide keys for all cabinets to be placed in Knox box. Provide a low priority “Knox” padlock on access gate if not already provided. Applications for both high and low security Knox systems are provided at the district office for \$30.00 each. The District shall verify this compliance with this requirement prior to issuance of a building permit.
17. Mount one 2A10BC Fire Extinguisher inside a weather resistant fire extinguisher box. The District shall verify compliance with this requirement prior to issuance of a building permit.
18. The applicant shall maintain vegetation control inside the fencing around the cabinets and tower. The vegetation control shall be maintained in perpetuity.

ATTACHMENT 2 **FINDINGS**

Special Use Permit Revision
S96-0004-R/ T-Mobile Telecommunication Monopole- Gold Nugget Way
Zoning Administrator/ October 7, 2009

1.0 CEQA FINDINGS

- 1.1 The proposed revision would be Categorical Exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines which exempts minor alterations to existing structures from further environmental review.
- 1.2 The documents and other materials which constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based are in the custody of the Development Services Department, Planning Services, at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville, CA.

2.0 SPECIAL USE PERMIT FINDINGS

2.1 The issuance of the permit is consistent with the General Plan;

The proposed use is consistent with the policies in the El Dorado County General Plan, as discussed in the General Plan section of this staff report. General Plan Policy 5.6.1.4 requires approval of a Special Use Permit for wireless facilities to address potential health, safety and welfare impacts to the adjoining properties. The proposed revision would add additional antennae and an equipment shelter to the existing facility. The fencing and landscaping required as Conditions of Approval of the initial Special Use Permit would remain intact. The RF report for the proposed antennae additions determined that the maximum emissions would not exceed 7.25 percent of the federally established thresholds.

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

The proposed use would not 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. The existing facility has been adequately screened from view through fencing and landscaping. The proposed addition would result in 7.25 percent of the maximum RF emissions established by federal thresholds.

2.3 The proposed use is specifically permitted by special use permit pursuant to this Title.

Section 17.14.210 of the County Code authorizes cellular facilities through issuance of a Special Use Permit. The existing facility was permitted under S96-0004. The proposed modification to the wireless facility would require a revision to the initial application. No expansion or alteration of use would occur as part of the revision that would be inconsistent with the County Code.