

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 24, 2022

PROJECT TITLE

AT&T Telecommunication Facility

APPLICANT

Tom Johnson (TSJ Consulting)

ADDRESS/LOCATION

2400 Bluebell Drive

PROPERTY OWNER

North Coast Commercial, LLC

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

015-370-045

FILE NUMBER

PRJ21-064

APPLICATION DATE

September 10, 2020

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

Jan 26, 2022

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Conditional Use Permit

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Design Review

PROJECT SITE ZONING

IG (General Industrial)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Light Industry

PROJECT PLANNER

Kristinae Toomians

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: CHAIR WEEKS AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING
COMMISSION
FROM: KRISTINAE TOOMIANS, SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: AT&T TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITY
AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Economic Development Department recommends that the Planning Commission, by resolution, approve a Conditional Use Permit to allow the construction of a new 60-foot-tall wireless communications antenna, along with supporting equipment shelter and backup diesel generator, on the property located at 2400 Bluebell Drive, behind an existing industrial building.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project involves the placement of a 60-foot-tall telecommunications tower (tower) along with a supporting equipment shelter and backup diesel generator. The tower consists of a monopole with a twelve antennae array, mounted at 57 feet from the ground level with the ability for future carrier equipment to collocate. The 15-foot x 27-foot project/lease area will be enclosed by an eight-foot tall, chain link fence and include a 190-gallon emergency diesel generator. The fence design and material would be reviewed by the Design Review Board at a future date.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

AT&T, represented by TSJ Consulting, Inc. proposes to install a 60-foot-tall telecommunications tower within a new 15-foot x 27-foot (405-square-feet) project/lease area which also includes a 190-gallon emergency diesel generator on the northwest corner of an approximately one-acre lot, developed with an industrial building and associated parking lot. Placement of the tower will

increase bandwidth for AT&T customers with the ability for collocation of future providers on the site.

The subject parcel is currently used by Battery Systems of Santa Rosa. The tower and fenced lease area will be constructed in the northwest corner of the site, which is currently a gravel patch and will not displace or disrupt any existing parking or circulation for the existing building.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Industrial

South: Industrial

East: Industrial

West: Single-Family Residential, separated by SMART rail

The project site is adjacent to a channelized portion of Piner Creek and SMART rail lines and is surrounded by developed parcels on three sides with a variety of industrial uses. A single-family residential neighborhood is located on the west side of the site, and is separated by the SMART rail line.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The development site is approximately 1.1 acres. The use of the site is Battery Systems of Santa Rosa, a battery supplier and installer.

4. Project History

On July 19, 2021, a pre-application Neighborhood Virtual Meeting was held. There was low attendance, but there were concerns about how the tower could negatively affect neighboring residents' health.

On September 10, 2021, the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application was submitted to the Planning and Economic Development Department.

On September 17, 2021, a Notice of Application was mailed to residents within 600-feet of the project site.

On December 16, 2021, the Planning and Economic Development Department requested that the Waterways Advisory Committee advise the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board as to whether the proposed AT&T Telecommunication Facility project is consistent with the applicable Citywide Creek Master Plan.

On January 12, 2022, the Design Review (DR) application was submitted to the Planning and Economic Development Department.

On January 26, 2022, the project was deemed complete.

PRIOR CITY, COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The General Plan land use designation for the site is General Industry, which is intended for manufacturing and distribution activities with potential for creating nuisances, along with accessory offices and retailing. Unrelated retail and service commercial uses that could be more appropriately located elsewhere in the City are not permitted. Uses may generate truck traffic and operate 24 hours a day.

While there are no goals or policies that speak directly to telecommunications facilities, cellular phone service has become an integral part of personal and business communication. As such, installation of the proposed telecommunications facility implements a variety of overarching General Plan goals by creating a functional place for those who live and work within the City. The proposal has been determined to be consistent with the General Plan.

2. Zoning

Surrounding Zoning Districts

North: IG (General Industrial)
South: IG (General Industrial)
East: IG (General Industrial)
West: SMART rail & R-1-6 (Single-Family Residential)

The project site is within the IG – General Industrial Zoning District, which is applied to areas appropriate for industrial and manufacturing activities, warehousing, wholesaling and distribution uses. Uses may generate truck traffic and operate 24 hours. Retail and business service uses that could be more appropriate in another zone are not permitted. Land uses allowed in the IG zoning district have the potential for creating objectionable noise, smoke, odor, dust, noxious gases, glare, heat, vibration, or industrial wastes. The IG zoning district is consistent with the General Industry land use classification of the General Plan.

Zoning Code Section [20-44](#), defines telecommunication facility standards. The project is considered a major telecommunications facility and as such, has been required to obtain a CUP and Design Review permit. Pursuant to Zoning Code Section [20-44.020](#), the review authorities are the Planning Commission (CUP), and the Design Review Board (Design Review).

Pursuant to Zoning Code Section [20-30.070](#), height of telecommunication facilities are specifically addressed in Zoning Code Chapter 20-44 and more specifically, Zoning Code Section [20-44.030\(G\)](#) states, “The facility shall be as small as possible and the minimum height necessary without compromising reasonable reception or transmission.” Staff has interpreted this language to allow the review authority (Planning Commission) discretion regarding the height limits of telecommunication facilities. Based on the information included in the application materials, staff finds that the proposed height of the tower is necessary to maintain adequate height for function while allowing future collocation of the site.

The project complies with development standards, design guidelines, and application requirements set forth in Chapters 20-23 and 20-44 of the City Code. The tower and all related equipment will be placed adjacent to an existing industrial structure and will be screened by an 8-foot-tall fence. The project blends in with the existing industrial landscape and will be placed behind an existing industrial building. The project will not interfere with other industrial operations in the vicinity.

Section 20-44.060 of the Zoning Code regulates the location of telecommunication towers by requiring an alternative site analysis, a separation between facilities, a good faith effort in achieving collocation, minimum roads and parking areas as necessary to serve the facility, and operation in compliance with the Federal Communication Commission’s (FCC) human exposure standards for non-ionizing electromagnetic radiation (NIER). An “Electromagnetic Energy (EME) Exposure Report,” prepared by OSC Engineering, Inc., dated May 19, 2021, concluded that the proposed placement of the tower at the subject site will not result in exposure of the public to excessive levels of radio-frequency energy as defined in the FCC Rules and Regulations.

Major telecommunication facilities are allowed within the IG zoning district upon approval of a CUP. Staff finds that the project complies with all requisite requirements of the Zoning Code, and that all required findings can be met as shown on the draft resolution included as an attachment to this Staff Report.

3. Design Guidelines

The project will be considered by the Design Review Board on April 7, 2022.

4. Historic Preservation Review Standards

Not applicable.

5. Neighborhood Comments

Planning staff received one comment from the public following the pre-application

neighborhood meeting that suggested that the applicant consider an alternate site on Coffey Road that already has an existing cell tower on site. The general concerns are with the proximity of the proposed project to residential units to the west. The applicant supplied a coverage map that highlights the lack of telecommunications signal coverage in the general vicinity. An "Electromagnetic Energy (EME) Exposure Report," prepared by OSC Engineering, Inc., dated May 19, 2021, concluded that the proposed placement of the tower at the subject site will not result in exposure of the public to excessive levels of radio-frequency energy as defined in the FCC Rules and Regulations.

6. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

None required.

FISCAL IMPACT

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The project has been found in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, the project qualifies for Class 3, which exempts the construction of new small structures in that telecommunication towers are considered small structures that are similar to this Project.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On December 16, 2021, the Planning and Economic Development Department requested that the Waterways Advisory Committee (WAC) advise the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board as to whether the proposed AT&T Telecommunication Facility project is consistent with the applicable Citywide Creek Master Plan.

Since the adjacent Piner Creek is channelized, the creek setback exception would apply. The WAC acknowledged that all waterway concerns were addressed and that the location of the wireless communication facility was sited in a great spot, away from other structures around it within an industrial landscape. They concluded that any impacts to the creek will be avoided.

NOTIFICATION

The project was noticed as a public hearing per the requirements of Chapter [20-66](#) of the City Code. Notification of this public hearing was provided by posting an on-site sign, publishing notice in a newspaper of general circulation, mailed notice to surrounding property owners and occupants, electronic notice to parties that had

expressed interest in projects taking place in this geographic area of Santa Rosa, and bulletin board postings at City Hall and on the City website. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65091, where necessary, the City has incorporated notice procedures to the blind, aged, and disabled communities. These procedures include audio amplifier/assistive listening device support at public meetings, closed captioning, and optical character recognition conversion of electronic notices.

ISSUES

There are no unresolved issues for this project.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1	Disclosure Form
Attachment 2	Location and Neighborhood Context Map
Attachment 3	Project Plans, received on November 13, 2021
Attachment 4	Photo Simulations, received on July 20, 2021
Attachment 5	Electromagnetic Energy (EME) Report, prepared by OSC Engineering, Inc., received July 20, 2021
Attachment 6	Coverage Map, received July 20, 2021
Attachment 7	Piner Creek Reach 2 Area Map
Attachment 8	Public Correspondence, July 18, 2021
Resolution	Conditional Use Permit Exhibit A

CONTACT

Kristinae Toomians, Senior Planner
Planning and Economic Development
100 Santa Rosa Avenue, Room 3
(707) 543-4692
KToomians@SRCity.org