

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
JULY 1, 2021

PROJECT TITLE

Crown Castle Relocation
(Telecommunications Facility)

APPLICANT

Jason Osborne (Crown Castle)

ADDRESS/LOCATION

1236 Cleveland Avenue

PROPERTY OWNER

JB Fish Company LLC

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

012-061-032

FILE NUMBER

PRJ20-023

APPLICATION DATE

December 29, 2020

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

May 25, 2021

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Preliminary Design Review

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

PROJECT SITE ZONING

CG-SA (General Commercial, within the
Station Area combining district)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Retail and Business Services

PROJECT PLANNER

Adam Ross

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

TO: CHAIR WEIGL AND MEMBERS OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
FROM: ADAM ROSS, INTERIM SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: CROWN CASTLE RELOCATION PROJECT
AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Economic Development Department recommends that the Design Review Board, by resolution, approve Preliminary Design Review for construction of a new 83-foot telecommunications tower, on the property located at 1236 Cleveland Avenue.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project involves the placement of an 83-foot telecommunications tower (tower), which is to replace an existing tower located at 135 Ridgway Avenue, approximately 0.22 miles from the proposed project location. The tower consists of a monopine design with two antennae installations mounted at 65 feet and 75 feet from the ground level with the ability for future carrier equipment to be collocated. The 24' x 37' project area will be enclosed by a six-foot tall fence and include a 210-gallon emergency diesel generator. The project went before the Planning Commission on June 24, 2021. Planning Staff is also asking for conditioning the project's fencing.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

Crown Castle is proposing to install an 83-foot monopine telecommunications tower within a 24' x 37' project area which includes a 210-gallon emergency diesel generator on the northeast corner of an approximately 0.71-acre developed lot. Placement of the tower will increase bandwidth for Verizon and AT&T customers with the ability for collocation of future providers on the site.

The subject parcel is currently used by Culligan Water of Sonoma County and is currently used for employee and patron parking, although the use does not inhibit a large number of customers. The placement of the tower is proposed in the northeast corner of the site. The building on-site and parking lot separates the public right-of-way from the proposed telecommunication facility but does not entirely screen them.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Retail and Business Services
South: Retail and Business Services
East: Highway 101
West: Retail and Business Services

The project site is adjacent to Highway 101 and is surrounded by developed parcels on all sides with a variety of commercial uses.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

The development site is approximately 0.71 acres. The use of the site is Culligan Water of Sonoma County, a bottled water provider and distributor.

4. Project History

On December 29, 2020, the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and Design Review applications were submitted to the Planning and Economic Development Department.

On February 26, 2021, a Notice of Application was sent to property owners and occupants within 600 feet of the proposed development site.

On February 26, 2021, Staff requested additional documentation for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis.

On May 25, 2021, the project was deemed complete.

On May 13, 2021, the Shot Clock, a regulation set forth by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which limits the time a local agency has to act on a telecommunications application, was extended to July 1, 2021.

On June 24, 2021, the Planning Commission held a public hearing for the Conditional Use Permit for the Project.

PRIOR CITY, COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The General Plan land use designation for the site is Retail and Business Services, which is intended to accommodate retail and service enterprises, office, and restaurants. 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. North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan

The subject site is located within the boundaries of the North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan (Specific Plan). The Specific Plan acknowledges that infrastructure improvements are necessary to adequately serve the Specific Plan area. The following Specific Plan goals and policies are applicable to the project:

Infrastructure and Public Facilities

PF-1 Support anticipated level of development intensity in project area with adequate infrastructure.

PF-1.1 Provide utility upgrades as needed to support increased density and intensity in the area.

PF-2 Provide mechanisms to adequately construct and maintain public infrastructure and facilities.

3. Zoning

Surrounding Zoning Districts

North: CG-SA (General Commercial, within the Station Area combining district) zoning district

South: CG-SA zoning district

East: Highway 101

West: CG-SA zoning district

The project site is within the CG-SA zoning district, which is applied to areas appropriate for a range of retail and service land uses that primarily serve residents and businesses throughout the City, and is intended to enhance and reinforce distinctive characteristics within the Station Area Specific Plan areas. The zoning district is consistent with the Retail and Business Services 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 discretion regarding the height limits of telecommunication facilities.

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 commercial structure and will be screened by a 6-foot tall fence. The project blends well into the established commercial zoning district in that the monopine design incorporates more branches than typically found on other similar telecommunication towers throughout the City and is next to Hwy 101 where other large trees can be seen. The project will not interfere with other commercial 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 co-location, 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). A project compliance report prepared by Hammett & Edison, Inc., dated November 10, 2020 (Attachment 7), 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. The project narrative (Attachment 3) and Alternative Sites Analysis (Attachments 6) discuss alternative sites considered.

Major telecommunication facilities are allowed within the CG 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.

4. Design Guidelines

Section 20-44.060 of the Zoning Code outlines design criteria for commercial telecommunication facilities, and in concert with the City's Design Guidelines, requires that the facilities be designed and located to be compatible with and minimize visual impacts to surrounding areas.

The following are relevant policies from Chapter 20-44 and the Design Guidelines, along with staff's analysis:

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|----------------|---|
| 3.3 II. A. 2. | Integrate new development carefully into existing neighborhoods and future planned neighborhoods. |
| 3.3 III. B.1. | Use high quality, durable and low maintenance materials. |
| 3.3 III. D.10. | The preferred location for utility equipment is in underground vaults. If placed above ground, large equipment shall be screened from view and should not be placed in prominent and highly visible locations. |
| 20-44.060 F.1 | Innovative design solutions that minimize visual impacts should be utilized. Telecommunication facilities shall be as small as possible and the minimum height necessary without compromising reasonable reception or transmission. |
| 20-44.060 F.2 | Telecommunication facilities shall be located and designed to avoid blocking and/or substantially altering scenic resources. |
| 20-44.060 F.3 | Antennas and their support structures should be located on the rear half of property or structures when reasonable transmission and/or reception would not be impaired and when visual impacts would be reduced unless no other feasible alternative location exists. |
| 20-44.060 F.4 | Telecommunication facilities and appurtenances should not be situated between the primary building on the parcel and any public or private street adjoining the parcel. |
| 20-44.060 F.17 | Each commercial telecommunication facility shall be installed in a manner that will maintain and enhance existing native vegetation. Suitable landscaping to screen the facility shall also be installed where necessary. |

The proposal includes a monopine tower that minimizes the visual impacts based on the surrounding vegetation that includes mature evergreen trees. Staff has determined no scenic resources are affected by this proposal based on site visits and the photo simulations provided by the applicant.

The monopine is proposed approximately 110 feet from the public right-of-way. The primary building, the Culligan Water of Sonoma County, separates the proposed monopine from the public street (Cleveland Avenue) so that the facility is not situated between the primary building and the public street. The proposed location to rear of the commercially zoned site abuts the large masonry wall separating Hwy 101 and the property, which reduces the visual prominence of the structures and associated equipment.

5. Historic Preservation Review Standards

Not applicable.

6. Neighborhood Comments

One interested member of the public has inquired about the progress of the application and is included as Attachment 11 of the Agenda packet.

7. 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.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

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

CROWN CASTLE RELOCATION PROJECT

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While the proposed chain link fence with slats is not a desirable feature, the applicant is looking for direction from the Design Review Board on materials and styling.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1	Disclosure Form
Attachment 2	Location and Neighborhood Context Map
Attachment 3	Project Narrative, received on December 29, 2020
Attachment 4	Project Plans, received on December 29, 2020
Attachment 5	Photo Simulations, received on December 29, 2020
Attachment 6	Alternative Sites Analysis, received on December 29, 2020
Attachment 7	Radio Frequency Compliance Report, prepared by Hammett & Edison, Inc., dated November 10, 2020
Attachment 8	CEQA Class 3 Exemption Letter, by Tim Page, AICP, dated May 25, 2021.
Attachment 9	Assessment of Migratory bird Corridors by Genevieve Rozhon, dated May 21, 2021.
Attachment 10	Tolling Agreement Extension to July 1, 2021, prepared by Crown Castle, dated September 18, 2017
Attachment 11	Public Correspondence as of June 3, 2021
Resolution	Conditional Use Permit

CONTACT

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