



Staff Report

File #: 22-0829

PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: 11/07/2022
TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners
FROM: Planning & Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

CUPM2020-0004: Application to modify Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 15-005, to increase the height of an existing telecommunications facility designed as a mono-pine from 60 feet to 75 feet, located at 638 Collett Avenue (Cresta Verde Park) in the Park (P) district within the Northeast Corona Specific Plan. (Applicant: Eliezer Acevedo, Smartlink, LLC. on behalf of AT&T Wireless, 3300 Irvine Avenue, Suite 300, Newport Beach, CA 92660)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission recommend adoption of Resolution No. 2596 DENYING CUPM2020-0004, based on the findings contained in the staff report.

PROJECT SITE SUMMARY

Area of Property: 5.36 acres
Existing Zoning: Park (P) District
Existing General Plan: Parks and Open Space Recreational
Existing Land Use: City Park
Surrounding Zoning/Land Uses:
N: SFR-9 (Single Family Residential) / Residential dwellings
E: SFR-9 (Single Family Residential) / Residential dwellings
S: SFR-9 (Single Family Residential) / Residential dwellings
W: R-1-9.6 (Single Family Residential) / Residential dwellings

BACKGROUND

Project Site Background

Cresta Verde Park is a 5.36-acre city park located at 638 Collett Avenue. The property is within the Northeast Corona Specific Plan and zoned Park (P). The park as established includes a softball field, basketball court, restrooms, picnic and barbecue area, covered shelter, tot-lot, drinking fountains, and bicycle racks.

On November 3, 2015, the Planning and Housing Commission approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 15-005 to allow the 60-foot mono-pine. The mono-pine is located on the northeasterly portion of Cresta Verde Park, and is the only telecommunications facility on the property or in the immediate area.

Project Background

CUPM2020-0004 is a request by Smartlink, on behalf of AT&T Wireless, to increase the height of the existing mono-pine from 60 feet to 75 feet. The added height is needed for AT&T to collocate on the tower. Collocation will allow AT&T to fill in a significant coverage gap in the area.

On April 12, 2021 the P&HC considered CUPM2020-0004. P&HC commented on the existing mono-pine's tree branches, which appeared weathered. The Commission also expressed concerns that the mono-pine extension would have aesthetic impacts on surrounding residences. The Commission requested that additional locations be explored. At the applicant's request, the Commission continued the project to May 10, 2021 to allow the applicant time to address the concerns. On May 10, 2021 the project was further continued to May 24, 2021, then continued off calendar.

The applicant subsequently sent out community meeting fliers to the neighborhood and evaluated 12 alternative locations, in addition to the 2 previously evaluated. The applicant also reduced the number of proposed antennas from 12 to 9.

The project was reviewed again at the Commission's February 7, 2022 meeting. The Planning and Housing Commission asked AT&T to contact the owner of Cresta Verde Golf Course to inquire about leasing space for a telecommunication structure there. The Commission continued CUP2020-0004 off calendar to allow AT&T time to explore this option.

In May 2022, AT&T informed the Planning & Development Department that they could not come to terms with the owner of the golf course.

At a public hearing on October 10, 2022, the Planning and Housing Commission discussed the existing tower's unmaintained condition and was concern with extending the height of the existing tower, as it could result in a more significant visual impact to the neighborhood. The Commission ultimately determined that it could not support the proposed extension due to its visual impact on the neighborhood, and directed the Planning Division staff to prepare a resolution of denial and to return to the Commission at a future public hearing with a recommendation to deny CUPM2020-0004.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The park is located in a residential area, with residential properties to the north, east, south, and west. As shown in Exhibit 3, the mono-pine is located within the northeastern portion of the park, approximately 51 feet from Collett Avenue and 105.5 feet from the east property line. The photo-simulations provided by the applicant depict the proposed 15-foot extension, which rises above the surrounding trees. Located west of the mono-pine is a block enclosure that is approximately 11 feet

by 17 feet in size, and contains Verizon Wireless equipment cabinets for the existing mono-pine.

The attached Planning Commission report (Exhibit 7) prepared for the October 10, 2022 meeting provides an account of the prior hearings and a detailed project description.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

In accordance with Section 21080(b)(5) of the California Public Resources Code, projects that a public agency rejects or disapproves are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and thus, the public agency is not required to prepare an initial study or adopt a negative declaration or EIR. Therefore, no environmental analysis is needed prior to the denial of CUPM2020-0004.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to the City, as the applicant has paid the applicable application processing fees for the project.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A 10-day public notice was mailed to all property owners within a 500-foot radius of the project site, as well as advertised in the Sentinel Weekly News and posted at the project site. As of the preparation of this report, the Planning and Development Department has not received any response from the public.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff has considered the Planning Commission's prior meetings regarding the proposed extension of the existing antenna, including April 12, 2021, February 7, 2022, and October 10, 2022. At these meetings the Commission expressed concerns with the existing maintenance and visual appearance of the antenna and provided the applicant opportunity to revise their proposal. Ultimately the applicant did not address the Commission's concerns regarding the aesthetic impacts of the antenna on the surrounding neighborhood. Based on the administrative record and the Commission's direction, staff has prepared the findings below for the Commission's consideration.

FINDINGS OF APPROVAL FOR CUPM2020-0004

1. In accordance with Section 21080(b)(5) of the California Public Resources Code, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) does not apply to projects that a public agency rejects or disapproves, and thus, the public agency is not required to prepare an initial study or adopt a negative declaration or EIR. No environmental analysis is being considered with CUPM2020-0004 as the recommendation is to deny the proposed project.
2. The findings necessary for the granting a Conditional Use Permit as set forth in Section 17.92.110 of the Corona Municipal Code cannot be made in reference to CUPM2020-0004 for the following reasons:
 - a. *The proposal would be detrimental to public health, safety, convenience, and general welfare because the tower height extension associated with CUPM2020-0004 would*

result in a negative visual impact to the residential neighborhood surrounding the project site. The existing tower is already highly visible from Collett Avenue and nearby residential properties, and has not been regularly maintained. Increasing the height of the tower would exacerbate the negative visual impact the tower currently has on the neighborhood.

b. The increased tower height proposed by CUPM2020-0004 would be detrimental to the existing single-family residential properties in the immediate area to the north and east of the project site. The existing tower is approximately 51 feet from the public right-of-way on Collett Avenue and is not screened behind any vegetation, buildings, or structures. Increasing the height to the tower by 15 feet, as proposed by CUPM2020-0004, would further intensify negative visual impacts to the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

3. CUPM2020-0004 is not consistent with the City's General Plan for the following reasons:

a. The General Plan land use designation of the project site is Park and the surrounding properties are Low Density Residential. The proposal associated with CUPM2020-0004 needs to demonstrate compatibility with the Park designation and surrounding land uses to protect public health, safety, convenience and general welfare in order not to diminish the quality of life for the residents. The tower is currently designed to resemble a pine tree so that it is indistinguishable from its surrounding environment and does not create a negative visual impact to the surrounding residential land uses. Increasing the height of the tower by 15 feet would make the tower more prominent and distinguishable from its surroundings, and would make its fake appearance more noticeable. The negative visual impact of the increased tower height would degrade the natural and aesthetically pleasing appearance of Creste Verde Park and would negatively impact the quality of life for those visiting the park and the residents who live in the immediate area.

b. General Plan Policy LU-8 assures the integrity, quality and livability of Corona's existing residential neighborhoods by preserving those elements that give them character, cohesion and quality of life. The proposal associated with CUPM2020-0004 would create a negative aesthetic impact to the neighborhood because residents would have a direct line of sight from their outdoor and interior living spaces to the 75-foot tower. The inability to completely screen the tower with trees or buildings would make it stand out from its surroundings and would contradict the residential character and quality of the surrounding neighborhoods.

c. General Plan Policy LU-15.4 ensures that City sites and any infrastructure installed thereon are designed to be compatible in scale, mass, character and architecture with the district and neighborhood in which they are located, as well as applicable design and development characteristics specified by the General Plan. CUPM2020-0004 is not in harmony with the stated objective of the General Plan to ensure that City sites and infrastructure are compatible with the character of the park and neighborhood, since

the increased height will create unsightly views from neighborhood streets and adjacent properties.

PREPARED BY: RAFAEL TORRES, ASSISTANT PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: SANDRA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: JAY EASTMAN, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS:

1. Resolution No. 2596
2. Locational and zoning map
3. Site plan
4. Elevations
5. Photo-simulations
6. Antenna & Equipment Layout
7. Planning Commission staff report; October 10, 2022