



Staff Report

File #: 22-0772

PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: 10/10/2022
TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners
FROM: Planning & Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

CUPM2020-0004 (CONTINUED): 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 adopt Resolution No. 2564 granting CUPM2020-0004 based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval.

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 was established in 1982 and includes a softball field, basketball court, restrooms, picnic and barbecue area, covered shelter, tot-lot, drinking fountains, and bicycle racks.

On August 4, 2015, the City held a community meeting at Cresta Verde Park to discuss the then-proposed 60-foot-high wireless telecommunications facility (aka mono-pine). The meeting was attended by a handful of residents. A representative for Verizon wireless presented project plans and photo simulations of the project.

On November 3, 2015, the Planning and Housing Commission approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 15-005 to allow for Verizon Wireless to construct 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, which will allow them to fill in a significant coverage gap in the area. Propagation maps prepared by the applicant are attached as Exhibit 9. The maps show the "before" and "after" 4G-LTE coverage for the area surrounding Cresta Verde Park. The "before" condition shows that the two nearest AT&T telecommunications facilities do not provide adequate coverage for the project area. One of the existing facilities is located on the city's water-tank site, north of Cresta Verde Park. The other is located on an industrial property south of the 91 freeway. The "after" map shows that AT&T would have adequate coverage if they collocate on Verizon's Cresta Verde Park facility.

Per the city's adopted *Location, Development, and Design Guidelines and Standards for Telecommunication Facilities* ("Guidelines"), collocating is the preferred method for establishing a telecommunications facility in the city. If collocation is not feasible, then constructing an entirely new telecommunications facility could be considered. The Guidelines also require a wireless carrier to evaluate alternative collocation sites to identify the best collocation opportunity. The applicant originally analyzed 2 other sites, but has since expanded the number to 14 alternative locations in the vicinity of the "target area". For a variety of reasons the applicant has deemed all the alternative locations as being not viable. The sites are summarized in Table A of this report and attached as Exhibit 10. As such, the applicant selected Cresta Verde Park because it contains an existing mono-pine that can accommodate a collocation and address its service area.

The applicant's CUPM2020-0004 request will revise the original project approved under CUP15-005. Per Section 17.92.150 of the Corona Municipal Code, major revisions to an existing conditional use permit are subject to review by the Planning and Housing Commission.

The applicant formally submitted the modification application to the City on November 12, 2020, which was reviewed and discussed at the City's Project and Environmental Review Committee (PRC) on December 3, 2020. The application was deemed incomplete, and the applicant was provided a letter outlining the missing application materials. The application was deemed complete on March 10, 2021, and scheduled for the Planning and Housing Commission (P&HC) meeting on April 12, 2021.

The proposal was approved by the Parks & Recreation Commission at their meeting on March 10, 2021.

On April 12, 2021 the P&HC considered CUPM2020-0004, but continued the project off-calendar to allow the applicant time to conduct additional research. The P&HC reconsidered the project on February 7, 2022, but again continued the proposal off-calendar. Summaries of the P&HC meetings are provided below.

Planning and Housing Commission Meeting, April 12, 2021

At the April 12, 2021 public hearing, the 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, as the applicant had originally only analyzed two alternative sites. 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.

After the April 12th meeting the applicant completed the following:

- Conducted a community outreach meeting on September 30, 2021 at Cresta Verde Park. A flyer was mailed to all property owners and occupants located within a 500-foot radius of the park site. Attached as Exhibit 13 is a copy of the flyer. Per the applicant, no residents attended the meeting or contacted the applicant regarding the project;
- Reduced the number of AT&T panel antennas from 12 to 9;
- Engaged with Verizon Wireless to address the weathered tree branches on the mono-pine; and
- Conducted an analysis of 12 additional alternative sites. A discussion of the alternative sites analysis is provided below.

The applicant analyzed 12 additional sites in the vicinity of the target area, in addition to the 2 alternative sites evaluated as part of the applicant's original submittal (14 total alternative sites). The applicant's Alternative Sites Analysis is attached as Exhibit 10. An enlarged map of the analyzed sites is attached as Exhibit 11. The applicant also submitted to the Planning Division a written statement prepared by an AT&T Radio Frequency Engineer with information detailing why the Cresta Verde park site was selected (Exhibit 12). The 14 alternative sites are summarized in Table A.

Table A
Alternative Sites Analysis

#	Site Description	Location	Reason Site Is Not Viable. (Refer to Exhibit 10 for detailed explanations.)
1.	City Water Tank	881 Corsica Dr.	Located too far north from the target area. Also, the terrain between the water tank and target area would block signals from reaching the target area.
2.	City Antenna Tower (Grape Hill)	740 John Cir.	Located too far north from the target area. Signals would not effectively reach the target area.
3.	Industrial building	1831 Delilah St.	Located too far southeast from the target area. Signals would not effectively reach the target area.

4.	Industrial park	South of 91 fwy, west of Promenade Ave.	Located too far south from the target area, and site is lower in elevation than the target area. Signals would not effectively reach the target area.
5.	Corona Hills Plaza	North of 91 fwy, west of McKinley St.	Located too far southeast from the target area. Signals would not effectively reach the target area.
6.	Industrial park	West of 15 fwy, south of Parkridge Ave.	Located too far southwest from the target area, and site is lower in elevation than the target area. Signals would not effectively reach the target area.
7.	Cresta Verde Golf Club	1295 Cresta Rd.	Property owner declined to lease space to AT&T.
8.	Village Park	860 Village Loop Dr.	Located too far northwest from the target area. Also, there are significant elevation changes between the park and target area that would prevent signals from effectively reaching the target area.
9.	Tenachappi Park	2331 Siskiyou Ln.	Located too far northeast from the target area. Also, there are terrain and elevation challenges that would prevent signals from effectively reaching the target area.
10.	Corona Ranch Elementary School	785 Village Loop Dr.	Located too far northwest from the target area. Also, there are terrain and elevation challenges that would prevent signals from effectively reaching the target area.
11.	Inland Vineyard Church	950 McKinley St.	Located too far northeast from the target area. Also, there are terrain and elevation challenges that would prevent signals from effectively reaching the target area.
12.	Corona Fire Station	915 McKinley St.	Located too far northeast from the target area. Also, there are terrain and elevation challenges that would prevent signals from effectively reaching the target area.
13.	Industrial park	Doherty St./Buchanan St.	Located too far southeast from the target area. Also, the site is lower in elevation than the target area. Signals would not effectively reach the target area.
14.	Vacant industrial property	210 Radio Rd (southeast quadrant of 91 & 15 fwy interchange)	Located too far south of the target area. Also, site is significantly lower in elevation than target area. Signals would not effectively reach the target area.

Planning and Housing Commission Meeting, February 7, 2022

The project was reviewed at the P&HC's February 7, 2022, public hearing. At the hearing, the Planning and Housing Commission asked AT&T to contact the owner of Cresta Verde Golf Course and inquire about leasing space on the property for the telecommunications structure. The Commission continued CUP2020-0004 off calendar to allow AT&T time to explore this option.

Project Update

In May 2022, AT&T informed the Planning & Development Department that AT&T and the owner of

the golf course could not come to terms for a lease (Exhibit 14). AT&T requested that CUP2020-0004 be rescheduled for a public hearing before the Planning Commission. AT&T is proposing to keep the same project that was reviewed by the Commission on February 7, 2022, which is to collocate antennas for wireless communication on the existing mono-pine used by Verizon wireless at Cresta Verde Park. The proposal would increase the height of the existing mono-pine by 15 feet resulting in a total height of 75 feet. AT&T's is proposing to keep the project at the initial project location for the following reasons.

- AT&T referred to the City's *Location, Development, and Design Guidelines and Standards for Telecommunication Facilities* ("Guidelines") on finding sites suitable for the location of telecommunication facilities.
- AT&T found a collocation opportunity on an existing telecommunications facility located at Cresta Verde Park, which is consistent with the city's Guidelines.
- AT&T performed an alternative sites analysis covering 14 other sites to determine the suitability of locating a telecommunications facility on a property other than the project site, which is consistent with the city's Guidelines. These sites were either not available or not technologically feasible to close the service gap being experienced in the area.
- AT&T reapproached the property owner of the Cresta Verde Golf Course to discuss a potential lease agreement for the location of a telecommunications facility. AT&T and the property owner could not agree on terms for a lease agreement.
- The telecommunications facility utilizes a design that is intended to make the facility indistinguishable from the surrounding the environment, which is consistent with city's Guidelines. The telecommunications facility will be an extension of the existing facility and designed as a pine tree.

Existing Verizon Wireless Mono-pine

City staff notified Verizon in May 2022 that the existing mono-pine requires maintenance, and needs to be brought into conformance with the condition of its original approved. Verizon proposed to update the existing mono-pine's antennas and equipment, and has agreed to rebranch the facility as part of their modifications. Verizon is currently working with the City Attorney's Office on an agreement that requires Verizon to rebranch the entire tree before the City releases the building permits associated with equipment upgrade. Should Verizon fail to complete their proposed modifications and rebranching, then AT&T would be required to complete the rebranching as a condition of approval associated with this proposed conditional use permit modification (CUPM2020-0004). Specifically, Planning Condition 18, as shown in Exhibit 4, requires the rebranching to be completed before the City final the building permits associated with AT&T's height extension.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site Plan

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. 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.

Elevation and Antenna Layout Plans

The mono-pine has 12 existing Verizon Wireless panel antennas installed at approximately 54 feet high measured to the top of the antennas. No changes are proposed to the Verizon antennas as part of this conditional use permit modification. The proposed extension to the mono-pine will add an additional 15 feet to the height of the tower. The extension will accommodate new AT&T panel antennas, a new AT&T microwave dish, and spacing in between the two sets of panels antennas and microwave dish. The spacing is necessary to ensure that there is no signal interference between carriers.

The new AT&T panel antennas will be installed on the tower at a height of 71 feet, as measured to the top of the antennas. The installation consists of 3 sectors, with 3 panel antennas mounted onto each sector for a total of 9 panel antennas. The antennas are approximately 2.5 feet and 8 feet in length. They are required to be painted to match the foliage of the mono-pine. To ensure that the antennas are further concealed, they are also required to be encased within a sock-like covering that matches the foliage of the mono-pine. Below the antennas is the microwave dish, which is 3 feet in diameter. The dish will be installed at a height of approximately 58.5 feet. Elevations are attached to this report as Exhibit 5, and photo-simulations are attached as Exhibit 6.

Equipment Plan

The applicant will construct a block wall enclosure to secure a 364 square-foot lease area, which is approximately two feet west of the existing Verizon Wireless enclosure. The applicant is also proposing to place a concrete swale surrounding the enclosure for drainage purposes. The enclosure walls are 10 feet in height and will be constructed out of decorative block, which will be covered by vine landscaping. The enclosure has a wrought iron access gate with a mesh material to screen the equipment from the public's view. The enclosure will house several cabinets, an emergency back-up generator, surge protectors, and other equipment associated with the AT&T facility (Exhibit 7).

Access and Parking

Access to the project site is obtained from two driveways. One is on the northerly side, from Collett Avenue; and the second is on the southeasterly side, from Brianna Way. A service technician is anticipated to visit the site approximately once a month for routine maintenance and will utilize a parking space within the park's parking lot.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

The Planning and Housing Commission adopted a Negative Declaration on November 23, 2015 in conjunction with the approval of CUP15-005 for the existing telecommunications facility. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a), the City has determined that no additional environmental review is necessary for the proposed project (CUPM2020-0004), as the proposal is consistent with the circumstances analyzed under the adopted Negative Declaration, and there are no substantial changes nor new information of substantial importance.

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

The Park zone prescribes a minimum front, rear, and side yard setback of 50, 50, and 30 feet, respectively. The modifications to the mono-pine and enclosure equipment comply with the required setbacks. The Park zone prescribes a maximum height of 35 feet for buildings or structures, but the height of structures can exceed the height allowed by the zone with a conditional use permit. The applicant's proposal would increase the height of the height of the mono-pine by 15 feet for a total height of 75.

As demonstrated by the applicant's propagation maps, the collocation is necessary and vital for AT&T to service their customers. The applicant has analyzed multiple alternative sites as required by the City's guidelines for telecommunications facilities. Unfortunately, the alternative sites are not feasible and AT&T and the property owner of the Cresta Verde Golf Course were not able to agree on terms for a lease agreement.

As shown by the applicant's plans, the existing telecommunications facility can accommodate a second wireless carrier with added height. Increasing the height of the mono-pine from 60 to 75 feet is not expected to create negative visual impacts to the surrounding area because the park contains an abundance of trees that are similar in height to, or taller than, the mono-pine. The mono-pine would continue to blend into its environment, as demonstrated by the photo-simulations. Furthermore, the applicant has taken steps to minimize the visual impacts that the proposed modifications may have on the area by continuing to design the extended portion as a pine tree. The new antennas are required to be enclosed within a sock-like covering that has the same texture as the foliage of the tree. Also, the project is conditioned to have the existing portion of the mono-pine rebranched, which will bring the tree back the condition that existed when it was originally constructed.

Finally, the proposed project would fulfill General Plan Policy IU-8.3 by encouraging the collocation of telecommunication facilities to reduce the amount of land dedicated to this use, without compromising service.

The Planning Division recommends approval of CUPM2020-0004, based on the findings listed below and staff's recommended conditions of approval attached as Exhibit 4.

FINDINGS OF APPROVAL FOR CUPM2020-0004

1. The Planning Commission adopted a Negative Declaration on November 23, 2015 in conjunction with the approval of CUP15-005 for the existing telecommunications facility. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a), the city has determined that no additional environmental review is necessary for the proposed project (CUPM2020-0004), as the proposal is consistent with the circumstances analyzed under the adopted Negative

Declaration, and there are no substantial changes nor new information of substantial importance.

2. All the conditions necessary for granting a Conditional Use Permit as set forth in Section 17.92.110 of the Corona Municipal Code do exist in reference to CUPM2020-0004 for the following reasons:
 - a. *The proposal will not be detrimental to the public health, safety convenience, and general welfare because any radiofrequency emissions from such installations are governed by limits placed by the Federal Communications Commission for human exposure. The proposed telecommunications facility is also required to adhere to FCC regulations and prior to construction, the applicant shall obtain all required permits from local and federal agencies.*
 - b. *The proposed use is not detrimental to the other existing and permitted uses in the general area of the project site and relates property to the surrounding roadways because the wireless telecommunications facility meets the yard setbacks criteria of the zone, is designed to resemble a pine tree so that is indistinguishable for the surrounding environment, and is in a location (i.e. park) where existing trees and other vegetation provide the greatest amount of screening.*
 - c. *Reasonable conditions as necessary are being imposed to the project to protect public health, safety, and welfare and to establish full compliance with the applicable development standards for the P (Park) zone.*
 - d. *CUPM2020-0004 will not significantly impact the existing circulation system because a service technician will only be visiting the site periodically throughout the year, and sufficient parking is provided at the site to accommodate such activity. Therefore, such use does not impact the level of service on the surroundings streets.*
3. The proposal is consistent with the General Plan for the following reason:
 - a. *CUPM2020-0004 is consistent with General Plan Infrastructure and Utilities (IU) Policy 8.3, which encourages collocating new antenna onto existing telecommunications facilities, to reduce the amount of land to be dedicated to telecommunications facilities without compromising service.*
4. The proposal is consistent with the P (Park) designation of the Northeast Corona Specific Plan (SP81-2) for the following reason:
 - a. *The wireless telecommunications facility is consistent with the development standards of the P (Park) zone within the Northeast Corona Specific Plan (SP81-2), as the proposed facility will continue to meet the required setbacks for the zone. The maximum building height of 35 feet prescribed by the Park zone can be exceeded per the Corona Municipal Code with a conditional use permit.*

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Verizon Wireless currently has a license agreement with the City to operate the existing cell site at the Cresta Verde Park. The current license agreement with Verizon has a monthly payment of \$3,158.24 paid to the City. The City Attorney will work with Verizon on amending the current license agreement to accommodate the antennas being added by AT&T. Per the City's approved administrative policy, Administrative Policy 05200.001, the City Manager has the authority to negotiate the payments in the license agreement for cell sites.

PREPARED BY: RAFAEL TORRES, ASSISTANT PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: SANDA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: JAY EASTMAN, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS:

1. Resolution No. 2564
2. Locational and zoning map
3. Site plan
4. Conditions of Approval
5. Elevations
6. Photo-simulations
7. Antenna & Equipment Layout
8. Applicant's letter requesting to modify CUP15-005
9. Propagation Maps
10. Alternative Site Analysis
11. Enlarged Map of Alternative Sites
12. AT&T Mobility Radio Frequency Statement
13. Community Outreach Flyer, September 30, 2021
14. Alternative Site-Selection Efforts Statement - July 13, 2022