



Staff Report

File #: 21-0269

**PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT**

DATE: 4/12/2021

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Community Development Department

**APPLICATION REQUEST:**

**CUPM2020-0004:** Application to modify Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 15-005, to increase the height of an existing wireless telecommunication facility designed as a mono-pine from 60 feet to 75 feet, located at 638 Collett Avenue (Cresta Verde Park) in the P (Park) designation of the Northeast Corona Specific Plan (SP81-2). (Applicant: Will Kazimi, SmartLink, LLC. on behalf of AT&T, 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:** P (Park)

**Existing General Plan:** P (Park)

**Existing Land Use:** Park

**Proposed Land Use:** Park

**Surrounding Zoning/Land Uses:**

**N:** SFR-9 (Single Family Residential) of SP81-2 / Residential Buildings

**E:** SFR-9 (Single Family Residential) of SP81-2 / Residential Buildings

**S:** SFR-9 (Single Family Residential) of SP81-2 / Residential Buildings

**W:** R-1-9.6 (Single Family Residential) / Residential Buildings

**BACKGROUND**

**Site Location History**

Cresta Verde Park is a 5.36-acre city-operated park facility located at 638 Collett Avenue. The property is within the Northeast Corona Specific Plan and zoned Park. 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 November 3, 2015, the Planning and Housing Commission approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 15-005 to allow for Verizon Wireless to construct a 60-foot high wireless telecommunication facility designed as a faux pine tree within Cresta Verde Park. The tree, commonly known as a mono-pine, is located on the northeasterly portion of the park and is the only telecommunications facility on the property and 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 mono-pine from 60 feet to 75 feet in order for AT&T to collocate onto the tower. The collocation would allow AT&T to fill in a significant 4G-LTE wireless coverage gap in the area. Propagation maps prepared by the applicant are attached as Exhibit 3.G. The maps show the "before" and "after" coverage for the area surrounding Cresta Verde Park. The "before" condition shows that the project area is currently experiencing a coverage gap. The two nearest AT&T telecommunications facilities do not provide adequate coverage for the project area. One facility is located on the Department of Water and Power's water-tank site, north of Cresta Verde Park. The other is located on an industrial property south of the 91 freeway. The "after" condition shows that the project area would have adequate wireless coverage if AT&T was permitted to collocate at Cresta Verde Park.

Per the City of Corona's Location, Development, and Design Guidelines and Standards for Telecommunication Facilities ("Guidelines"), collocating onto an existing structure or building is the preferred method for a wireless carrier to establish a telecommunications facility in the city. If collocation is not feasible, then constructing an entirely new telecommunications facility (macro facility) could be considered. The Guidelines also require a wireless carrier to explore alternative sites for the best collocation opportunity before selecting a particular site. Prior to selecting Cresta Verde Park, the applicant analyzed two other sites. One site was the Cresta Verde Golf Course located at 1295 Cresta Road. However, the owner was not interested. The other site was a vacant industrial property located at 210 Radio Road, which contains existing antenna poles that could possibly accommodate a collocation. However, collocation was deemed not feasible by the applicant due to the structure of the poles. As such, the applicant selected Cresta Verde Park because it contains an existing mono-pine that can accommodate a collocation.

The applicant's request per CUPM2020-0004 would make revisions to 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 meeting on April 12, 2021.

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

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Site Layout**

The park is located in a predominantly residential area with residential properties to the north, east, south, and west. As shown in Exhibit 3.A, 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 Plans and Antenna Layout**

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. 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 measured to the top of the antennas. The installation consists of three sectors, with four panel antennas mounted onto each sector for a total of 12 panel antennas. The antennas are 8 feet in length and 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 covered with 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. The applicant's elevation plans are shown in Exhibit 3.C. Photosimulations of the mono-pine from various views surrounding the mono-pine are attached as Exhibit 3.D.

### **Equipment Plan**

The applicant will construct a block enclosure to secure a proposed 364 square-foot lease area, approximately two feet west of the existing Verizon Wireless block 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 in faux 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 equipment cabinets, an emergency back-up generator, surge protectors, and other equipment associated with the AT&T facility (Exhibit 3.E).

### **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**

The applicant paid the application processing fees to cover the cost of the application as required by City resolution.

## **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 Community Development Department has not received any response from the public regarding the proposal.

## **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 also prescribes a maximum height of 35 for buildings or structures. The applicant's proposal to increase the height of the mono-pine to 75 feet is allowed by a conditional use permit.

As demonstrated by the applicant's propagation maps, the collocation is necessary and vital for AT&T in order for them to meet the service demand for their customers. The applicant has analyzed alternative sites as required by the City's guidelines for telecommunications facilities before selecting the project site. Unfortunately, the alternative sites were not feasible.

As shown by the applicant's plans, the existing telecommunications facility is capable of accommodating a second wireless carrier. 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 photosimulations. 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 antennas are required to be covered with a sock-like covering that has the same texture as the foliage of the tree. Also, to ensure that the existing and extended portions of the tree have a seamless appearance, the extended portion (pine foliage and trunk) is required to match the existing portion in terms of design, materials, and color.

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

The Planning Division recommends approval of CUP2020-0004, based on the findings listed below and staff's recommended conditions of approval attached as Exhibit 3.B.

**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. *CUPM2020-004 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.*

**PREPARED BY:** RAFAEL TORRES, ASSISTANT PLANNER

**REVIEWED BY:** SANDRA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

**REVIEWED BY:** JAY EASTMAN, PLANNING MANAGER

**SUBMITTED BY:** JOANNE COLETTA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**EXHIBITS**

1. Resolution No. 2564
2. Locational and zoning map
- 3.A. Site Plan
- 3.B. Conditions of Approval
- 3.C. Elevations
- 3.D. Photosimulations
- 3.E. Antenna & Equipment Layout
- 3.F. Applicant's letter requesting to modify CUP15-005
- 3.G. Propagation Maps

Case Planner: Rafael Torres (951) 736-2262