



COUNTY OF ORANGE

RESOURCES & DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

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DATE: October 25, 2005 **FILE:** PA05-0048

TO: File/Record/Applicant

FROM: Timothy Neely, Director, Planning and Development Services Department

SUBJECT: Planning Application PA05-0048 for Site Development Permit

APPLICANT: Nextel Wireless
John Helminski, agent

I. NATURE OF PROJECT:

Site Development Permit is required to modify an existing cellular communications facility at the Long Canyon/Ortega Highway (40701 Ortega Highway) wireless telecommunication site. The Applicant, Nextel, proposes to pigtail onto an existing "Monopine" tower, operated by Sprint PCS, an additional wireless telecommunication antenna array and add the necessary equipment boxes to support the Nextel system. The telecommunication system will provide Nextel network service area along the Ortega Highway within the San Juan Capistrano/Lake Elsinor area.

The proposal consists of adding two (2) sectors of four (4) antenna each, for a total of 8, located below the existing Sprint-PCS sectors/antennae. The new antennas will be shielded within the "monopine" structure, providing a natural pine tree appearance from the exterior. The facility will be unmanned and remotely monitored, however their will be site visits to perform maintenance and testing by the technician, as required. The facility will operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The facility will provide high speed internet, telephone and other wireless service to the surrounding area. The proposed equipment shelter (7-0' x 12-5') that supports the Nextel communication system will be within the existing Sprint PCS fenced area, thereby not require any additional space.

PA01-0065 Background:

Currently, under approved Planning Application PA01-0065, approved July 27, 2005, there is an unmanned wireless telecommunication facility with a single stealth monopole, designed antenna with a height of 45 feet serving the Sprint PCS telecommunication network. This facility occupies a 1,000 square foot fenced area (25' by 40') and it includes seven (7) cabinets for the necessary supporting equipment, all within the fenced area.

The property is zoned A1 “General Agricultural” District, which allows communication transmitting, reception or relay facilities as principal uses permitted, subject to the approval of a site development permit (7-9-55.3). In addition, the Orange County Zoning Code (Section 7-9-129.2) allows antennas to exceed the district building height of 35 feet by 10 additional feet. The existing antenna meets this regulation precisely, excluding any pine tree branches needed to conceal the antenna itself.

The site is in a remote location of the County within the Cleveland National Forest. The site is located in a rural setting very near Orange County’s southeast border with the County of Riverside. The property is 26 acres, mostly undeveloped, with the exception of a single family residence occupied by the property owner, Mr. Roger Delong. The antenna is located very near the edge of the property against a hillside, between a garage and the slope. The antenna is unlikely to impact adjacent properties, which are also zoned A1 and mostly undeveloped, as the antenna itself will be tucked into this hillside. Should the antenna be visible from surrounding properties, the monopole will be masked by its pine tree appearance.

The site has an Open Space land use designation in the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The antenna project is consistent with this designation, which provides for opportunities for low-intensity, high technology facilities which do not require a commitment of significant infrastructure. Wireless telecommunications facilities are based on technical requirements, which include service area, geographical elevations, alignment with neighboring sites and customer demand components. The site’s characteristics meet all these requirements, thus enabling effective wireless telecommunication service in the area.

However, the Ortega Highway is a designated Viewscape Corridor in the Master Plan of Arterial Highways and therefore, the appearance of the antenna is critical in preserving the natural rural qualities of the corridor. The monopine antenna addresses these aesthetic concerns as it is designed to mimic a mature pine tree. In addition, the monopine has two live pine trees planted in close proximity to create the impression of a natural grove of trees commonly found in the region.

II. REFERENCE

County of Orange Zoning Code Sections 7-9-150 “Discretionary Permits and Procedures”; Sections 7-9-55.3 of the applicable A1 “General Agriculture” District regulations; and Section 7-9-129.2 (antenna height limits).

III. ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The proposed project is Categorically Exempt (Class 3 - installation of small new equipment in a small structure) from CEQA per Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines.

IV. CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the subject proposal has been Conditionally Approved as noted below.

Timothy Neely, Director
RDMD, Planning and Development Services Department

By: signature on file
Charles M. Shoemaker, Chief
RDMD, Site Planning Section

Date: 10/26/2005

V. APPEAL PROCEDURE

Any interested person may appeal the decision of the Director, Planning and Development Services Department on this permit to the Orange County Planning Commission within 15 calendar days of the decision upon submittal of the required document and a filing fee of \$760.00 filed at the Development Processing Center, 300 N. Flower Street, Santa Ana.

VI. APPENDICES

- A. Findings for Planning Application PA05-0048
- B. Conditions of Approval for Planning Application PA05-0048