

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

SAN DIEGO AREA
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Filed: October 2, 2000
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180th Day: March 31, 2001
Staff: BP-SD
Staff Report: October 24, 2000
Hearing Date: November 13-17, 2000

REGULAR CALENDAR
STAFF REPORT AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION

Application No.: 6-00-58

Applicant: AT&T Wireless Services/
Wireless Facilities Inc.

Agent: Doug Munson

Description: Installation of an unmanned telecommunications facility to include a three-sector directional antenna system housed within a new 38-foot high light standard pole within a parking area. Also proposed are radio and power cabinets at the base of the pole, which will be screened by a new masonry wall.

Site: At the Las Plugs Road entrance to Camp Pendleton Marine Base, Camp Pendleton, San Diego County

Substantive File Documents: Certified San Diego County Local Coastal Program (LCP); Coastal Development Permit Nos. 6-97-160 and 6-98-74

STAFF NOTES:

Summary of Staff's Preliminary Recommendation: Staff is recommending approval of the proposed communications facility. Adverse impacts to visual resources is the primary issue associated with this project. In this case staff believes potential impacts to the public viewshed along Interstate 5 (I-5) in the Camp Pendleton area have been addressed as designed by the applicant and as required in the attached special conditions. The project will be located on the east side of I-5 so no public view blockage issues arise with respect to ocean views. In addition, the proposed monopole has been designed to double as a light standard within an existing parking lot, thus minimizing its visibility from I-5. Special Conditions require the applicant to agree to co-locate any future antennae at the project site if technologically feasible, and to submit a written agreement to remove the proposed facilities and restore the site to its former condition should technology changes render the facility no longer viable or necessary in the future. With these conditions all potential visual impacts associated with the proposed development will be reduced to the maximum extent feasible.

I. PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends the Commission adopt the following resolution:

MOTION: *I move that the Commission approve Coastal Development Permit No. 6-00-058 pursuant to the staff recommendation.*

STAFF RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL:

Staff recommends a YES vote. Passage of this motion will result in approval of the permit as conditioned and adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PERMIT:

The Commission hereby approves a coastal development permit for the proposed development and adopts the findings set forth below on grounds that the development as conditioned will be in conformity with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3. Approval of the permit complies with the California Environmental Quality Act because either 1) feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives have been incorporated to substantially lessen any significant adverse effects of the development on the environment, or 2) there are no further feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.

II. Standard Conditions.

See attached page.

III. Special Conditions.

The permit is subject to the following conditions:

1. Co-Location of Future Antennae. PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall agree in writing to cooperate with other communication companies in co-locating additional antennae and/or equipment on the project site in the future, providing such shared use does not impair the operation of the approved facility. Upon the Commission's request, the permittee shall provide an independently prepared technical analysis to substantiate the existence of any practical technical prohibitions against the operation of a co-use facility.

2. Future Redesign. PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall agree in writing that where future

technological advances would allow for reduced visual impacts resulting from the proposed telecommunication facility, the applicant agrees to make those modifications which would reduce the visual impact of the proposed facility. In addition, if in the future the facility is no longer needed, the applicant agrees to abandon the facility and be responsible for removal of all permanent structures, and restoration of the site as needed to re-establish the area consistent with the character of the surrounding vegetation. Before performing any work in response to the requirements of this condition, the applicant shall contact the Executive Director of the California Coastal Commission to determine if an amendment to this coastal development permit is necessary.

IV. Findings and Declarations.

The Commission finds and declares as follows:

1. Project Description. Proposed is the installation of a three sector directional antenna system wireless communication facility with related radio and power cabinets. The antennas will be housed within a new 38-foot high light standard at the parking area adjacent to the guardhouse. The radio and power cabinets will be located near the existing guardhouse and will be screened by a new masonry wall built to match the design of the guardhouse.

The site is located at the Las Pulgas Road entry into Camp Pendleton, on the east side of Interstate 5. Existing at the site is a two way paved access road at the entry gate. There is a one-story guardhouse approximately 250 sq.ft. in area. Just east of the guardhouse is an improved parking area. The parking area is lit with two light standards at either end approximately 30 feet in height; one of which will be replaced with the proposed monopole.

The proposed installation consists of a 240 sq.ft. equipment enclosure constructed of masonry block 8-feet in height matching the block wall construction of the existing guardhouse. The antennas are proposed within a 13-inch diameter pole, 38-feet in height that will include a light fixture at 26-feet to match the existing light standard at the other side of the parking area.

Because there is no certified LCP for this area, the standard of review for this development is Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

2. Visual Resources. Section 30251 of the Coastal Act is applicable and states, in part:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas...

The project site is visible from I-5 which is a major public access route and is designated in the previously certified San Diego County land use plan as a Scenic Corridor. As such, installation of the proposed wireless communication facility could result in adverse visual impacts as viewed from I-5. However, the proposed facility is located on the east side of I-5; therefore, ocean views from I-5 would not be adversely impacted by the proposed development. In response to this concern, the applicant has submitted an alternatives analysis of other potential locations for the subject facilities. According to the applicant, the project site was chosen as the preferred location to fill a gap in their communication network for the I-5 corridor in the Camp Pendleton area.

The applicant indicates that when selecting a site, four disciplines are involved: radio frequency engineering, site acquisition or leasing, zoning and construction. First, the radio frequency team designs a cell configuration within a given area. Taking into account topography, existing buildings and landscaping, they zero in to a particular design and footprint. This footprint dictates certain areas as optimum for locating a telecommunications facility. According to the applicant, each site is chosen with many specific criteria including height in relationship to desired coverage, adjacent topographical impacts, surrounding structures, surrounding landscape and relationship to adjacent antenna sites. Height of the antennas plays a very different role in a digital system than the early analog systems. Historically, high sites with a large area of service were preferred but as the technology and popularity of mobile phones increased the number of sites to handle the capacity increased as well as the desire to cover a smaller area per site. Each site has a finite capacity; the greater area of coverage means the greater potential number of subscriber use, therefore reaching capacity sooner than if the site coverage area were limited to a smaller footprint. Hence, the higher the site, the greater potential to cover a greater area. According to the applicant, the adjacent topography poses a specific impact to the distance a signal will travel and the strength in which it will travel. Hills and mountains can channel a signal or interrupt its potential. The type of groundcover also participates in the ability or inability for a signal to travel with strength. Any surrounding structures can impact the signal and its strength. Buildings tend to reflect the signal in a direction that causes the original signal to misshape or collide with itself thus creating a negative impact on the signal. Buildings also absorb the signal depending upon the exterior material, which causes the signal to lose strength and dissipate.

Once this process is complete the leasing agent reviews the area for interested landlords and sites that meet the radio frequency criteria. The first approach is to find an existing carrier and determine if they will entertain a co-location concept. In this case the applicant indicates there are four potential landlords in this area: Caltrans, the railroad, the Power Company and Camp Pendleton.

Other than the marine base, according to the applicant there are no existing co-locatable installations with other carriers within the needed area to be serviced. CalTrans would not lease area in their right of way unless access is provided from a source outside of the right-of-way. There is no such access existing in this area at this time. The applicant indicates the railroad right-of-way would have been acceptable except the railroad could not provide access easements to the power lines that could only be accessed across Camp Pendleton property. The Power Company expressed no desire to enter into a lease indicating it has generally become an intrusion into their ability to maintain their lines. According to the applicant, Camp Pendleton became the only viable solution. The military facility's environmental review section required the project take existing views and aesthetics into consideration.

Surrounding landscape causes problems of its own. Depending on the landscape material and its moisture content the signal can be either absorbed or altered in a negative way. Vertical landscape such as trees or high shrubs cause the greatest impact. According to the applicant, landscaping needs to be maintained at a distance that is conducive to the ability of the signal to propagate.

The applicant states that based on the above criteria, the proposed site was selected as best meeting their requirements, while at the same time taking into account environmental concerns such as views, slopes and native vegetation. Regarding visual impacts, while the proposed monopole will be approximately 38 feet high, the site is buffered from I-5 by a raised railroad right-of-way that is approximately 20-feet in height. The antennas will be housed on a new light standard at the parking area adjacent to the guardhouse and as such the mast which contains the antennas will be disguised as a light from the parking lot. The only portion of the installation that would be viewed from either northbound or southbound traffic on I-5 will be the upper 6-feet of the pole. The radio and power cabinets will be located near the guardhouse and will be screened by a new masonry wall built to match the design of the guardhouse.

Additionally, the equipment area has been designed to match the aesthetics of the existing guardhouse and would be viewed as an accessory use to the general public. Additionally, landscaping will be provided (24-inch box toyons) around the perimeter of the equipment enclosure to screen it from public views. Finally, because of the small width of the pole and the distance to I-5 there should be no adverse impact on any view corridor along I-5.

While the proposed facility will not have significant adverse impacts on the visual quality of the area, the Commission is concerned that cumulatively, installation of additional similar projects in the area could have adverse impacts on visual resources. As demand for wireless communication facilities increases, it is likely that other service providers will be interested in placing additional structures, antennae and equipment in the project area, and the Commission is concerned that cumulatively, installation of additional similar projects in the area could have adverse impacts on visual resources. As such, Special Conditions #1 and #2 have been attached. Special Condition #1 requires that the applicant submit a written statement agreeing to cooperate with other communication facilities in co-locating additional antenna on the proposed development, unless the applicant can demonstrate a substantial technical conflict to doing so. Special Condition #2 requires the applicant to submit a written statement agreeing to remove the structures and restore this site in the future should technological advances make this facility obsolete. In this way, it can be assured that the proliferation of these types of facilities can be limited to appropriate locations, and that the area will not be littered with outdated and obsolete facilities in the future.

In summary, while the proposed facility will extend 38-feet high, it will not result in public view blockage, will only be partially visible from I-5 and will be disguised as a light pole within an existing improved parking lot. Therefore, the Commission finds that as conditioned, impacts to scenic coastal resources have been reduced to the maximum extent feasible, consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act.

3. Local Coastal Planning. Section 30604 (a) also requires that a coastal development permit shall be issued only if the Commission finds that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a Local Coastal Program (LCP) in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. In this case, such a finding can be made.

The subject site is located on the Camp Pendleton Marine Base, a federally owned and operated military facility used by the United States Marine Corps and located in an unincorporated area of the County of San Diego which is not subject to local permit review by the County. In addition, although the project is subject to the Commission's Federal Consistency Review Process, the Commission's act of granting a coastal development permit to the applicant functions under the California Coastal Management Program as the equivalent of a concurrence under the Coastal Zone Management Act. Because there is no certified LCP for this area, the standard of review for this development is Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. Based on the above discussion, the Commission finds that the proposed development, as conditioned, is consistent with all applicable Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act and no adverse impacts to coastal resources are anticipated.

4. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 13096 of the California Code of Regulations requires Commission approval of a coastal development permit to be supported by a finding showing the permit to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect which the activity may have on the environment.

As discussed herein, the proposed project, as conditioned, will not cause significant adverse impacts to the environment. There are no feasible alternatives or mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the proposed activity may have on the environment. Therefore, the Commission finds the proposed project, as conditioned, is the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative and can be found consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Act to conform to CEQA.

STANDARD CONDITIONS:

1. Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment. The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.
2. Expiration. If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date on which the Commission voted on the application. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.
3. Interpretation. Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.

4. Assignment. The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.
5. Terms and Conditions Run with the Land. These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the permittee to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

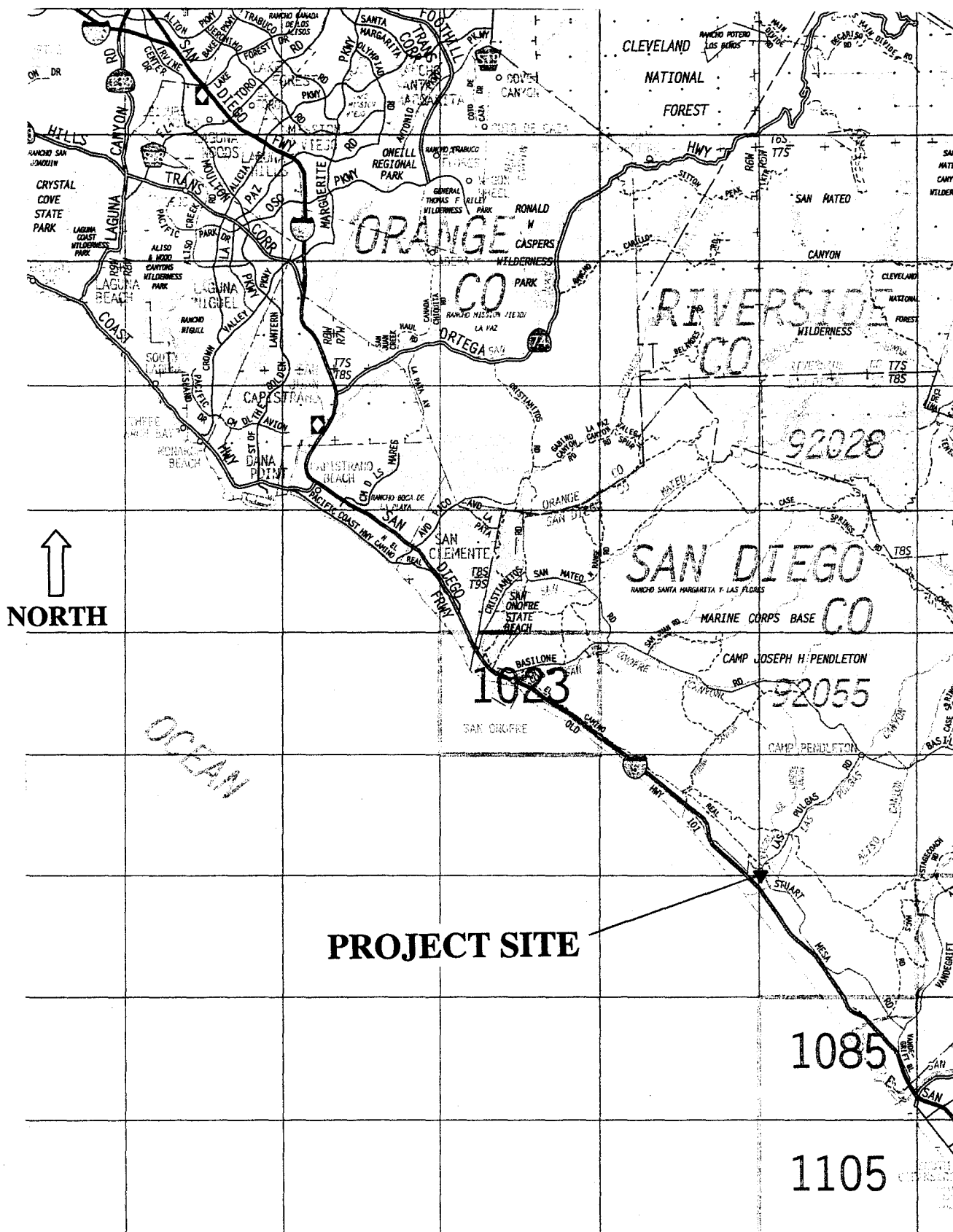
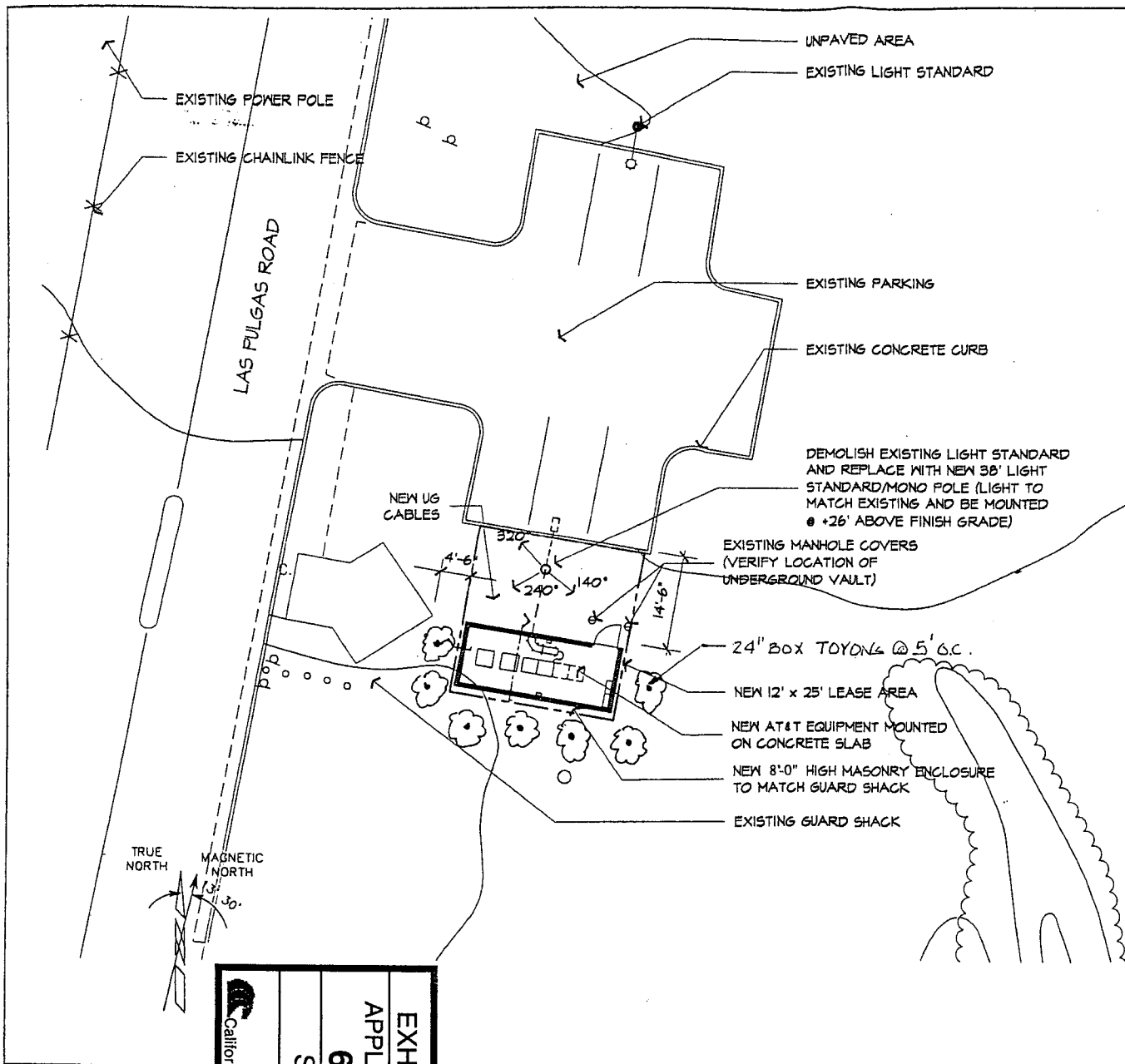


EXHIBIT NO. 1
APPLICATION NO.
6-00-58
Location Map



PROJECT SUMMARY

SITE: LAS PULGAS

SITE ADDRESS: LAS PULGAS ROAD GATE

COORDINATES: LAT: 33° 18' 13.9" LON: 117° 27' 45.2"

RAD CENTER: 30'-0" & 35'-0" ABOVE FINISH GRADE

SCOPE OF PROJECT: INSTALLATION OF A RADIO BASE STATION (RBS) ON A NEW CONCRETE SLAB IN A 8'-0" HIGH MASONRY ENCLOSURE (TO MATCH EXISTING GUARD SHACK) LOCATED ON GRADE ON SOUTH SIDE OF EXISTING PARKING LOT.

DEMOLISH EXISTING LIGHT STANDARD AND REPLACE WITH INSTALLATION OF THREE (3) ANTENNA ARRAYS CONCEALED IN THE TOP 10'-0" OF A NEW LIGHT STANDARD / MONOPOLE. 3 ARRAYS / 1 ANTENNA PER ARRAY / 3 ANTENNAS TOTAL.

COAXIAL CABLE RUNS FROM RBS TO ANTENNAS

A NEW TELEPHONE SERVICE RUN TO RBS

A NEW 120v/208v 3ph 4w 200A ELECTRICAL SERVICE TO RBS

NEW MANUAL TRANSFER SWITCH AND GENERATOR PLUG

LEASE AREA IS APPROXIMATELY 250 SQUARE FEET

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

A PORTION OF RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA Y LAS FLORES IN THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA AS DESCRIBED IN PATENT FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO PIO PICO & ANDREA PICO, DATED MARCH 28, 1879, RECORDED IN BOOK 7, P. 18, ET SEQ. OF PATENTS IN THE OFFICE OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY RECORDER MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT THE NORTHEASTERLY END OF THE SOUTHEASTERLY BOUNDARY LINE OF SAID PATENT BEING ALSO KNOWN AS HORIZONTAL CONTROL POINT "MORRO" HAVING COORDINATES NORTHING = 2054329.98 AND EASTING = 6250077.89; THENCE SOUTH 88°04'03" WEST 58,945.68 FT. TO THE TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING, SAID TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING HAVING COORDINATES NORTHING = 2056317.70 & EASTING = 6191165.74; THENCE NORTH 79°54'30" WEST 25.00 FT.; THENCE SOUTH 10°05'30" WEST 12.00 FT.; THENCE SOUTH 79°54'30" EAST 25.00 FT.; THENCE NORTH 10°05'30" EAST 12.00 FT. TO THE TRUE POINT OF BEGINNING.

CONTAINING 300 SQUARE FEET OR 0.00689 ACRES

ZD's

03/20/2000

DRAWN BY: PSN

CCN#: 043

REVISIONS

DATE	DESCRIPTION

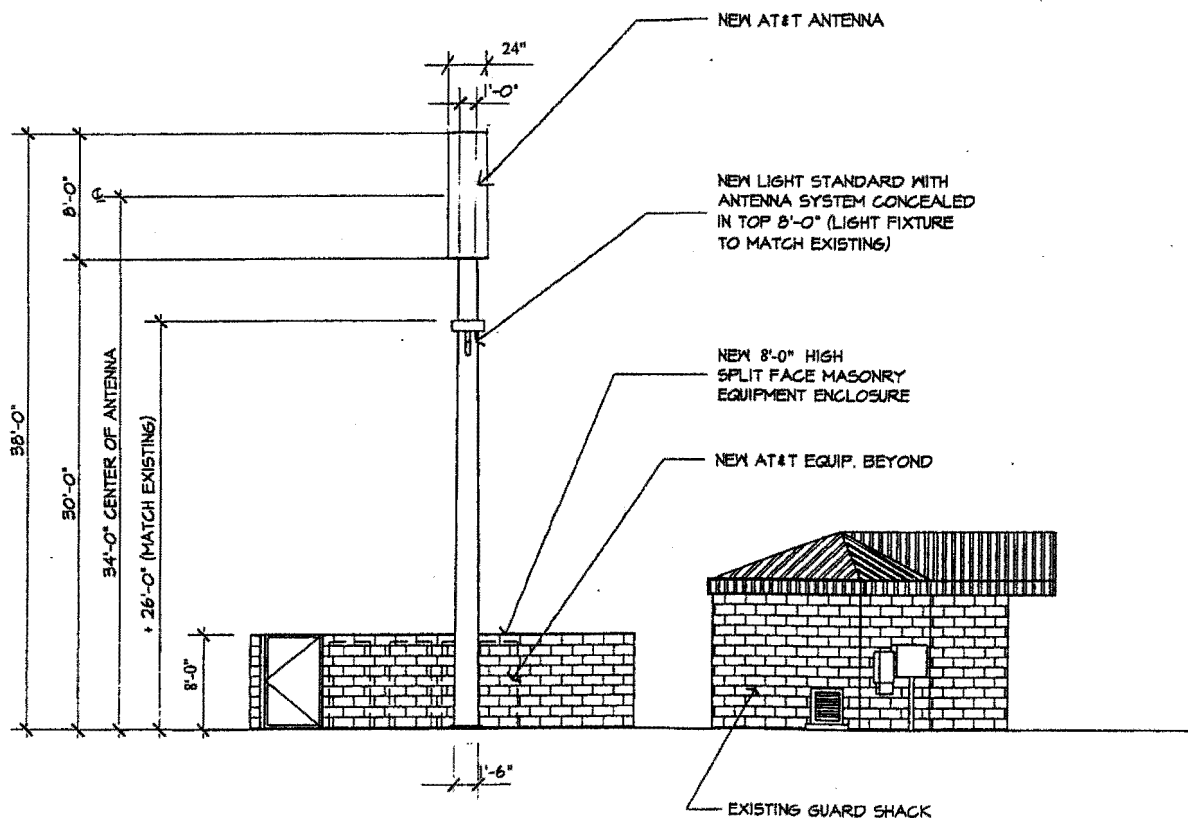


CAMP
PENDLETON
LAS PULGAS
(LAS PULGAS ROAD GATE)
JOB# SD-043c

SITE/ROOF
PLAN

A-1

EXHIBIT NO. 2
APPLICATION NO.
6-00-58
Site Plan
California Coastal Commission



SOUTH ELEVATION

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

ZD's

03/20/2000

DRAWN BY: PSN

CCN#: 043

REVISIONS

DATE DESCRIPTION



CAMP
PENDLETON
LAS PULGAS
(LAS PULGAS ROAD GATE)
JOB# SD-043c

ELEVATION

A-3

EXHIBIT NO. 3

APPLICATION NO.

6-00-58

Elevation

California Coastal Commission