

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

SAN DIEGO AREA
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 SAN DIEGO, CA 92108-4402
 767-2370

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REGULAR CALENDAR
STAFF REPORT AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION

Application No.: 6-00-60

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

Agent: Doug Munson

Description: Installation of a three sector directional antenna system with related radio and power cabinets. The antennas will be mounted to a new 50' high monopole. The monopole is proposed as a simulated pine tree design (monopine) to blend it with the existing mature trees in the project area. The cabinets will be located at the base of the cabinets inside a new masonry wall enclosure.

Site: Along Pate Road, on the east side of Interstate 5, just south of the Orange County line, Camp Pendleton Marine Base, San Diego County.

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 has concluded that 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 as a simulated pine tree within an existing group of mature trees and landscaping, thus minimizing its visibility from I-5. Special Conditions require final construction plans, the applicant to agree to co-locate any future antennae at the project site if technologically feasible and submittal of 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 potential visual impacts associated with the proposed development will be reduced to the maximum extent feasible.

Substantive File Documents: Certified San Diego County Local Coastal Program
(LCP); Coastal Development Permit Nos. 6-97-160, 6-98-74, and 6-00-57

I. PRELIMINARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends the Commission adopt the following resolution:

MOTION: *I move that the Commission approve Coastal Development Permit No. 6-00-060 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.

3. Final Plans. PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall submit to the Executive Director for review and written approval, final plans for the proposed monopine facility that have been approved by the Camp Pendleton Marine Base and are in substantial conformance with the site plan prepared by Booth and Suarez Architecture, Commission date stamped received 1/19/2001 submitted with this application.

The permittee shall undertake development in accordance with the approved plans. Any proposed changes to the approved plans shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the plans shall occur without a Coastal Commission approved amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.

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 with related radio and power cabinets. The antennas will be mounted to a new 50' high monopole designed as a simulated pine tree design (monopine) to blend it with the existing mature trees in the project area. Proposed are three arrays of antennas with four antennas in each array. The proposal also includes a 320 sq.ft. equipment enclosure at the base of the pole inside a new masonry wall enclosure.

The site is located atop a hillside near Pate Road at the north end of Camp Pendleton, on the east side of Interstate 5. Existing at the site is a 45- foot tall siren pole and equipment installation owned by PG&E. The site is accessed by a dirt road which runs off an existing parking area adjacent to Pate Road.

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...

Because of its hilltop location, 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.

The applicant has submitted a general overview of the considerations involved in siting a wireless facility. When selecting a potential 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. 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, San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) and Camp Pendleton.

According to the applicant, 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.

In addition, 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 Pacific Ocean also plays a large role in affecting the quality of the signal (it can distort the signal). Thus, all these factors must be considered when determining a potential site location.

Regarding the proposed project, the applicant states the proposed facility is necessary to improve ATT cellular coverage along I-5. The proposed siting complements other existing and proposed AT&T facilities located to the north in Orange County, to the east on Camp Pendleton and to an existing facility to the south at the "Weigh Station". According to the applicant, each of these site locations is integral not only for coverage along the Interstate 5 corridor but also as microwave links to connect the telco apparatus necessary for the system to function.

With respect to siting the facility, according to the applicant, the subject site was originally designed to be nearer the freeway possibly in the CalTrans right-of-way or the railroad right-of way. However, AT&T determined that view issues would be a concern and the proposal was revised to site the facility away from the ocean on the east side of I-5.

According to the applicant, if this site were not approved, AT&T would be forced to locate at least two, possibly more, sites as substitution for the same coverage. Because of the nature of the terrain, the replacement projects would have pole height requirements of at least 50' to provide for the necessary rad centers for the microwave dishes, which must be placed due to lack of telco landline service in the area. The Fresnell Zone is the space above the existing terrain that must be avoided in setting microwave signals because of the characteristics of atmospheric conditions from the earth to a certain height above the earth. In addition to that prescribing a minimum elevation for the microwave dishes, the transmitting and receiving antennas would have to be placed at a height to accommodate the distance to it's neighbor sites and allow for the variable terrain. Therefore, the result would likely be more sites at elevations not much lower than the proposed site.

The AT&T location is within an area that has previously been disturbed by the installation of a siren warning system for the nearby nuclear power plant. According to the applicant the proposed project is restricted from relocating south due to the reduction in elevation of the terrain as well as the existing coastal sage scrub. Similarly, the project is precluded from moving further to the north because of the existing residential development as well as the westerly hillside coverage also being coastal sage scrub. Moving to the east is also not feasible because an existing residential area atop a knoll higher than the project site would interfere with the signal.

Additionally, the project site has existing electrical power and access in place. As such there will be minimal environmental impact to the adjacent area. The applicant states that other potential sites are not be served by power or are heavily covered in coastal sage

scrub. The lack of power services at such sites would require major road and infrastructure improvements to bring new services at a great impact to existing coastal sage scrub in the project area. The subject site is proposed in an existing disturbed area. There would be no impact to the surrounding coastal sage habitat at the project site.

In addition, the proposed facility would provide cellular coverage for military personnel at Camp Pendleton. Camp Pendleton has land use constraints associated with the I-5 corridor due to flight paths, ordnance zones and training operations which further limit possible siting locations.

Moreover, the applicant contends the site is necessary for public safety as it provides coverage to not only the I-5 traffic, but to emergency services which are contracted by the Federal government to respond to emergencies not on the base, but located within base jurisdiction. The FCC mandates that coverage be continuous within a network plan.

Regarding visual impact concerns, according to the applicant, this site has been modified to be a "monopine" from the original monopole design. As redesigned, the proposed antenna system will blend in better with the surrounding environment because the existing landscape has existing mature eucalyptus trees. According to the applicant low-growing and environmentally sensitive coastal sage populates surrounding countryside. The introduction of a pole or tree in those locations would have greater visibility. Additionally the applicant notes there are numerous SDG&E high-tension transmission towers, and other base elements that adversely visually impact the landscape.

The applicant contends the proposed site is the best site along this portion of the I-5 corridor because it has existing mature landscaping in the form of numerous eucalyptus trees that will provide a visual buffer for the equipment building as well as the simulated pine tree. The site is near a grove of mature trees providing an appropriate backdrop so as to eliminate silhouetting of the facility.

The applicant concludes that the alternatives analysis has resulted in an proposed location that avoids the potential for significant visual impacts. By proposing a pine tree design to blend in with the existing mature landscaping and by placing the facility among existing mature landscaping, aesthetic impacts on the coastal view corridor have been addressed.

Based on the above described alternatives analysis, the Commission finds that the proposed project site is the least environmentally damaging location. Special Condition #3 requires final plans that indicate the proposed monopole will be designed as a simulated pine tree. While the monopine will be partially visible from I-5, the project site will meet the goals of the applicant while minimizing impacts on visual resources. Additionally, as designed as a simulated pine tree amongst several other trees, the project's visual appearance will be minimized. Therefore, the Commission finds the impacts to scenic coastal resources have been reduced to the maximum extent feasible, consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act.

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 50-feet high, it will not result in public view blockage and will be disguised as a pine tree amongst other trees. 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.

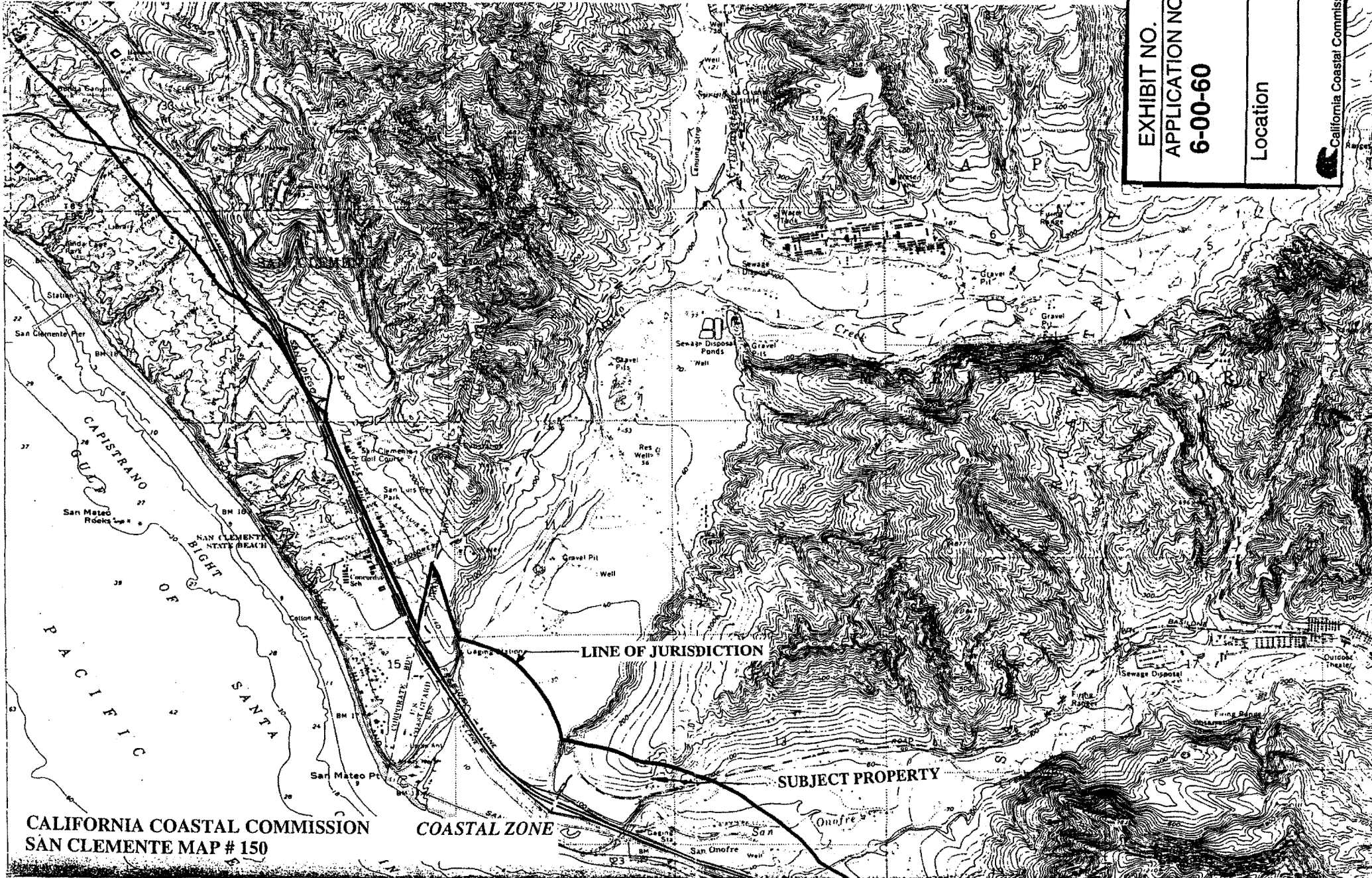
As discussed herein, the proposed project, as conditioned, will not cause significant adverse impacts to the environment. There are no feasible alternatives or mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the proposed activity may have on the environment. 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.
APPLICATION NO.
6-00-60
Location

California Coastal Commission



CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION
 SAN CLEMENTE MAP # 150

COASTAL ZONE

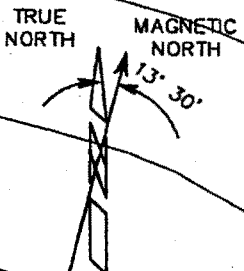
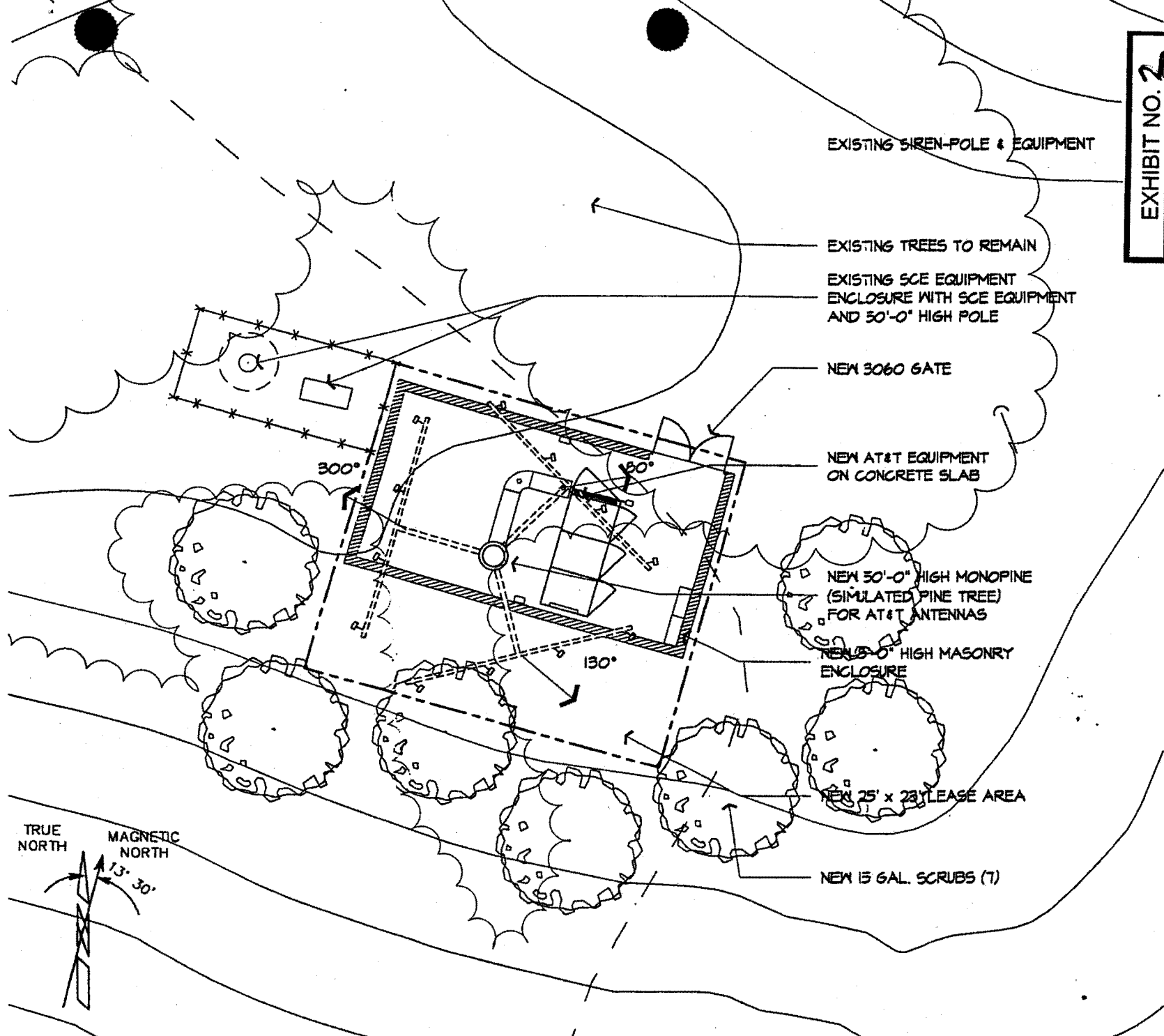
SUBJECT PROPERTY

LINE OF JURISDICTION

CAPISTRANO
 QUAY
 OF
 PACIFIC
 SANTA

San Clemente
 Sewage Disposal
 Outdoor Theater
 Ewing Ponds
 San Onofre

EXHIBIT NO. 2
APPLICATION NO. 6-00-60
Site Plan
California Coastal Commission



EXISTING SIREN-POLE & EQUIPMENT

EXISTING TREES TO REMAIN

EXISTING SCE EQUIPMENT ENCLOSURE WITH SCE EQUIPMENT AND 30'-0" HIGH POLE

NEW 3060 GATE

NEW AT&T EQUIPMENT ON CONCRETE SLAB

NEW 30'-0" HIGH MONOPINE (SIMULATED PINE TREE) FOR AT&T ANTENNAS

NEW 6'-0" HIGH MASONRY ENCLOSURE

NEW 25' x 28' LEASE AREA

NEW 15 GAL. SCRUBS (7)

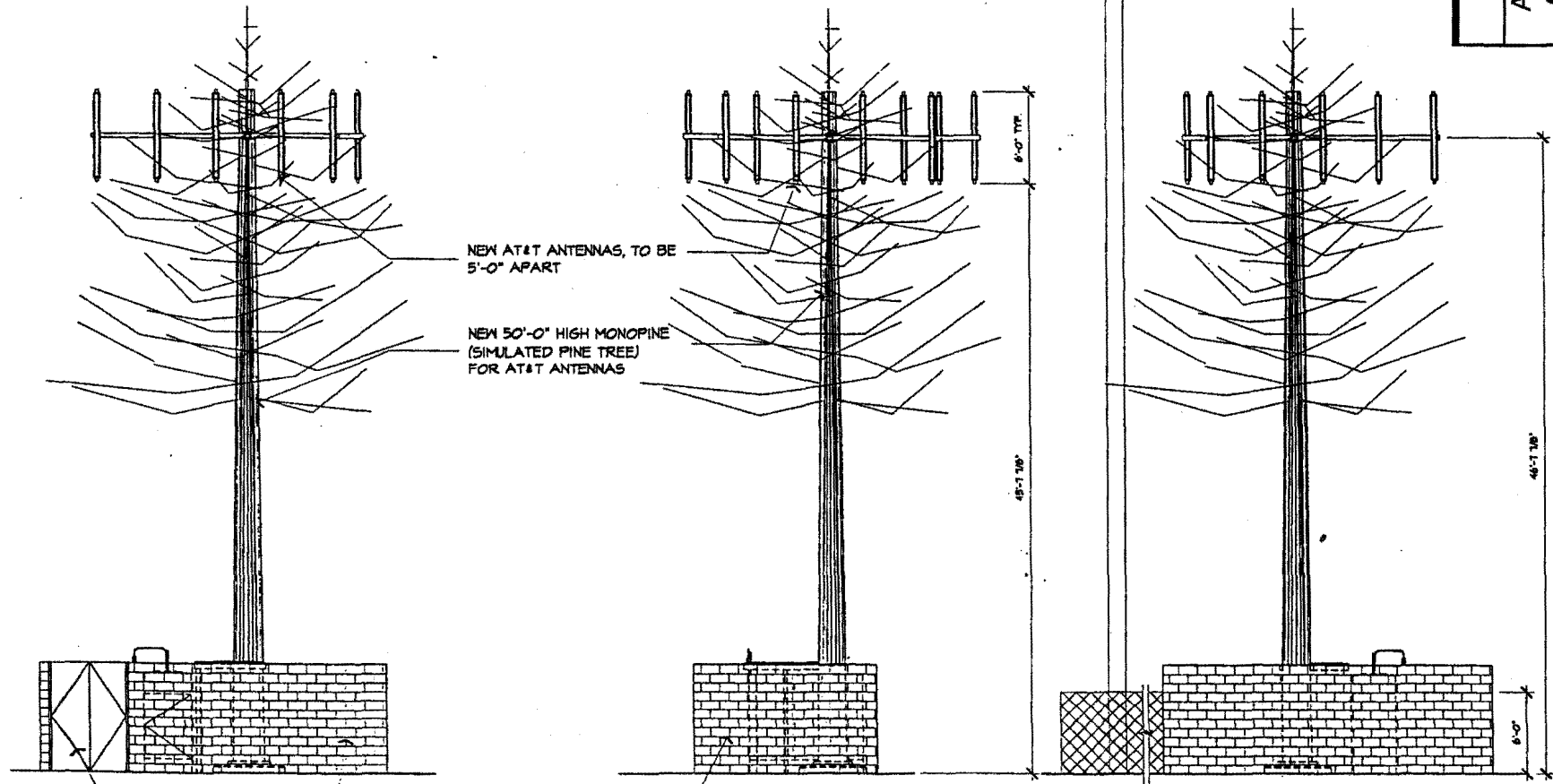
PARTIAL SITE PLAN

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

EXHIBIT NO. 3
APPLICATION NO.
6-00-60

Elevation

California Coastal Commission

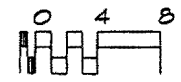


NORTH ELEVATION
 SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

WEST ELEVATION
 SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0" (EAST ELEVATION OPPOSITE)

SOUTH ELEVATION
 SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS
 SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"



CAMP
 PENDELTON
 SCE SIREN POLE
 PATE ROAD
 JOB# SD-141a

EXTERIOR
 ELEVATIONS
 A-3

Proposed 50' Tall Simulated
Pine tree With Antennas



EXHIBIT NO. 4
APPLICATION NO. 6-00-60
Simulated Photo