

Planning Commission Staff Report

January 7, 2010



Project: Franklin High School/Bartholomew Sports Complex
Wireless Communications Facility
Request: Conditional Use Permit
File: **EG-09-042**
Location: 6623 Quail Run Lane (Bartholomew Sports Complex)
APN: 132-0050-001
Planner: Sarah Kirchgessner
App. Accepted: July 4, 2009

Property Owner

Cosumnes Community Services District
 Paul Mewton
 8820 Elk Grove Boulevard
 Elk Grove, CA 95624

Applicant

Verizon Wireless
 Molly Kates
 2785 Mitchell Drive, Ste 9
 Walnut Creek, CA 94598

Agent

On Air. LLC
 Alan Heine
 4305 Hensley Circle
 El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve the Conditional Use Permit for the project (EG-09-042), subject to the attached findings and conditions of approval contained in the January 7, 2010 staff report.

Project Description

The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to construct and operate a wireless communications facility in the Bartholomew Sports Complex, a public park. The antennas will be located on a 100-foot tall light stanchion with six (6) panel antennas. The existing 80-foot light stanchion will be replaced by a 100-foot stanchion. The additional twenty (20) feet in height will accommodate and support the six (6) panel antennas. The installation will include a 12-foot x 30-foot radio equipment shelter that houses a 60KW diesel generator. The antennas will be located at two antenna locations, one antenna centerline will be at 96-feet and the second antenna centerline will be at 86-feet. The project also includes a height exception to exceed the Zoning Code height limit in the RD-5 zone by 45 feet.

Setting

The project site is located on the south side of Whitelock Parkway in the Bartholomew Sports Complex in the East Franklin Specific Plan Area. The Verizon lease area is located in the northwestern portion of the park, adjacent to a baseball diamond. The project site is bordered by single family residential uses to the south and east, Whitelock Parkway to the north, and Franklin High School to the west. Table 1 details the project's and adjacent properties' current Zoning and General Plan designations and uses.

Table 1. Land Uses and Designations

	Existing Use	General Plan	Zoning
Subject Site	Park/Sports Complex	Public Park	RD-5
North	Single-family housing	Low Density Residential	RD-4
South	Single-family housing	Low Density Residential	RD-5
East	Single-family housing	Low Density Residential	RD-7
West	School	Public Schools	RD-5

Figure 1. Location Map

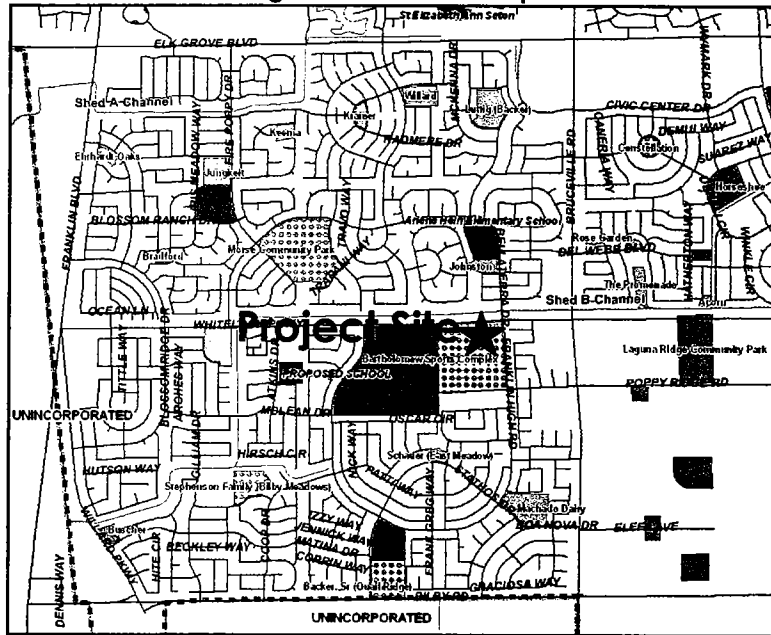


Figure 2. Zoning Map/Aerial



Figure 3. Site Plan

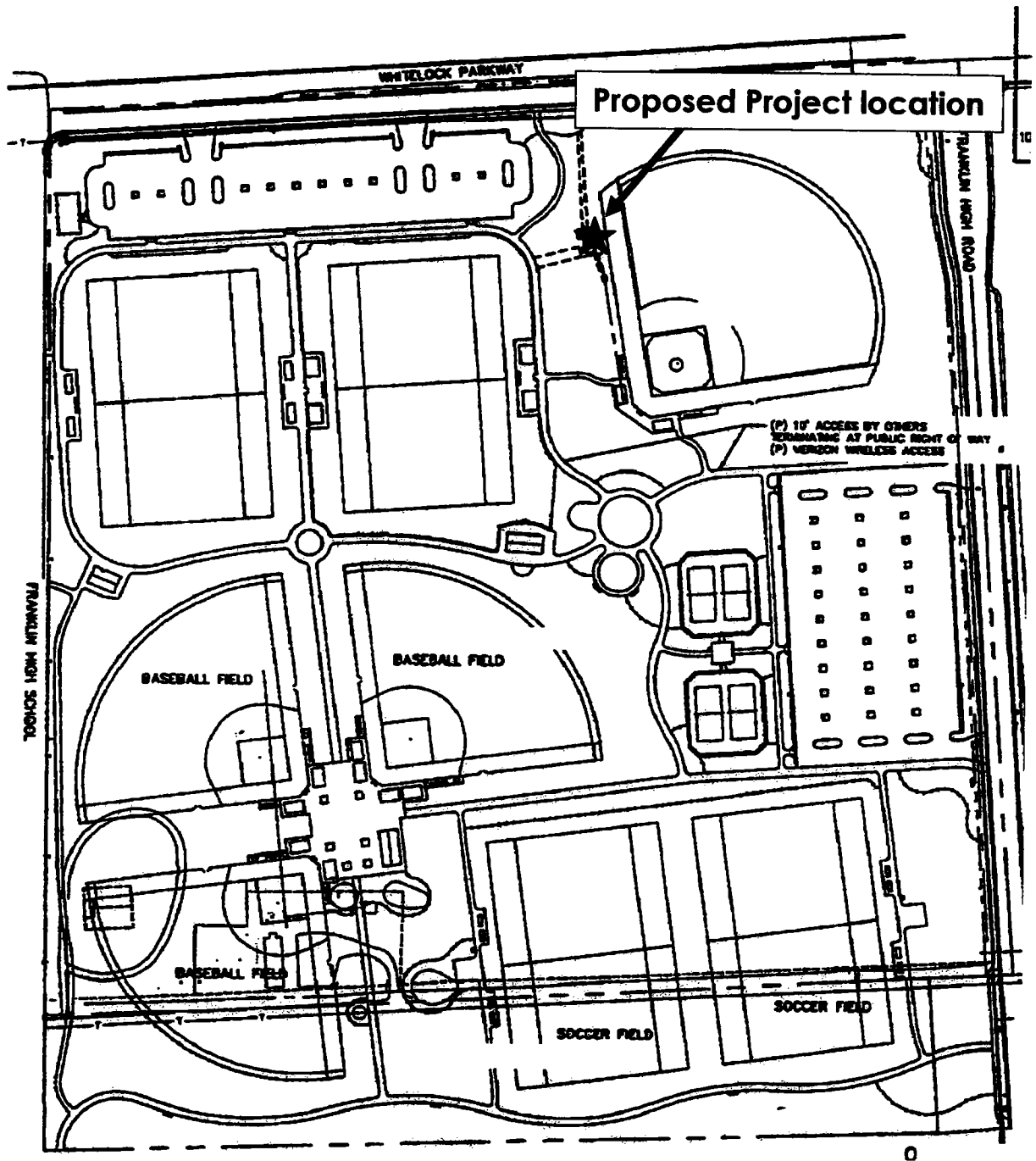
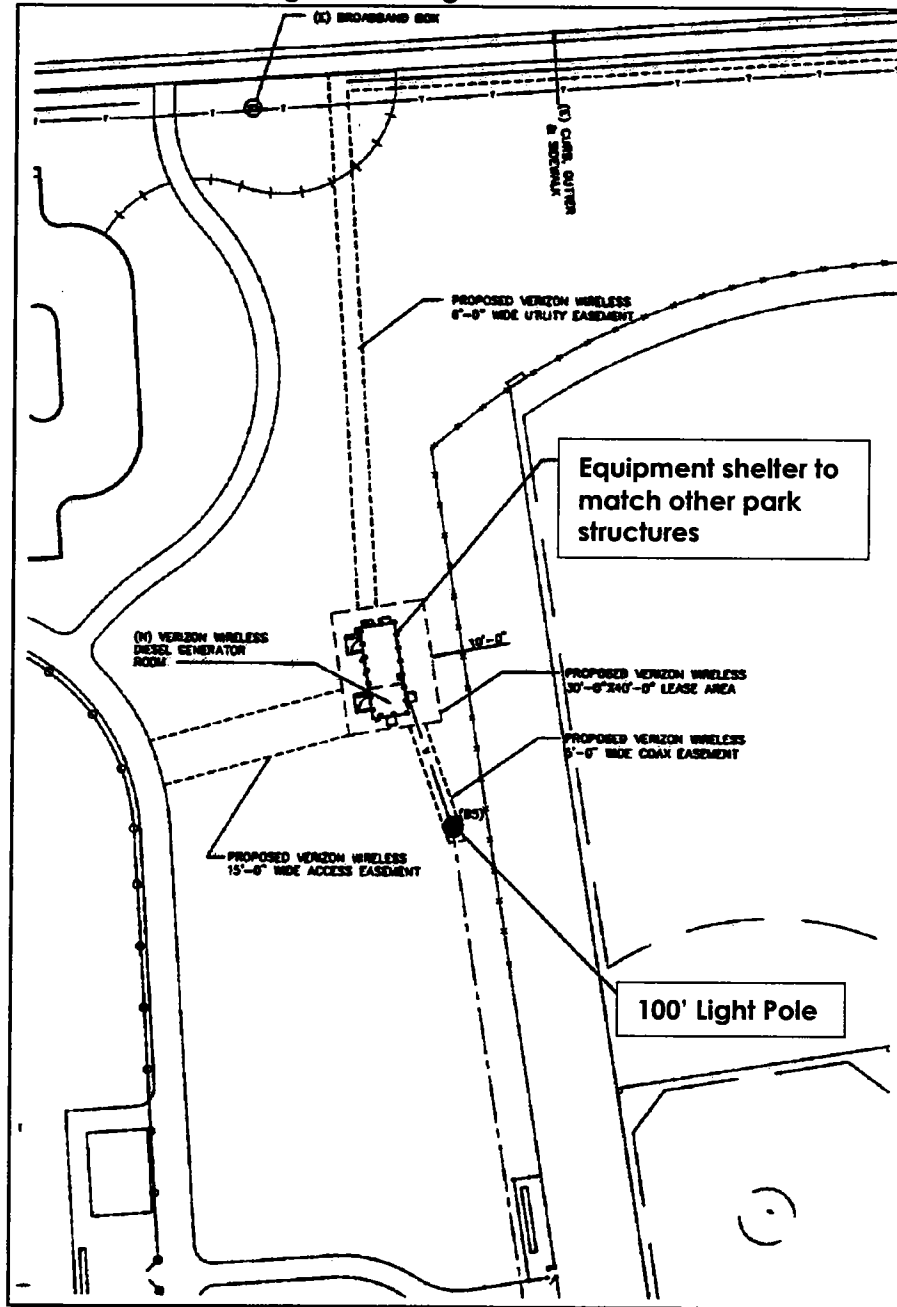


Figure 4. Enlarged Site Plan



Analysis

Conditional Use Permit

The purpose of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is to allow for the individual review of uses that are authorized by the General Plan, but might have project-specific site development features or operating characteristics that need to be evaluated to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas and uses. The Zoning Code conditionally allows wireless facilities within the RD-5 zone subject to the issuance of a CUP. The Planning Commission has discretion to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the CUP application.

The applicant is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to construct and operate a wireless communications facility in a public park. The antennas will be mounted on a 100-foot tall light stanchion and consist of six (6) panels. The new 100-foot tall stanchion will replace the existing 80-foot light stanchion. The proposed wireless facility meets the applicable development standards for site design, safety design, lighting, landscaping, design/finish, advertising, and setbacks (§23.94.050 (3)). However, the wireless facility does not meet the height limit for wireless towers in the RD-5 zone in the Zoning Code (Table 23-94-1) by 45 feet. The project includes a height exception as part of the Conditional Use Permit in conformance with the Zoning Code.

The project is compatible with the surrounding uses and is not expected to result in impacts to the welfare of surrounding residents because the design and location of the wireless facility will reduce the visual impact to the surrounding areas. By utilizing two centerline locations, the antennas can be located close to the pole reducing the visual appearance of the antennas. By installing the antennas on a light stanchion, the visual impact is effectively lessened. Photo simulations were provided by the applicant, which show how the proposed collocation would appear from Visconti Court, from just south of the proposed wireless facility, and Franklin High Road (Attachment C).

Table 2: Conformity with Development Standards

	Zoning Code Requirement	Proposed Project	Complies?
Site Design	Screening, camouflage, compatible with existing architectural elements, landscape elements and other site characteristics.	The antennas will be located on a 100-foot tall light stanchion with six (6) panel antennas designed to be compatible with the other lights in the park.	Yes
Safety Design	Resistant to and minimize opportunities for unauthorized access, climbing, vandalism, graffiti	The equipment will be located inside an enclosed building.	Yes
Location	Setbacks from abutting street right of way shall be 100' Setbacks from all other property lines shall be 20'	North- over 150' (nearest ROW) South- over 1,000' (property line) East- over 200' (property line) West- over 300' (property line)	Yes
Height Limit	Height limit in RD-5 zone is 55'	Height- 100'	No, unless approval of exception to height standards is granted as

			described below.
Lighting	Minimum tower lighting and a manually operated or motion detector controlled light above the equipment cabinet. The light shall remain off except when personnel are present at night.	The light on the equipment shall be turned off during the day and only on at night when personnel are present at the site.	Conditioned
Landscape	When appropriate, facilities shall be landscaped so as to maintain and enhance the aesthetic quality of the community and generally screen the equipment from public view.	The park has a specified design and landscape already planned. The project has been designed to match the existing structures, which includes minimal landscaping around the buildings.	Yes
Design/Finish	The tower and equipment shall have subdued colors and non-reflective materials that blend with the colors and materials of surrounding areas.	The proposed project includes a 20-foot extension to an existing light stanchion. The 20-foot extension will blend with the existing light pole. The equipment cabinet matches existing structures in the park.	Yes
Advertising	Shall not bear any signs or advertising devices.	Only warning signs will be post on the equipment.	Yes
Parking	Shall be determined by the designated Approving Authority in conjunction with required development permits.	Adequate parking is provided on-site.	Yes

Design

Upon submittal of the application, staff had expressed concern that the proposed design might not meet the intent of the Zoning Code to minimize the visual impact of the proposed wireless facility to the greatest extent possible. In response, the applicant stated that he discussed various options with the CCSD, Musco Lighting, and the RF engineers in order to respond to staff's concerns. Based on these discussions, the applicant determined that the antennas could not be installed below the height of the lights (80') due to coverage loss and interference with the antennas when servicing the lights. Staff also requested that the applicant provide revised photosimulations showing the proposed antennas concealed within a radome structure, a domelike shell used to house the antennas (Figure 6).

Staff analyzed the photosimulations and ultimately determined that the proposed design without a radome best meets the intent of the Zoning Code. Although the cell panels are visible, the exposed antenna panels and open grid structure would appear to be less conspicuous than a solid radome structure. The property owner, the Cosumnes Community Services District (CCSD), has indicated to staff that it is actively soliciting wireless carriers to locate their antennas in its parks and the City should expect to see additional CUP applications. However, Staff will continue to critically analyze each application and explore alternative design options as each setting dictates. Exposed antenna panels may not always be the recommendation of staff.

