

Agenda Report

January 9, 2012

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Department of Public Works
SUBJECT: APPEAL OF PROPOSED WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY AT GRAND AVENUE AND CALIFORNIA BOULEVARD (IE05372C)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that this action is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Section 15268 Ministerial Projects; and
2. Deny the appeal and approve the application to allow the installation of a wireless telecommunications facility on top of an existing wood utility pole at the northeast corner of Grand Avenue and California Boulevard with mitigations.

BACKGROUND:

At the continued public hearing held on December 5, 2011, staff presented Alternative 11 which was an existing utility pole on the north side of California just east of Grand Avenue. Staff determined that the height of the pole and proximity to the adjacent residence deemed Alternative 11 not viable. The appellant provided public comment and noted that a scheduled conference call between certain interested parties and the City's telecommunications consultant was cancelled due to the windstorm. A final request was made for T-Mobile and city staff to evaluate a two-site alternative which would be the combination of Alternatives 2 and 7. City Council recommended that the public hearing be continued for one week in order to conduct the rescheduled conference call and to evaluate the two-site alternative.

On December 7, 2011, city staff conducted a conference call with Mr. Jonathan Kramer (consultant to City staff), Ms. Gretchen Brickson (appellant), Mr. Gabriel Yeung (resident at 558 S. Grand Avenue), and Mr. Dana Ostenson (resident at 555 S. Grand Avenue). City staff and Mr. Kramer fielded questions about Alternative 2, Alternative 7 and the combination of Alternatives 2 and 7 as well as the costs associated with the planning and installation of telecommunications facilities.

Staff Findings:

City staff requested additional coverage maps from T-Mobile to evaluate the two site alternative utilizing the combination of Alternatives 2 and 7. Alternative 7 was re-evaluated with different pole heights and radome dimensions. Attachment A represents the cell coverage provided by a 55 foot replacement streetlight pole that requires a non-standard radome with a diameter of approximately 30 inches. Attachment B represents the cell coverage on a replacement 30 foot streetlight pole with the same standard design as the radome for Grand Avenue and California Boulevard.

T-Mobile provided oral comments at the public hearing on December 5, 2011 stating that it does not have the capital budget allocated toward a second site, and the development of a second site is not in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the remaining coverage gap would not get closed anytime soon.

Based on staff's review concurred by Jonathan Kramer, it was determined that Alternative 2 (existing traffic signal at Orange Grove Boulevard and California Boulevard) would require a larger non-standard radome assembly and larger replacement traffic signal pole even if two antennas were utilized. Therefore, staff recommends that the Grand Avenue and California Boulevard location (a single-site solution) with the following mitigations is the least intrusive means to provide improved cell service in the coverage gap.

Proposed Mitigations at Single-Site Solution at Grand Avenue and California Blvd.:

1. T-Mobile will replace the existing utility pole at their expense with a new pole in the same location installed by Pasadena Water and Power.
2. Rotating and flush mounting the riser assembly and eliminating the global positioning system unit to reduce the visual impact.

In conclusion, staff recommends the City Council deny the appeal and approve the single-site solution at Grand Avenue and California Blvd., which was previously approved by the Public Works Director. However, in the event the City Council decides to uphold the appeal and deny the application for this site, the City Council should identify, with findings, how the application fails to meet one (or more) of the criteria required by the Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC). During prior discussion on this item, the City Council has appeared to focus its discussion on the justification study required by Section 12.22.070 of the PMC; specifically, (1) whether T-Mobile has demonstrated a significant gap in wireless service; and (2) whether T-Mobile has demonstrated that the proposed single-site solution at Grand Avenue and California Blvd. installation is the least intrusive means of serving its coverage gap, or whether there is a two-site solution that serves the gap through lesser intrusive means.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) is the agency responsible for regulating radio frequency (RF) emissions to ensure public safety. As such, the FCC determines the operating parameters and thresholds for use, whereas PMC 12.22 specifies the means in which telecommunications facilities in the public right-of-way may be processed and permitted.

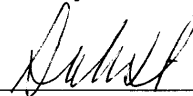
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This project has been determined to be Statutorily Exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act, Administrative Code, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15268, Ministerial Projects. The application for the installation of the antenna and related equipment is a ministerial project. Per Section 15268, ministerial projects are exempt from the requirements of CEQA.

FISCAL IMPACT:


The applicant has submitted a deposit to cover all costs to process the application, including the costs incurred by the City's consultant, Jonathan Kramer. The project is subject to applicable construction permit fees, which is estimated at \$850. The applicant is also responsible for (1) the replacement cost of the existing wood utility pole estimated at \$5,000; and (2) once installed, the actual cost of electric usage of the wireless facility, payable to the Department of Water and Power.

Respectfully submitted,



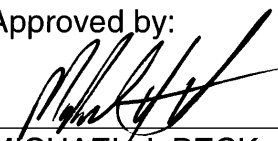
SIOBHAN FOSTER
Director of Public Works

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Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK
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Attachments: