

MONTEREY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING:	October 27, 2004 @ 9:20 AM	AGENDA NO.:	2
Project Description: Use Permit for a Verizon (Machado; PLN040304) 70 foot tall windmill-camouflaged, wireless telecommunication tower within a leased 1,250 square foot fenced area that also includes a 336 square foot equipment shelter building.			
Address and Parcel Number: 140 Blanco Road, Salinas (Assessor Parcel Number 207-022-017), within the Machado farm building complex.			
Planning Area: Greater Salinas Area Plan		Flagged and staked: Simulations	
Zoning Designations: F/40			
CEQA Actions: Exemption			
DEPARTMENT:	Planning and Building Inspection		

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends to the Planning Commission the following:

Approve the described project based on the Findings and Evidence found in Exhibit B, subject to proposed conditions found in Exhibit C.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED ACTION:

Project Description: The proposed Verizon Telecommunication Tower will be located behind a residence with accessory agricultural buildings, surrounded by evergreen trees that serve to screen the proposed 336 square foot equipment building and the lower 40 to 50 feet of the proposed 70 foot tower. These structures front on Boronda Road, surrounded on three sides by agricultural fields under row crop cultivation and across the road by a walled residential neighborhood within the Salinas City limits.

Visual Impact: The approximately top 20 to 30 feet of the proposed tower will be visible from passing traffic on Davis and Boronda Roads. To reduce the visual impact of the tower, the wireless antenna shall be mounted on a faux windmill in character with the rural setting.

Precedence for the faux windmill structure can be seen a quarter of a mile south of the subject site on Davis Road, although only 35 feet high. Co-location of wireless antenna on this latter structure was not possible because of its shorter height.

A possible third co-location site on an existing PG&E power tower west of the subject site on Blanco Road was also not possible because the property owner did not want to lease further ground space for the necessary equipment building that would interfere with agricultural operations. The Verizon proposed 70 foot tower height will accommodate future co-location of more wireless antenna carriers.

City of Salinas Community Planning and Development Department comments: Although not within the City of Salinas Sphere of Influence, the tower’s proximity to the City’s southern residential neighborhood prompted County staff to elicit comments from City staff as to the potential impact of the proposed tower. City staff state that the proposed antenna would have limited impact on nearby residences because it is located on the southwest portion of the developed area of the subject property away from residences across Blanco Road. Their request to allow other carriers to co-locate on the proposed facility to reduce the number of telecommunication antennas and facilities is consistent with the County’s requirements for the project (see Exhibit B, Condition no. 5).

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Use Permit application was reviewed by the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Environmental Health Division, Public Works Department, Parks Department, the Agricultural Commissioner, the Salinas Rural Fire District, the City of Salinas Community Development Department, and the Airport Land Use Commission.

Note: The project is appealable to the Board of Supervisors

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cc: Planning Commissioners; County Counsel; Health Department; Public Works; Monterey County Water Resources Agency; Salinas Rural Fire District; Lynne Mounday and David Lutes of the P&BI Dept.; Property Owner and their representative; File

Attachments:	Exhibit A:	Project Data Sheet
	Exhibit B:	Recommended Findings and Evidence
	Exhibit C:	Recommended Conditions of Approval
	Exhibit D:	Vicinity Map
	Exhibit E:	Site Plans

This report reviewed by Lynne Mounday, Planning & Building Services Manager

EXHIBIT B

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS AND EVIDENCE

1. **FINDING:** *PLAN, POLICY AND ZONING CONSISTENCY FINDING:* Use Permit for **Machado PLN040304**, as described in condition #1 and as conditioned, conforms to the plans, policies, requirements and standards of the General Plan, the Greater Salinas Area Plan, and the Monterey County Zoning Ordinance (Title 21). The property is located at 140 Blanco Road, Salinas (Assessor Parcel Number 207-022-017), within the Machado farm complex on Blanco Road, east of the Blanco and Davis Road intersection, Greater Salinas Area.

The subject parcel is located in an area designated for Farmlands with 40 acre minimums. Monterey County's *Wireless Communication Facilities Ordinance No. 04053* allows wireless telecommunication facilities to be located on any lot or parcel in any zoning district, subject to the findings and evidence presented in this exhibit and the conditions of approval found in Exhibit "C." The subject property is found in compliance with all rules and regulations pertaining to zoning uses, subdivision, and any other applicable provisions of Title 21. Zoning violation abatement costs, if any, have been paid.

- EVIDENCE: (a) The Planning and Building Inspection staff reviewed the project, as contained in the application and accompanying materials, for conformity with
- 1.) Monterey County General Plan and the Greater Salinas Area Plan;
 - 2.) Section 21.64.310 of the Monterey County Zoning Ordinance, Title 21, "Regulations for the Siting, Design, and Construction of Wireless Communication Facilities;"
 - 3.) Section 21.30.050 B of the Monterey County Zoning Ordinance, Title 21, public and quasi-public uses.

The latter two sections designate this project as consistent with placement of a wireless communication tower in a Farmlands designated area (F/40) as a public and quasi-public use when meeting standard development guidelines. These guidelines have been included in this report as conditions of approval.

- (b) Written and verbal public testimony submitted at public hearings before the Planning Commission.
 - (c) The applications, plans, and support materials submitted by the project applicant to the Monterey County Planning and Building Inspection Department for the proposed developments as found in project file **PLN040304** (Machado).
 - (d) The on-site inspection by the project planner on September 21, 2004.
2. **FINDING:** *NO VIOLATIONS EXIST FINDING:* The subject property is in compliance with all rules and regulations pertaining to zoning uses, subdivision and any other

applicable provisions of the County's zoning ordinance. No violations exist on the subject properties, and all zoning violation abatement cost, if any, have been paid.

EVIDENCE: Staff reviewed Monterey County Planning and Building Inspection Department records and is not aware of any violations that exist on subject property.

3. **FINDING:** ***VISUAL IMPACT FINDING:*** The development of the proposed wireless communication facility will not adversely affect any designated public viewing area, scenic corridor, or identified environmentally sensitive area.

EVIDENCE: (a) The 70 foot high telecom tower is exposed to public view approximately 20 feet above existing evergreen trees at the southwest corner of a heavily vegetated residential lot surrounded by open fields in row crop cultivation. The exposed portion of the tower will be seen from both Blanco and Davis Roads camouflaged as a windmill behind a single family residence and accessory agricultural structures fronting on Blanco Road. An existing, similar telecom tower camouflaged as a windmill can be seen a short distance south of the subject parcel on Davis Road, although the latter tower is shorter in height. Therefore, the proposed tower as partially screened and camouflaged, is made to harmonize with the surrounding rural setting.

- (b) The subject parcel is also directly across Blanco Road from a walled residential neighborhood within the City of Salinas City limits. Although not formally within the City of Salinas Sphere of Influence, the City's Community Development Department has reviewed the project and made the following comments:

"The proposed antenna would have limited impact on nearby properties, since it would be located on the southwest portion of the developed area of the subject property away from residences across Blanco Road. In addition, the proposed facility would be shielded from Blanco Road by existing on-site agricultural and residential structures. If appropriate, Staff recommends that the applicant allow other carriers to co-locate on the proposed facility to reduce the number of telecommunication antennas and facilities." [Letter from Thomas B. Wiles dated July 19, 2004, Associate Planner from City of Salinas Community Development Department]

- (c) File and application materials; staff site visit and administrative record; GreaterSalinas Area Plan.

4. **FINDING:** ***SITE SUITABILITY FINDING:*** The chosen site is adequate for the development of the proposed wireless communication facility and the applicant has demonstrated that the site is adequate for the provision of telecommunication services as required by the FCC.

EVIDENCE: (a) Two other alternative sites were found unfeasible: (1) the existing faux windmill, wireless antenna a quarter mile south of the subject site on Davis Road does not have the height to co-locate another carrier; and (2) the landowner holding a PG&E power pole easement across their property about a quarter of a mile west of the subject site on Blanco Road will not lease further ground space to the required Verizon equipment shelter because of potential disruption of their agricultural operations.

- (b) The proposed development has been reviewed by the Monterey County Planning and Building Inspection Department, Water Resources Agency, Public Works,

Parks Department, Environmental Health Division, the Salinas Rural Fire Protection District, the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's office and the County's Airport Land Use Commission. There has been no indication from these agencies that the site is not suitable for the proposed development.

- (c) Files with application materials found in Planning & Building Inspection Department file no. **PLN040304** (Machado).

5. FINDING: *HEALTH AND SAFETY FINDING:* The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the uses or structures applied for will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of such proposed uses, or be detrimental or injurious to property and improvement in the neighborhoods, or to the general welfare of the County.

- EVIDENCE:**
- (a) The proposed wireless communication facilities will not create a hazard for aircraft. The proposed location for the tower has been reviewed and recommended for approval by the County's Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) with the recommendation that a red obstruction light as indicated on sheet number A-2 of the project plans be required as a condition of the project approval. The applicant is required also to provide proof from the California Public Utilities Commission, the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Aviation Authority that they have received the appropriate approvals.
 - (b) The proposed location for the tower has been reviewed by the County's Agricultural Commissioner who notes that the tower is located in an area that has been used by agricultural aircraft for many years and is heavily traveled. It is noted that any structure above telephone pole level presents a hazard to helicopters that must fly in marginal weather conditions, such as 50 foot ceilings and 800-foot visibility. Therefore, a red flashing beacon shall be lit during hours of dark or fog/low visibility.
 - (c) The Environmental Health Division places a standard "Haz Mat Business Response Plan" that requires the applicant to register hazardous material associated with telecommunication tower.
 - (d) The Salinas Rural Fire District places a standard requirement that the electrical panel be labeled to indicate that the facility has backup power from an automatic generator.
 - (e) Condition no. 10 of Exhibit C.

6. FINDING: *ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FINDING:* The proposed project is seen as the construction and installation of small, new accessory equipment in an area with no significant adverse impacts on the environment. Although the 70 foot high tower is visible from Davis and Blanco Roads, the tower is not viewed from a designated scenic route. The structures are considered exempt from California Environmental Quality Act review based on Section 15303, Class 3 (e) as an accessory structure, and Section 15061 (3) as a project without a potential significant effect on the environment.

- EVIDENCE:**
- (a) Standard conditions placed by the County's Environmental Health Division and the Salinas Rural Fire District, in addition to standard review and permits from the

California Public Utilities Commission, the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Aviation Authority, appear sufficient to mitigate the proposed towers effect on the environment. The Environmental Health Division places a standard “Haz Mat Business Response Plan” that requires the applicant to register hazardous material associated with telecommunication towers. The Salinas Rural Fire District places a standard requirement that the electrical panel be labeled to indicate that the facility has backup power from an automatic generator.

- (b) The County’s Agricultural Commissioner and Airport Land Use Commission both require a red obstacle light atop the proposed tower to be assured of the tower’s visibility for local aircraft.
- (c) The County’s Planning and Building Inspection Department has reviewed the project and finds the proposed project location is low seismic hazard zone and low archaeological sensitivity zone that eliminate potential significant geological and archaeological impacts.
- (d) The County’s Planning and Building Inspection Department and Planning Commission have reviewed the project’s impact on the public viewshed. It has been determined that the existing vegetation screening and windmill camouflaging of the telecom tower in a rural area serves to harmonize said tower with surrounding land uses.
- (e) Conditions 4 to 12 of Exhibit C.

7. FINDING: *APPEAL FINDING:* The Planning Commission’s decision on this project is appealable to the Board of Supervisors.

EVIDENCE: Section 21.80.040 of the Monterey County Zoning Ordinance (Title 21).