



CITY OF PINOLE

Community Development Department

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December 7, 2009

City of Hercules
Planning Commission
Attn: Robert Reber, Assistant Planner
111 Civic Drive
Hercules, CA 94547
Via Email: RReber@ci.hercules.ca.us

RE: Conditional Use Permit No. 09-02 and 09-03 at 215 Skelly Road

Dear Mr. Reber:

The City of Pinole appreciates the opportunity to comment on the development applications for Conditional Use Permit No. 09-02 and 09-03 involving a wireless communications facility at 215 Skelly Road near our shared city limit boundary. The City of Pinole supports efforts to improve everyday wireless communication for the convenience of community members in both Pinole and Hercules as well as to provide improved communication during emergencies. Due to the proposed project's close proximity to the City of Pinole, including the entrance to the City of Pinole's downtown area and the inclusion of a proposed 87-foot faux pine tree pole we are concerned about the aesthetics of the proposed project.

We have reviewed the staff report for these conditional use permit requests as well as the project development plans and have the following comments:

1. We support the City of Hercules Design Review Subcommittee's recommendations to improve the screening of the ground-based equipment with shrubs, prohibit barbed wire, utilize vinyl-coating on the proposed chainlink fence, and paint the equipment cabinets an earth tone color. We suggest that City of Hercules consider adding additional screening such as wood slats within the chain-link and/or climbing vines to further screen the proposed ground-based equipment.
2. We also support the Design Review Subcommittee's recommendations to use the fullest and maximum possible number of branches for the greatest faux foliage density, vary faux foliage color to achieve a more natural look, and plant additional real trees near the faux tree to try to make the proposed tree pole appear as natural looking as possible. We suggest beginning the tree branching lower on the proposed faux trunk at 15 feet above the ground rather than at 35

feet in order to improve the aesthetic appearance of the faux tree. We also suggest planting real trees that are at least 24" box size that will ultimately reach heights that will help the faux tree blend into the landscape but would not hinder pole-mounted wireless communication performance.

3. We request that the Planning Commission consider an alternate location on the project site for the tree pole further from the railroad tracks to minimize the chance of damage to the telecommunications facility as a result of a train derailment accident or due to the vibration associated with train operations.
4. The project property includes a 1968 water easement that is approximately 25 feet to 40 feet wide along the southern boundary. The City of Pinole requests that the wireless communication facility be moved at least 36 feet to the north and the project be conditioned to provide a 25 feet wastewater easement abutting the northern edge of the existing water easement. This wastewater easement is needed to accommodate a future land outfall from the Pinole Hercules Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) that will connect the WPCP to San Pablo Avenue and help provide currently planned wastewater service to the City of Hercules.
5. The staff report includes no information about the effective communication coverage of the existing AT&T or T-Mobile wireless communication networks. In addition, there is no information provided by the applicants that fully explains why the proposed antennas and microwave dish equipment need to be mounted 70 – 80 feet above the ground. Page A-2 of the project plan prints identifies locations for future carrier antenna locations mounted below the T-Mobile equipment. The City of Pinole requests that the Hercules Planning Commission reduce the tree pole height from 87 feet to 70 feet or less to accommodate only the currently proposed AT&T and T-Mobile equipment on the tree pole. Given that the lower heights are proposed for future carrier antennas, it does not appear that the reduced height will hinder AT&T and T-Mobile's effort to provide improved wireless communication service for their customers.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this wireless communication facility. If you have any questions about this letter, please feel free to contact me by phone at (510) 724-9832 or via email at wrhodes@ci.pinole.ca.us.

Sincerely,



Winston Rhodes, AICP
Planning Manager

CC: Pinole Planning Commission
Belinda, B. Espinosa, City Manager
Dean Allison, Public Works Director/City Engineer