

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

**DATE:** February 6, 2020

**TO:** Zoning Hearing Officer

**FROM:** Planning Staff

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of a Use Permit Renewal, pursuant to Section 6500 of the San Mateo County Zoning Regulations, to allow the continued operation of an existing cellular communication facility located on Skyline Boulevard in the unincorporated San Bruno area of San Mateo County.

County File Number: PLN 2000-00776 (T-Mobile)

**PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to renew their use permit to allow the continued operation of a cellular communication facility which consists of an existing ground equipment area and three radio antennas on a PG&E transmission line tower. Additionally, a minor modification is proposed to install three new antennas and three Radio Remote Units (RRU) on the tower, pursuant to the federal preemption under the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act. The existing ground equipment area will remain unaltered.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Zoning Hearing Officer approve the Use Permit Renewal, County File Number PLN 2000-00776, by making the required findings and adopting the conditions of approval listed in Attachment A.

**BACKGROUND**

Report Prepared By: Tiare G. Peña, Project Planner; Telephone 650/363-1850

Owner: City and County of San Francisco/Pacific Gas and Electric

Applicant: T-Mobile

Location: 525 Skyline Boulevard at Sawyer Camp Trail, San Bruno

APN: 093-020-080

Size: 302 acres (parcel size); 233 sq. ft. (lease area for cellular equipment)

Existing Zoning: RM (Resource Management)

General Plan Designation: Open Space

Existing Land Use: Pacific Gas and Electric tower and transmission corridor

Flood Zone: Zone C (areas of minimal flooding); Community Panel No. 06081C0127F, effective date April 25, 2019.

Environmental Evaluation: Categorically exempt under Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act (Class 1) Guidelines; existing public or private structures and equipment.

Setting: The project site is located west of State Highway 35 (Skyline Boulevard), on property owned by the City and County of San Francisco and designated as their watershed area. The property is developed with an existing PG&E transmission tower, which is approximately 120 feet high. Enclosed within a fenced area is the existing cellular equipment cabinets. The project site has some moderate vegetation inclusive of a few trees and low shrubs. The site is adjacent to the Sawyer Camp Trail, a 6-mile long walking and biking trail which extends between San Mateo and San Bruno.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **A. COMPLIANCE WITH CONDITIONS OF THE LAST APPROVAL**

This use permit was approved on June 5, 2008 at which time, fifteen (15) conditions of approval were placed on the project. These conditions are assessed below with regard to compliance and whether they should be retained, modified or are no longer applicable.

1. This approval applies only to the proposal, documents and plans described in this report and submitted for approval by the Zoning Hearing Officer on June 5, 2008. Minor revisions or modifications to the project may be approved by the Planning Director if they are consistent with the intent of and in substantial conformance with this approval.

*Compliance with Condition? Yes.*

*Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, but the condition should be modified to reflect today's approval date.*

2. The applicant shall submit plans for a building permit within one year from the date of approval.

*Compliance with Condition? Yes.*

*Recommend to Retain Condition? No, this condition is no longer applicable.*

3. The use permit shall be valid for a period of ten years and will expire on June 5, 2018. The applicant shall apply for renewal of the use permit and pay applicable renewal fees six months prior to expiration.

*Compliance with Condition? Yes.*

*Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes, however, modified as follows: The use permit shall be valid for a period of ten years and will expire on January 16, 2030. The applicant shall apply for renewal of the use permit and pay applicable renewal fees six months prior to expiration.*

4. Any change in use shall require an amendment to the use permit. Amendment to this use permit requires an application for amendment, payment of applicable fees, and consideration at a public hearing.

*Compliance with Condition? Yes.*

*Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes.*

5. The applicant shall receive and maintain approval from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) concerning the operation of the project at this site. Upon receipt of each of these approvals, the applicant shall supply the Planning Department with proof of approval. If these approvals are revoked, the applicant shall inform the Planning Department of the revocation.

*Compliance with Condition? Yes.*

*Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes.*

6. The applicant shall apply for and be issued a building permit prior to the start of construction and develop in accordance with the approved plans as well as install all structures to current building codes.

*Compliance with Condition? Yes.*

*Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes.*

7. Noise sources associated with demolition, construction, repair, remodeling, or grading of any real property shall be limited to the hours from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. weekdays and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturdays. Said activities are prohibited on Sundays, Thanksgiving and Christmas (San Mateo Ordinance Code Section 4.88.360).

*Compliance with Condition? Yes.*

*Recommend to Retain Condition? Yes.*

8. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit to the Planning Department for review and approval a stormwater management plan, which shows how transport and discharge of pollutants from the project site will be minimized. The goal is to prevent soil sediment and other pollutants from entering local drainage systems and water bodies, and to protect all exposed earth surfaces from erosive forces. Said plan shall adhere to the San Mateo Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program "General Construction and Site Supervision Guidelines."

*Compliance with Condition?* Yes.

*Recommend to Retain Condition?* No, this condition is no longer applicable.

9. All new utility lines to the proposed project shall be installed underground. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a plan, for review and approval by the Community Development Director, which shows the location for all new underground utility lines from the nearest existing pole to the new antennas and equipment.

*Compliance with Condition?* Yes.

*Recommend to Retain Condition?* Yes, but modified as follows: Any new utility lines to the project site shall be installed underground. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a plan, for review and approval by the Community Development Director, which shows the location for all new underground utility lines from the nearest existing pole to the antennas and equipment.

10. The applicant shall submit color samples for all the equipment. The panel antennas shall be a silver-grey color to blend with the existing PG&E tower. The chain link fence around the equipment area shall be black vinyl coated with dark green slats. All equipment that is possible to be painted shall be painted a dark green to match the landscaping. The Planning Division shall confirm that all project elements have been painted the approved colors prior to final building inspection.

*Compliance with Condition?* Yes.

*Recommend to Retain Condition?* Yes, but modified as follows: The chain link fence around the equipment area shall be black vinyl coated with dark green slats. Should the monopoles or antennas need to be replaced or repainted prior to the expiration of this Permit, they shall be repainted a cool gray or mottled gray/white color to blend with the sky.

11. A building inspector will check the approved colors in the field prior to a final on the building permit.

*Compliance with Condition?* Yes.

*Recommend to Retain Condition?* No, this condition is no longer applicable.

12. The applicant shall submit a landscape plan in accordance with the San Mateo County Guidelines, which demonstrates how the visual impacts from the proposed cellular facility will be reduced. The plan shall indicate the type, location and size of all proposed landscaping as well as the method for irrigation. No trees shall be removed without the issuance of a tree removal permit.

*Compliance with Condition?* Yes, however, the landscaping plan which was included with the approved project was never implemented. PG&E denied the applicant permission to implement the landscaping since it conflicted with their "Greenbook" guideline recommending a 30-foot clear zone diameter from their power line tower, at which time the existing tower was less than 30 feet from the proposed equipment area. A new transmission tower has since been located further from the equipment area, thus resulting in its location being outside the 30-foot diameter clear zone. As such, the applicant has proposed to implement the original landscaping plan as part of this request and will be conditioned to do so.

*Recommend to Retain Condition?* No, this condition is no longer applicable.

13. The approved landscaping shall be installed and confirmed by the Planning Department prior the final building inspection.

*Compliance with Condition?* Yes, see discussion above under Condition No.12.

*Recommend to Retain Condition?* No, as the landscaping has been installed, this condition is no longer applicable.

14. The landscape screening shall be maintained by the applicant. All landscaping that does not survive shall be replaced per the approved landscape plan.

*Compliance with Condition?* No, see discussion under Condition No. 12.

*Recommend to Retain Condition?* Yes

15. A building permit will be required for the installation of the cellular facility.

*Compliance with Condition? Yes.*

*Recommend to Retain Condition? No, this condition is no longer applicable. New conditions added, see Attachment A; Findings and Conditions of Approval*

B. CONFORMANCE WITH USE PERMIT FINDINGS

Under the provisions of Section 6500 (*Use Permits*), wireless communications facilities are permitted in the RM (Resource Management) District after issuance of a use permit. In order for the continued operation to be approved, the following use permit findings are necessary:

- a. **That the establishment, maintenance and/or conducting of the use will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, result in significant adverse impact to coastal resources or be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in said neighborhood.**

The project is not located in the Coastal Zone, therefore, there are no impacts coastal resources. ff has reviewed the project file, and previous conditions of approval and finds no records concerning non-compliance with Planning Department conditions of approval or issues from neighboring parcels in the vicinity. Therefore, this finding can be made.

- b. **That the granting of the use permit renewal to allow the continued operation of this telecommunications facility is necessary for the public health, safety, convenience, or welfare.**

The project use is for radio telecommunications and cellular transmission and receiving. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has established that radio telecommunications and mobile and wireless telephone facilities directly serve national interests and indirectly benefit the public. This system provides private and public users the benefit of facilitating communication between mobile units and the existing wire-developed telephone system, as well as processing a greater quantity of calls more efficiently than landline technology. The project use continues to qualify as serving the public interest and is considered necessary for public health, safety, convenience, and welfare. Therefore, this finding can be made.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15301, Class 1, relating to existing facilities.

D. OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES

<b>Referring Agency</b>	<b>Approve</b>	<b>Conditions of Approval</b>
Building Inspection Section	Yes	None
Department of Public Works	Yes	None
Cal-Fire	Yes	Yes

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Recommended Findings and Conditions of Approval
- B. Location/Parcel Map
- C. Equipment Detail
- D. Photo Simulations

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County of San Mateo  
Planning and Building Department

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

Permit or Project File Number: PLN 2000-00776      Hearing Date: February 6, 2020

Prepared By: Tiare Peña, Project Planner      For Adoption By: Zoning Hearing Officer

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS**

Regarding the Environmental Review, Find:

1. That this project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15301, Class 1, relating to existing facilities.

Regarding the Use Permit Renewal, Find:

2. That the establishment, maintenance and/or conducting of the use will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, result in significant adverse impact to coastal resources or be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in said neighborhood. The facility has been in operation since 2000 with no records of non-compliance or neighbor complaints.
3. That the granting of the use permit renewal to allow the continued operation of this telecommunications facility is necessary for public health, safety, convenience, or welfare. This facility contributes to enhance the wireless network for increased clarity, range, and system capacity; and therefore, is a benefit to both public and private users.

**RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

Current Planning Section

1. This approval applies only to the proposal, documents and plans described in this report and submitted for approval by the Zoning Hearing Officer on February 6, 2020. Minor revisions or modifications to the project may be approved by the Community Development Director if they are consistent with the intent of and in substantial conformance with this approval.
2. The use permit shall be valid for a period of ten years and will expire on February 6, 2030. The applicant shall apply for renewal of the use permit and pay applicable renewal fees six months prior to expiration.



3. Significant changes in use or intensity shall require an amendment to the use permit. Amendment to this use permit requires an application for amendment, payment of applicable fees, and consideration at a public hearing.
4. The applicant shall maintain approval from the FCC and CPUC concerning the operation of the facility at this site. Upon receipt of each of these approvals, the applicant shall supply the Planning Department with proof of approval. If these approvals are ever revoked, the applicant shall inform the Planning Department of the revocation, within ten days of the receiving notice of such revocation.
5. The landscape screening shall be maintained by the applicant. All landscaping that does not survive shall be replaced per the approved landscape plan.
6. If the monopoles or antennas need to be replaced or repainted prior to the expiration of this Permit, they shall be repainted a cool gray or mottled gray/white color to blend with the sky. The chain link fence around the equipment area shall be black vinyl coated with dark green slats.
7. The applicant shall apply for and be issues a building permit prior to the start of construction and develop in accordance with the approved plans as well as install all structures to current building codes.
8. The applicant shall not enter into a contract with the landowner or lessee which reserves for one company exclusive use of the tower structure or the site for telecommunication facilities.
9. If a less visually obtrusive/reduced antenna technology becomes available for use during the life of this project, the applicant shall present a redesign incorporating this technology into the project for review by the Community Development Director and any parties that have expressed an interest.
10. This facility and all equipment associated with it shall be removed in its entirety by the applicant within ninety (90) days if the FCC license and registration are revoked or if the facility is abandoned or no longer needed. The owner and/or operator of the facility shall notify the Planning Department upon abandonment of the facility.
11. There shall be no external lighting associated with this use, Wireless telecommunication facilities shall not be lighted or marked unless required by the FCC or Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
12. Noise sources associated with demolition, construction, repair, remodeling, or grading of any real property shall be limited to the hours from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. weekdays and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturdays. Said activities are prohibited on Sundays, Thanksgiving and Christmas (San Mateo Ordinance Code Section 4.88.360).

13. This approved installation is to be dismantled and removed in its entirety from the property at that time when this technology becomes obsolete or this facility is no longer needed.
14. Any new utility lines to the project site shall be installed underground. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a plan for review and approval by the Community Development Director, which shows the location for all new underground utility lines from the nearest existing pole to the antennas and equipment.

Cal-Fire

15. The applicant shall provide an appropriate Knox Box for access through gate approved by San Bruno Fire Department.

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**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

# **ATTACHMENT B**





**San Mateo County Zoning Hearing Officer Meeting**

Owner/Applicant: **Public Utilities Commission/T Mobile**

File Numbers: **PLN2000-00776**

**VICINITY MAP**

Attachment: **B**





**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO - PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

# **ATTACHMENT C**



Existing



Existing T-Mobile Installation

Proposed



Proposed T-Mobile Installation

view from Skline Boulevard looking south at site



SF03191A Skyline  
580 Skyline Boulevard, San Mateo, CA  
Photosims Produced on 4-25-2019



Existing



Existing T-Mobile Installation

Proposed



Proposed T-Mobile Installation

view from Skline Boulevard looking northwest at site  
 SF03191A Skyline  
 580 Skyline Boulevard, San Mateo, CA  
 Photosims Produced on 4-25-2019



Existing



Proposed



view from San Andreas Trail looking southeast at site  
SF03191A Skyline  
580 Skyline Boulevard, San Mateo, CA  
Photosims Produced on 4-25-2019