

CITY OF MERCED
SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION #25-0001

DRAFT

AT&T Mobility	Construct a 55' stealth mono-palm wireless communication tower and an 8x8 walk in closet.
APPLICANT	PROJECT
605 Coolidge Dr., Ste 100	3400 Parsons Ave
ADDRESS	PROJECT SITE
Folsom, CA 95630	006-150-002
CITY/STATE/ZIP	APN
(916) 798-2275	R-1-6
PHONE	ZONING

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In accordance with Chapter 20.68 of the Merced City Zoning Ordinance, the Merced City Site Plan Review Committee considered and approved Site Plan Review Application #25-0001 on April 3, 2025, submitted by AT&T Mobility c/o Epic Wireless Group, on behalf of City of Merced, property owner, to construct a 55-foot-tall stealth mono-palm wireless communication tower at 3400 Parsons Ave. within a General Plan designation of Open-Space Park Recreation with a Zoning classification of R-1-6 Zone. Said property being more particularly described as Adjusted Parcel 2 as shown on that map "Bradley's Add. No. I, R.M. Vol. 2, Pg 66" recorded in Book 6, Page 15 of Merced County Records; also known as Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 006-150-002.

WHEREAS, the proposal is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and is in accordance with Section 15332 (Exhibit D); and,

WHEREAS, the Merced City Site Plan Review Committee makes the following Findings:

- A) The proposal complies with the General Plan designation of Open Space – Park recreation (OS-P) and the Zoning classification of R-1-6.
- B) The wireless communication tower would be disguised as a palm tree (55-foot-tall stealth mono-palm) located on the northern portion of the parcel. Ancillary cabinet ground equipment would be enclosed by an 8-foot-tall CMU wall. The proposed 55-foot height is necessary to provide coverage to service the area. The proposed cell tower will be setback 184 feet south from the homes on El Portal Drive.
- C) The location is adjacent to single-family homes on El Portal Drive, little visibility from the homes on Shamrock Place, Nottingham Ave., Cascade Creek Ave., and Parsons Ave. There are existing trees in the surrounding area including

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twelve (12) palm trees on the property, so the cell tower will blend in with others in the area.

- D) Based on elevations provided, the large cellmax antennas located on the site plan does not protrudes out more than the mono-palm branches. The smaller antennas will be covered with a palm stealth “bulb”. Additionally, in order to minimize the visibility, the antennas will need to be painted green (Condition #8).
- E) Applicant has provided an alternative site analysis for co-locations; however, the conclusion is that it is not viable or available (Exhibit F).
- F) Applicant has provided a map of existing and proposed wireless facilities within the three-mile radius to illustrate service for local area and first responders (First Net Program), also known as First Responders Network (Exhibit G).
- G) Support tower is not located in an agricultural zoning district.
- H) The radio frequency emission of the proposed cell tower will meet FCC guidelines (Exhibit E).
- I) The communication tower will not block any of the scenic corridors shown in General Plan Policy OS-1.3B.
- J) The proposed communication tower would not create any unusual structures that are not already permitted within the R-1-6 Zone. Other structures (with similar functions, height, and designs), such as mono-palm tower for wireless communication providers, are allowed within the R-1-6 Zone with Site Plan Permit approval.
- K) According to Section 332 (-C-) (-7-) of the Federal Telecommunication Act, local governments may not (1) prohibit or effectively prohibit personal wireless service (2) unreasonably discriminate among providers of functionally equivalent service providers, (3) regulate personal wireless service facilities based on the environmental effects from radio frequency emission to the extent such emission meets FFC Guidelines.
- L) Staff mailed a public hearing notice to property owners adjacent to the subject site and published the public hearing notice in the *Merced County Times*. As of the time this report was prepared (3/28/25), Planning Staff has received 1 email in opposition to the project.
- M) Per Zoning Ordinance 20.58-2, a Site Plan Review Permit is required because the subject site is in an R1 Zone.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Merced City Site Plan Review Committee does approve Site Plan Review Application #25-0001, subject to the following conditions:

1. All applicable conditions contained in Site Plan Approval Resolution #79-1-Amended (“Standard Conditions for Site Plan Application”) shall apply.

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2. All other applicable codes, ordinances, policies, etc., adopted by the City of Merced shall apply including, but not limited to, the California building code and fire codes.
3. The site shall be constructed as shown on Exhibit B (site plan) and Exhibit C (elevation), as modified by the conditions of approval within this resolution.
4. Notwithstanding all other conditions, all construction and improvements shall be in strict accordance with Zoning, Building, and all other codes, ordinances, standards, and policies of the City of Merced.
5. In coordination with the Police Department and Fire Department, a frequency/inter-modulation study shall be prepared. Service may not be initiated until these departments have reviewed and have found the study to be acceptable.
6. At the time of building permit submittal, the applicant shall provide certification by a Radio Frequency Engineer, stating the RFR measurements and that they meet FCC radio frequency radiation standards.
7. The applicant shall work with the Merced Regional Airport and comply with all of their requirements for this type of structure and obtain all proper permits. Said requirements may include, but are not limited to, obtaining approval from the Airport Land Use Commission or showing proof of submitting an FAA Form 7460-1 to the FAA.
8. The private communication tower shall be a stealth mono-palm wireless communication facility and antennas shall be painted green to blend in.
9. The private communication tower shall be maintained at all times. At no time shall the private communication tower be faded or worn down to a state that would be considered unacceptable to City standards.
10. The private communication tower shall not have any form of steps, ladder, or pegs protruding from its side.
11. No signs, other than warning and safety signage, shall be located on a support tower or ancillary facility.
12. Other than lighting required by the FAA or other regulatory agency for the purpose of safety, lights are not permitted on the communication tower.
13. Any noise generated by the facility from the equipment or the tower shall be kept to a minimum so as not to cause a nuisance to the surrounding businesses.
14. At the time of building permit submittal, the applicant shall provide a site plan to the Engineering Department showing all easements which includes, but is not limited to, railroad right-of-way and City easements. The project shall not encroach into any rights-of-way or easements without first obtaining proper approval to do so.
15. The premise shall remain clean and free of debris and graffiti at all times.
16. The CMU wall shall be painted to match existing park building.
17. A landscape plan shall be submitted to Public Works Deputy Director for approval.

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18. The applicant shall work with the Engineering Department for any improvements required, such as bike path, curb cut, gate, and/ or removeable bollards.

If there are any questions concerning these conditions and recommendations, please contact Jessie Lee at (209) 385-6858.

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DATE

SIGNATURE

Development Services Technician II

TITLE

Exhibits:

- A) Location Map
- B) Overall Site Plan
- C) Elevation
- D) Categorical Exemption
- E) Radio Frequency Emission Compliance Report
- F) Alternative Sites Analysis
- G) AT&T Coverage Maps
- H) Presentation
- I) Public Comments