

September 21, 2023

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept Categorical Exemption CE23-106; and,

Approve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP23-016) and adopt the proposed findings and conditions of approval thereto, to operate a new wireless telecommunication facility mounted on an existing Southern California Edison High-Tension Electrical Tower with equipment located under the tower behind CMU block walls located at 1401 ½ West Wardlow Road (APN: 7311-001-802) in the Light Industrial (IL) Zoning District. (District 5)

APPLICANT: Dish Wireless
c/o Jeremy Siegel for Eukon Group
65 Post, Ste 1000
Irvine, CA 92618
(Application No. 2306-08)

DISCUSSION

The applicant, Dish Wireless, is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to install a new unscreened wireless telecommunication facility on an existing high-tension electrical tower operated by Southern California Edison (SCE), along with ancillary unmanned ground level-mounted equipment (Attachment A – Project Plans). Dish Wireless is currently establishing their wireless network and installing facilities within the city at strategic locations to achieve their coverage objectives and provide adequate service for their customers.

The subject site is located on an undeveloped parcel with six existing tall high-tension electrical towers that are maintained and operated by SCE. The subject site is located on the north side of West Wardlow Road, between Santa Fe Avenue and Delta Avenue (Attachment B – Vicinity Map). It is in the Light Industrial Zoning District and has an Open Space General Plan Land Use PlaceType designation. The surrounding uses include the Interstate 405 (I-405) to the north, industrial uses to the west, commercial uses south of West Wardlow Road and residential uses further beyond, and residential uses to the east.



The City recognizes that certain types of land uses, such as wireless telecommunications facilities, due to the nature of the use, require individual review through a CUP. Such review shall determine whether the type of use proposed, or the location of that use, is compatible with surrounding uses, or can be made compatible with surrounding uses, through the imposition of development conditions. The project site already includes an existing wireless facility on an electrical lattice tower. However, that tower can no longer accommodate additional carriers due to weight concerns from SCE. Therefore, the proposed design would be located on a two-legged high-tension electrical tower and placed at a height of 58-feet which is lower than the existing facility on site. Findings required for this proposal thus include compatibility of aesthetics and noise, consistency with the General Plan, among others (Attachment C - Findings). The proposed location of the equipment on the tower itself would be in a location furthest away from existing residences and buffered by the business uses to the west and south, in addition to the I-405 from the north. In City staff's view, the proposed design is the preferred alternative, and other design options such as requiring screening on this proposed cellular installation or requiring a new monopole would not be less visually intrusive alternatives, and in fact such requirements could potentially result in negative visual impacts to the community in this case (Attachment D – Photosimulations).

The project is consistent with the General Plan, which envisions the city as a modern, connected, technologically savvy city. The Land Use Element Policy 3-1 acknowledges telecommunications as part of the industrial matrix that encapsulates a forward-advancing city. Accordingly, the proposed project will provide enhanced wireless coverage to the surrounding neighborhood, community, and regional uses. Conditions of approval include a projection distance from the leg of the tower, and a limit to the horizontal expansion of mounting supports (Attachment E – Conditions of Approval). Additional conditions of approval include the requirement for the permittee to allow for additional carriers to co-locate on this site to minimize the proliferation of negative visual impacts caused by additional single-carrier wireless facilities.

Staff recommends approval of this CUP, as the project is consistent with the requirements of the Zoning Regulations and will result in the installation of a new wireless telecommunications facility with the least visually intrusive design that will support future co-location of other carrier's antennas and equipment.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A total of 64 Public Hearing notices were distributed on September 7, 2023, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Long Beach Municipal Code. No comments were received at the time of writing this staff report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, the project is exempt per section 15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small

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Structures (CE23-106), as the scope of the project is consistent with the parameters for new construction.

Respectfully submitted,



MIGUEL SAMAYOA
PROJECT PLANNER



ALEXIS OROPEZA
CURRENT PLANNING OFFICER



ALISON SPINDLER-RUIZ, AICP
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

CK:ASR:AO:ms

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Project Plans
- Attachment B – Vicinity Map
- Attachment C – Findings
- Attachment D – Photosimulations
- Attachment E – Conditions of Approval