



# REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION City of Sacramento

915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2671

PUBLIC HEARING  
February 28, 2008

To: Members of the Planning Commission

**Subject: Stockton Blvd. Monopole (P06-203)**

A request to construct a new 70 foot stealth "tree" monopole with six antennas and an equipment lease area for a telecommunications facility in the General Commercial, Broadway/Stockton Special Planning District (C-2 SPD) zone.

- A. Environmental Determination: Exempt, CEQA Guidelines section 15303;
- B. Special Permit to construct a new 70 foot stealth "tree" monopole with six antennas and an equipment lease area for a telecommunications facility.

**Location/Council District:**

2784 Stockton Blvd. Sacramento, CA 95817  
Assessor's Parcel Number: 014-0121-031  
Council District 5

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends the Commission approve the Special Permit request based on the findings of fact and subject to the conditions of approval listed in Attachment 1. The Commission has final approval authority over items A-B above, and its decision is appealable to City Council.

**Contact:** Stephanie Hockman, Junior Planner, 808-7497; Mark Martin, Senior Planner, 808-5945

**Applicant:** Rama Gulati  
Applied Wireless Consulting, Inc. for T-Mobile  
6728 Fair Oaks Boulevard, #400  
Carmichael, CA 95608  
(916) 402-4019

**Owner:** Veterans of Foreign Wars – Post 67  
2784 Stockton Boulevard  
Sacramento, CA 95817  
(916) 455-7975



**Summary:** The applicant is proposing to construct a new 70 foot monopole for wireless communications, which will be disguised and camouflaged as a monopine. The components of the project will consist of the monopole, six antenna systems, and the associated equipment. The antennas will be recessed in the branches of the monopine and the majority of the equipment will be screened by the proposed fence. Any equipment, such as cables, that are not screened by the fence will be painted to match adjacent materials. No advertising or signage (except those required by the Federal Communications Commission and emergency contact information) is proposed for the unmanned facility. The facility will provide 24-hour wireless service to residential and business customers in the area. Staff notified all property owners within 500 feet of the site for this public hearing and received no opposition from the surrounding neighborhood. **This item is non-controversial as staff is not aware of any neighborhood concerns.**

<b>Table 1: Project Information</b>
<b>General Plan designation:</b> Community/Neighborhood Commercial and Offices
<b>Existing zoning of site:</b> C-2 SPD (General Commercial, Broadway-Stockton Special Planning District)
<b>Existing use of site:</b> Veterans of Foreign Wars Post
<b>Property area:</b> 1.15 acres

**Background Information:** There is no record of prior planning applications affecting this property.

**Public/Neighborhood Outreach and Comments:** The project was routed to the following neighborhood groups and associations: Oak Park Redevelopment Advisory Committee, Stockton Boulevard Partnership, Tahoe Park Neighborhood Association, Elmhurst Neighborhood Association, and Medical Center Neighborhood Association. Additionally, all property owners within five hundred (500) feet of the proposed site received a public hearing notice for this project. City staff received no phone calls or comments about this project.

**Environmental Considerations:** The Development Services Department, Environmental Planning Services Division has reviewed this project and determined that the project is exempt under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 3, Section number 15303 which consists of the construction and limited of new, small facilities or structures including water main, sewage, electrical, gas, and other utility extensions, including street improvements, of reasonable length to serve such construction.

### **Policy Considerations**

**General Plan Update Vision and Guiding Principles:** While the City's General Plan is being updated, the City Council has adopted a vision for the future of the City, as well as several guiding principles to help guide the update and achieve this vision. This was done to ensure that new developments submitted during the ongoing update comply

with the goals and policies that are being incorporated into the General Plan through the update. The applicable guiding principle that this proposal complies with is the need to: promote designs for development that are compatible with the scale and character of Sacramento's existing neighborhoods (pg. 3).

In addition to being consistent with this principle, the proposal is not contrary to any of the other approved principles of the General Plan Update Vision.

**General Plan:** The subject site is designated Community/Neighborhood Commercial and Offices in the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The proposal is consistent with the General Plan Policy which promotes improving and providing communication and utility services to all areas of the City (Section 7-10). The proposal will improve wireless cellular capacity and coverage for residential and business customers in the area.

**Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities:** The Guidelines for Telecommunication Facilities, adopted by the City Council on April 29, 1997, emphasize minimizing the visibility of new telecommunication facilities through construction and design techniques. Key objectives for the City were outlined to maximize the number of "invisible" telecommunications facility sites. The proposed monopole, designed as a stealth pine tree is consistent with the following policies as described in the Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities:

- Antennas should be screened with stealthing materials so as not to be visible (as much as possible).
- Monopoles should be constructed of materials that match the prevalent poles and/or buildings and landscaping in the area or provide stealthing for the pole (i.e. wood, metal, palm/pine tree).
- Monopoles should be painted to match either the sky line (dull matte gray) or other prevalent architectural or natural features (i.e. trees).

### Project Design

In order to determine what type of monopole design would best fit the site, staff visited the proposed project location and sites that contain examples of monopoles designed by T-Mobile. Initially, staff thought that a monopole disguised as a flagpole would be best given the use of the proposed project site (a Veterans of Foreign Wars post). However, many of the flag pole monopoles staff visited did a poor job of imitating a flag pole (i.e. the flag was not proportional in size to the pole, the pole did not taper to mimic a real flag pole, etc). In addition, a flag would need to be lit and staff felt that requirement could potentially have a negative impact on adjacent residences.

After evaluating several sites, staff felt that a stealth tree monopole or monopine would be the best design. Staff has worked with the applicant to design the monopole in such a way so that it mimics a natural pine tree. For example, the applicant will utilize materials that imitate bark on the trunk and will taper the branches to give it a more natural shape. The six proposed antenna systems will be screened by branches and will

be painted to match the tree. Staff also requested that the chain link fence be lined with vinyl slats painted to match the adjacent buildings and all equipment be screened by the fence to minimize the visual impact of the equipment lease area.

Given the enhancements provided by the applicant, staff is supportive of the design and feels that the monopole is adequately disguised. Staff finds that generally, the proposed project complies with the General Plan, the Zoning Code, and the City's Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities.

#### **Alternative Locations**

Before selecting the proposed site at 2784 Stockton Boulevard, the applicant considered five alternative locations. The locations are listed below with a narrative explaining why each site was rejected.

1. American Legion High School - 3801 Broadway

The applicant indicated that this location is 0.56 mile west-southwest from the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall and is too far from the desired coverage area. Also, T-Mobile has another project in process about 1,000 feet away from this location.

2. WIC building – 2701 Stockton Boulevard

This building is only 22' tall and a new pole/structure would still be required.

3. McClatchy Park - 3500 5th Avenue

T-Mobile already has another site in process for this area.

4. Shriner's Hospital - 2425 Stockton Boulevard

The applicant contacted the hospital and was notified by hospital staff that it was not interested in T-Mobile's proposal.

5. Marion Anderson Special Education Center – 2850 49<sup>th</sup> Street

The center is too close to two of T-Mobile's existing sites (SC0617 to the east and SC06941 to the south).

6. UC Davis Medical Center

The applicant contacted the hospital in person and via letter and calls regarding her proposal. However, the hospital did not respond to T-Mobile's proposal.

The proposed project location provides coverage of the area with one site, thus minimizing the required number of antennas that have to be installed in the area to provide service to their customers.


### **Land Use**

The applicant proposes to construct a new 70 foot stealth "tree" monopole with six antennas and an equipment lease area for a telecommunications facility in the General Commercial, Broadway/Stockton Special Planning District (C-2 SPD) zone. In evaluating **Special Permit** proposals of this nature, the Commission is required to make the following findings:

- A. A special permit shall be granted upon sound principles of land use.  
The facility will improve wireless coverage for the area.
  
- B. A special permit shall not be granted if it will be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or if it results in the creation of a nuisance.  
The installation of the monopole, antennas, and the associated equipment will not be detrimental to public health, safety or welfare because the installation of the facility will be subject to City building permits.
  
- C. A special permit use must comply with the objectives of the general or specific plan for the area in which it is to be located.  
The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan Policy of promoting and supporting communications facilities within the City as well as the Guidelines for Telecommunication Facilities.

### **Access, Circulation and Parking**

The applicant proposes to use the existing driveway and parking lot circulation to access the telecommunications facility equipment for regular maintenance and repairs.

Respectfully submitted by:   
STEPHANIE HOCKMAN  
Junior Planner

Approved by:   
MARK MARTIN  
Senior Planner

Recommendation Approved:

  
GREGORY BITTER  
Principal Planner

Attachments:

Attachment 1	Recommended Findings of Fact and Conditions of Approval
Exhibit 1A	Site Plan
Exhibit 1B	Equipment Plan
Exhibit 1C	Elevations
Attachment 2	Land Use and Zoning Map

**Attachment 1  
Recommended Findings of Fact and Conditions of Approval  
Stockton Boulevard Monopole (P06-203)  
2784 Stockton Boulevard**

**Findings Of Fact**

**A. Environmental Determination: Exemption**

Based on the determination and recommendation of the City's Environmental Planning Services Manager and the oral and documentary evidence received at the hearing on the Project, the Planning Commission finds that the Project is exempt from review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines as follows:

This project consists of a request to construct a new 70 foot stealth "tree" monopole with six antennas and an equipment lease area for a telecommunications facility.

This project consists of the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures including water main, sewage, electrical, gas and other utility extensions, including street improvements, of reasonable length to serve such construction.

**B. The Special Permit** to construct a new 70 foot stealth tree monopole with six antenna systems and an equipment lease area for a telecommunications facility is approved subject to the following findings of fact:

1. The project, as conditioned, is based upon sound principles of land use in that:
  - a. The facility will serve in increasing and improving telecommunications coverage for the area;
  - b. Opportunities for collocation have been explored and deemed infeasible due to a lack of additional capacity on a nearby existing telecommunications facilities and lack of response from the other potential sites;
  - c. The proposed monopole complies with the intent of the Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities to create "invisible" cellular facilities in that the proposed pole is a designed to appear as a pine tree.
2. The project, as conditioned, will not be detrimental to the public welfare, safety, or result in the creation of a public nuisance in that:

- a. Installation of the monopole and antennas will be subject to City building permits;
  - b. The proposed vinyl slate and chain link fencing equipment enclosure will match the existing building façade;
  - c. The unmanned facility will not alter the current operations of the site;
  - d. No additional parking, utilities, or services are required at this site as a result of this proposal.
3. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan Policy of promoting and supporting communications facilities within the City and the Telecommunications Policy requiring "invisible" facilities.

**Conditions Of Approval**

**B.** The **Special Permit** to construct a new 70 foot stealth tree monopole with six antenna systems and an equipment lease area for a telecommunications facility is hereby approved subject to the following conditions of approval:

- B1.** The applicant shall obtain all necessary building permits prior to commencing construction.
- B2.** The facility shall be constructed in substantial conformance to the submitted plans. Any modification to the project shall be subject to review and approval by Planning staff prior to the issuance of building permits.
- B3.** The applicant shall obtain all necessary federal telecommunications permits prior to commencing construction.
- B4.** The applicant shall use non-reflective paint on all equipment on the pole to prevent glare. The pole shall be painted brown 20 feet above ground level to the top of the pole and the remainder of the pole shall be constructed with materials that resemble a tree trunk. The tree trunk materials shall extend a short distance, 5± feet into the branches of the tree, so the bark appears to continue the entire length of the tree from the pedestrian standpoint. All cables, brackets, supports, etc. shall be painted to match the surrounding equipment.
- B5.** The antennas shall be painted green to match the color of the tree branches and shall be recessed within the tree branches.
- B6.** The overall height of the monopine shall not be higher than 70± feet, including all camouflaging branches. The proposed telecommunications equipment mounted

on the tower shall not be higher than 63± feet. Any additional antennas (6 antenna systems are approved), shall require a Special Permit Modification.

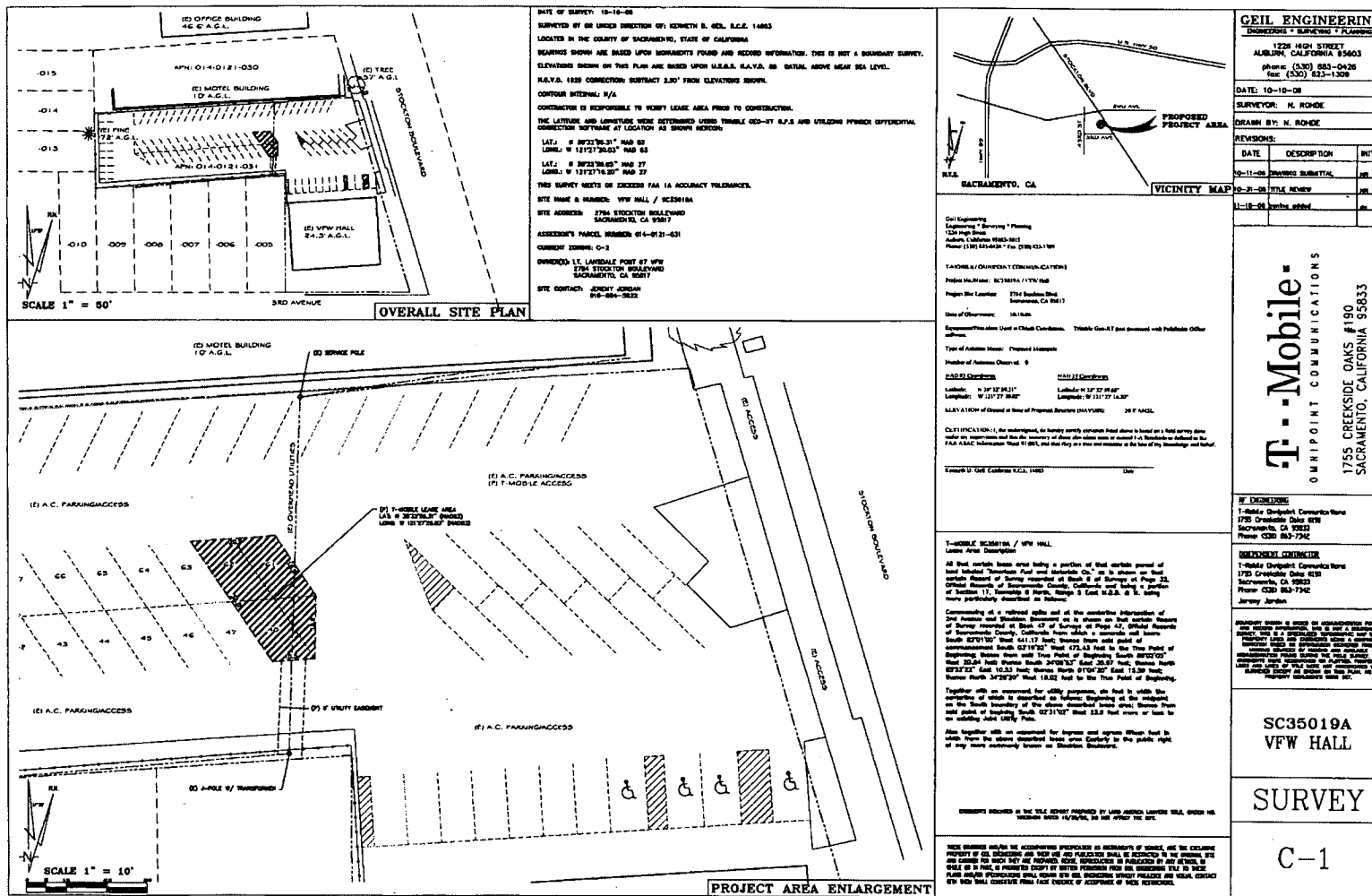
- B7.** Any future proposed collocation or addition of antennas must be designed and camouflaged to continue the illusion of the pine tree, such as recessing the antennas and painting them to match surrounding branches.
- B8.** Should the applicant discontinue using the tower for wireless services, the applicant shall remove the stealth tree monopole, the antennas, the equipment cabinets, and any associated equipment within six months of termination.
- B9.** The chain link fence with vinyl slates shall remain graffiti free and in sound structural condition for the duration of the operation of the facility. No barbed wire or concertina wire shall be permitted. Removal of graffiti and/or repair of damage to the monopole or fencing are the responsibility of T-Mobile.
- B10.** The light within the equipment lease area is to remain off at all times except during the time that the equipment lease area is attended to onsite by a representative of T-Mobile.
- B11.** The applicant shall periodically review the condition of the tree trunk and camouflaging branches for maintenance and repairs. The applicant shall repair and repaint any deteriorating tree elements as needed.

#### **Advisory Notes**

##### **Utilities**

1. This project is served by the Combined Sewer System (CSS), however based on the project description there will be no significant impact to the CSS.
2. The applicant must comply with the City of Sacramento's Grading, Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance. This ordinance requires the applicant to prepare erosion and sediment control plans for both during and after construction of the proposed project, prepare preliminary and final grading plans, and prepare plans to control urban runoff pollution from the project site during construction.
3. The proposed project is located in the Flood zone designated as X zone on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Federal Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that have been revised by a letter of Map Revision effective February 18, 2005. Within the X zone, there are no requirements to elevate or flood proof.

Exhibit 1A - Site Plan







**Attachment 2 – Land Use and Zoning Map**

