

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

**DATE:** December 16, 2021

**TO:** Zoning Hearing Officer

**FROM:** Planning Staff

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of Use Permit Renewal, pursuant to Section 6512.6 of the Zoning Regulations, to allow the continued operation of an existing wireless telecommunication facility operated by Verizon Wireless. The project site is located at 106 Princeton Avenue in the unincorporated Princeton-by-the-Sea area of San Mateo County.

County File Numbers: PLN 2006-00182 (Verizon Wireless)

**PROPOSAL**

The project applicant, Christopher Fowler of On Air LLC, proposes on behalf of Verizon Wireless to renew an existing Use Permit (PLN 2006-00182) to allow the continued operation of a wireless telecommunication facility located at 106 Princeton Avenue in the unincorporated Princeton area of San Mateo County. No physical changes are proposed to the facility under this renewal, aside from a separate Building permit case (BLD 2021-01199) involving minor modifications, which qualifies for Federal preemption under the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, that includes replacement of three (3) antennas, addition of two (2) antennas, relocation of three (3) existing antennas, replacement of two (2) RRUS, installation of five (5) new antennas, relocation of two (2) RRUS, addition of six (6) twin diplexers, replacement of one (1) surge suppressor, installation of four (4) new surge suppressors, replacement of one(1) hybrid cable, and installation of two (2) new hybrid cables.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Zoning Hearing Officer approve the Use Permit Renewal, County File No. PLN 2006-00182 by making the required findings and adopting the conditions of approval listed in Attachment A.

**BACKGROUND**

Report Prepared By: Glen Jia, Project Planner; [bjia@smcgov.org](mailto:bjia@smcgov.org)

Applicant: Christopher Fowler of On Air LLC for Verizon Wireless

Owner: Romeo Packing Company

Location: 106 Princeton Avenue in the unincorporated Princeton-by-the-Sea area

APN: 047-034-320

Parcel Size: 3,500 sq. ft.

Existing Zoning: W/DR/CD (Waterfront District/Design Review District/Coastal Development District)

General Plan Designation: General Industrial

Existing Land Use: Wireless Telecommunication Facility and Fertilizer Packing Plant

Water Supply: N/A

Sewage Disposal: N/A

Flood Zone: N/A

Environmental Evaluation: The project is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1, of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for the continued operation of existing public or private facilities involving no physical changes or expansion of use.

Setting: The project parcel is located in the southwestern area of the Princeton-by-the-Sea community and is surrounded primarily by warehouses. The rear of the parcel (cellular facility lease area) is accessed by an existing asphalt alley that comes off Princeton Avenue. The parcel is currently developed with an existing 12-foot tall, 1,140-square foot warehouse. The existing cellular facility includes an outdoor chain link fenced lease area where the tower and antennas are located and approximately 396 sq. ft. of the rear portion of the adjacent warehouse building leased to Verizon Wireless and used as an equipment room. The existing wireless telecommunication facility consists of one (1) 50-foot-tall monopole, with Verizon panel antennas at 47 feet 8 inches high (centerline). Associated equipment for the wireless telecommunication facility is located adjacent to the monopole.

Chronology:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
July 9, 2021	Received application and payment for use permit renewal for Planning case numbers PLN 2006-00182 (Verizon).
July 15, 2021	Project deemed incomplete

July 15, 2021                      Resubmittal received  
August 14, 2021                      Project deemed complete.  
December 16, 2021                      Zoning Hearing Officer public hearing.

**DISCUSSION**

A.    **KEY ISSUES**

1.    **Conformance with the General Plan**

The project continues to conform with the applicable General Plan policies for Visual Quality and Land Use as no physical changes to the existing permitted facility are proposed.

2.    **Conformance with Zoning Regulations**

The project site is located within the W/DR/CD (Waterfront District/Design Review District/Coastal Development District) zoning district. The existing wireless telecommunication facility is operating under PLN 2006-00182 (Use Permit). No physical changes are proposed.

3.    **Conformance with Local Coastal Program**

As the parcel is not in an R-1 Zoning District, the project is not subject to design review by the Coastside Design Review Committee. Non-residential design review in the Coastal Zone is guided primarily by the Local Coastal Program. Staff has determined that the project complies with all applicable Local Coastal Program (LCP) policies, specifically:

- a.    Policy 8.13.b(2) (*Special Design Guidelines for Coastal Communities*). This policy requires that industrial structures be designed to employ architectural detailing, subdued colors, textured building materials, and landscaping to add visual interest and soften the harsh lines of standard or stock building forms normally used in industrial districts. The project is a utility structure that is painted to blend in with its surroundings to be as unobtrusive as possible and continues to conform with the special design guidelines as no physical changes to the existing permitted facility are proposed.

4.    **Conformance with Wireless Telecommunication Facilities Ordinance**

Staff has determined that the project complies with the applicable standards of the Wireless Telecommunication Facilities (WTF) Ordinance, as discussed below:

a. *Development and Design Standards*

Section 6512.2.E – G seeks to minimize and mitigate visual impacts from public views by designing facilities to blend in with the surrounding environment, painting equipment to blend with the surrounding environment and/or buildings and requiring facilities to be constructed of non-reflective materials.

The existing facility blends in with the surrounding environment and is constructed of non-reflective materials. No physical changes to the facility are proposed.

5. Conformance with Use Permit Findings

In order to approve the subject Use Permit renewal, the Zoning Hearing Officer must make the following findings:

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

The existing telecommunication facility is located in an industrial area in the unincorporated Princeton-by-the-Sea area of San Mateo County, which minimizes impacts to surrounding coastal resources, residences and businesses. No physical changes to the facilities are proposed.

- b. *That the telecommunication facilities are necessary for the public health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the community.*

Staff has determined that the continued operation of the existing cellular facility at this location will allow for continued cellular communication coverage for private citizens and businesses. The existing wireless telecommunication facility has been in existence for over ten years. Community members, businesspersons, and residents have come to rely on the coverage provided by these sites to facilitate daily conversation and to provide assistance in emergency situations.

5. Conformance with Conditions of Last Use Permit Approvals

Staff has reviewed the previous use permit conditions of approval for Verizon (PLN 2006-00182), last approved May 6, 2010, and have determined the Verizon is in compliance with all previous conditions, see

Attachments E. No physical changes are proposed as part of the renewal. Previous conditions that remain relevant, along with new conditions, are included in Attachment A of this staff report.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1, of the CEQA Guidelines for the continued operation of existing public or private facilities involving no alterations or expansion of use as no physical changes are proposed.

C. REVIEWING AGENCIES

San Mateo County Building Inspection Section  
San Mateo County Department of Public Works  
Coastside Fire Protection District

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Recommended Findings and Conditions of Approval
- B. Location Map
- C. Project Plans
- D. Photos of Existing Wireless Telecommunication Facility
- E. PLN 2006-00182 Previous Conditions

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County of San Mateo  
Planning and Building Department

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

Permit or Project File Number: PLN 2006-00182      Hearing Date: December 16, 2021

Prepared By: Glen Jia, Project Planner      For Adoption By: Zoning Hearing Officer

**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS**

Regarding the Environmental Review, Find:

1. That the project is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1, of the CEQA Guidelines for the continued operation of existing public or private facilities involving no physical changes and no expansion of use.

Regarding the Use Permit, Find:

2. That the establishment, maintenance and/or conducting of the use will not, under the circumstances of these particular cases, result in a significant adverse impact to coastal resources, or be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the said neighborhood because the facility meets current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) standards and have been conditioned to maintain valid FCC and California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) licenses. The telecommunication facility is located in an industrial area in the unincorporated Princeton-by-the-Sea area of San Mateo County, which minimizes impacts to surrounding coastal resources, residences and businesses. With regard to visual impacts, the tower and antennas blend with the surroundings. No physical changes to the facility are proposed. Furthermore, the radio frequency emissions compliance report confirms the telecommunication facility does not exceed the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) General Population limits, and thus does not cause any significant impacts on the environment.
3. That the wireless telecommunication facility is necessary for public health, safety, convenience or welfare since it provides cellular coverage in the area for both public and private users who have come to rely on the coverage provided by the facility for daily conversation and to provide assistance in emergency situations.

## **RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

### **Current Planning Section**

1. This approval applies only to the proposal, documents, and plans described in this report and materials approved by the Zoning Hearing Officer on November 4, 2021. The Community Development Director may approve minor revisions or modifications to the project if they are consistent with the intent of and in substantial conformance with this approval.
2. This permit shall be valid until November 4, 2031, ten (10) years from the date of approval. Renewal of this permit shall be applied for six (6) months prior to expiration to the Planning and Building Department and shall be accompanied by the renewal application and fees applicable at that time.
3. This use permit shall be for the proposed project only. Any change or change in intensity of use shall require an amendment to the applicable use permit. Amendments to the use permit require an application for amendment, payment of applicable fees, and consideration at a public hearing.
4. 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.
5. The applicant shall maintain all necessary licenses and registrations from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and any other applicable regulatory bodies for the operation of the subject facility at this site. The applicant shall supply the Planning Department with evidence of such licenses and registrations. If any required license is ever revoked, the applicant shall inform the Planning Department of the revocation within ten (10) days of receiving notice of such revocation.
6. 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.
7. The applicant shall maintain the chain link fence with slats in good condition and perform repairs as necessary to continue its function as a screening device for the equipment cabinets. Any damage to the fence shall be promptly repaired. All repairs shall match the appearance, materials, and workmanship of the fence as originally constructed.

8. There shall be no external lighting associated with this use. The wireless telecommunication facility shall not be lighted or marked unless required by the FCC or Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
9. If technically practical and without creating any interruption in commercial service caused by electronic magnetic interference (EMI), floor space, tower space and/or rack space for equipment in a wireless telecommunication facility shall be made available to the County for public safety communication use.
10. The applicant shall be responsible for painting and/or maintaining the antennas and monopole in the originally approved and painted color. Any proposal to change the color shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to painting.
11. Equipment cabinets shall be painted and/or maintained in a grey or neutral color to match the surroundings and shall not be reflective. Any proposal to change the color shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to painting.
12. The fence surrounding the equipment cabinets shall be maintained in good condition, and any damage to the fence shall be promptly repaired. Any repaired sections of the fence shall match the appearance of the existing fence.
13. Lighting for the equipment cabinet shall be directed to the ground and be the minimum amount required for maintenance purposes. Any change in lighting shall be subject to review and approval by the Planning Department.
14. The applicant shall not enter into a contract with the landowner or lessee that reserves for one company exclusive use of structures on this site for telecommunication facilities.
15. Operation of the generator for testing purposes shall be conducted between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The generator shall not be operated for testing purposes for more than 26 hours annually. Operation of the generator during power outages will not count toward the stated annual time limitation.
16. A current permit from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District shall be maintained while the generator operates on the site.

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