



**THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

DATE: August 11, 2021

TO: City of San Diego Hearing Officer

FROM: Nilia Safi, Development Project Manager, Development Services Department

SUBJECT: T-Mobile Mission Village CUP – Project No. 664070, Hearing Officer agenda Item No. 1 for the August 18, 2021 docket

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Attached is a revised Hearing Officer Report for Item No. 1 (T-Mobile Mission Village CUP).

The modified report includes a revised CEQA statement located on the first page (Attachment 1). The original report cited CEQA Section 15303 (Existing Facilities) where the statement should read CEQA Section 15303 (New Construction).

Sincerely,

Nilia Safi  
Development Project Manager

Attachment:

1. Hearing Officer Report (Revised)

cc: File



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Hearing Officer

DATE ISSUED: August 11, 2021 REPORT NO. HO-21-035

HEARING DATE: August 18, 2021

SUBJECT: T-Mobile Mission Village CUP Process Three Decision

PROJECT NUMBER: [664070](#)

OWNER/APPLICANT: Mission Village Christian Fellowship/T-Mobile

### SUMMARY

Issue: Should the Hearing Officer approve a Wireless Communication Facility (WCF) located at 2650 Melbourne Drive, in the Serra Mesa Community Planning Area?

Staff Recommendation: Approve Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 2565029.

Community Planning Group Recommendation: On March 18, 2021, the Serra Mesa Community Planning Group voted 13-0-0 to recommend approval of the proposed project with a condition/recommendation (Attachment 8).

Environmental Review: This project was determined to be categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA section 15303 (New Construction). This project is not pending an appeal of the environmental determination. The environmental exemption determination for this project was made on July 12, 2021 and the opportunity to appeal that determination ended July 26, 2021 (Attachment 7).

### BACKGROUND:

T-Mobile is proposing to construct a new Wireless Communication Facility (WCF) located at 2650 Melbourne Drive within the RS-1-7 zone (Residential-Single Unit) of the Serra Mesa Community Planning area. Land uses surrounding the project site include Open Space-Park Land to the west, Juarez Elementary School to the east, a religious facility to the north and single family residential to the south (Attachments 1, 2, and 3). According to the current regulations and pursuant to San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) Section [141.0420\(c\)\(1\)\(A\)\(i\)](#), the project as designed requires a Conditional Use Permit, Process Three, Hearing Officer decision as the project is in in a residential zone on a premises that does not contain residential development. Wireless communication facilities are permitted in all zones citywide with the appropriate permit process. Wireless communication facilities are separately regulated uses, which have limitations or require compliance with

conditions in order to minimize potential impacts. The intent of the regulations is to camouflage facilities from public view.

DISCUSSION:

T-Mobile proposes a WCF consisting of nine (9) panel antennas and six Remote Radio Units (RRUs) located inside the upper portion of a new tower mimicking the architecture design of an existing church located on the same premises. (Attachment 10, Figure 1 and 2). The tower will be a 169 square-foot, 30-foot tall freestanding structure supporting the antennas in the upper portion behind Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic (FRP) screen walls with the equipment located at ground level within the building envelop (Attachment 9). The tower will be designed and painted to match the existing church structure to include similar window trim, windows and roof line pursuant to the design



Figure 1: Proposed Photo Simulation of Architecture Tower



Figure 2: Proposed Photo Simulation of Architecture Tower

requirements of [SDMC Section 142.0420\(d\)](#) and the [WCF Design Guidelines](#). The 13-foot by 13-foot by 30-foot tall dimension of the tower is the smallest, least visually intrusive structure to support the propose WCF and provide cellular communication required for the area. The Telecommunication Act of 1996 preempts local governments from regulating the "placement, construction and modification of wireless communication facilities on the basis of the environmental effects of Radio Frequency (RF) emissions to the extent that such facilities comply with the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) standards for such emissions. A Radio Frequency – Electromagnetic Energy (RF-EME) Compliance Report (NSB) dated April 20, 2020 from EBI Consulting, was submitted to the City verifying that the proposed project meets or exceeds the requirements of the FCC. The report will be stamped as Exhibit "A" and provided within the project file

Council Policy 600-43 (Wireless Communication Facilities) assigns preference levels to WCFs proposed on different land uses, with Preference 1 being the highest and Preference 4 the lowest. The subject WCF is considered a Preference 3 as it is a non-residential facility in a residential zone requiring a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Process Three approval. If approved, T-Mobile will provide upgraded wireless communication service to the surrounding area. Other WCF locations were considered which included Gethsemane Lutheran church located at 2696 Melbourne Drive to the north and Juarez Elementary School to the east. However, the Lutheran church was not interested in housing a WCF and the elementary school is the least preferred location according Council Policy 600-43 location hierarchy. Therefore, the subject location was chosen for the placement of this WCF.

#### Community Plan:

The Serra Mesa Community Plan does not contemplate or address Wireless Communications Facilities (WCFs). However, the City of San Diego's General Plan Section UD-15 requires that the visual impacts from wireless facilities be minimized by concealing wireless facilities inside existing structures or using screening techniques to hide or blend them into the surrounding area. T-Mobile has designed this WCF to integrate the new WCF facility with the existing facility to have minimal visual impact to the surrounding area.

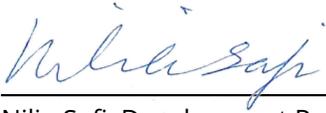
#### Conclusion:

Based on its design, the project complies with the WCF Regulations ([SDMC 141.0420](#)). Staff has prepared draft findings in the affirmative to approve the project and recommends approval of Conditional Use permit No. 2565029 (Attachment 5).

#### ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve Conditional Use Permit No. 2565029, with modifications.
2. Deny Conditional Use Permit No. 2565029, if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nilia Safi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Nilia Safi, Development Project Manager

Attachments:

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Community Plan Land Use Map
3. Project Location Map
4. Project Data Sheet
5. Draft Resolution with Findings
6. Draft Permit with Conditions
7. Environmental Exemption
8. Community Planning Group Recommendation
9. Project Plans
10. Photo Simulations