

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Permit File Number: PLN 2000-00497

Board Meeting Date: November 9, 2010

Prepared By: Jim Eggemeyer
Community Development Director

For Adoption By: Board of Supervisors

RECOMMENDED FINDINGS

For the Environmental Review, Find:

1. That this project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 15301, Class 1, relating to operation or permitting of existing private structures or facilities involving no expansion of use.

For the Use Permit, Find:

2. That the establishment, maintenance, and conducting of the proposed use will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, result in a significant adverse impact, or be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in said neighborhood. The impacts from the continued operation of this facility, subject to the recommended conditions of approval, will be minimal. Because the facility is unmanned and only requires periodic service visits, continued operation of the facility should not generate additional traffic, noise, or intensity of use of the property.
3. The use is for telecommunication services. The FCC has established, through the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the desirability and need for wireless communications facilities to enable communication between mobile units and the existing wire-dependent telephone system. As shown in the site alternatives analysis, this facility handles a large volume of calls per day and plays an integral role in providing cellular coverage along the Edgewood Road corridor. Removal of this facility would significantly impact the public's ability to communicate with the Emergency-911 network in the case of an accident. Alternative sites would not be able to provide the same level of coverage as this site, and thus could potentially have a negative impact upon the public's ability to access the Emergency-911 network. This facility contributes to an enhanced wireless network for increased clarity, range, and system capacity, and therefore is a benefit to both public and private users. This facility is considered necessary for public health, safety, convenience, and welfare, particularly in the case of a large-scale natural disaster, such as an earthquake or wildland fire. No adverse effects to public safety would result from the continued operation of this facility.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Planning and Building Department

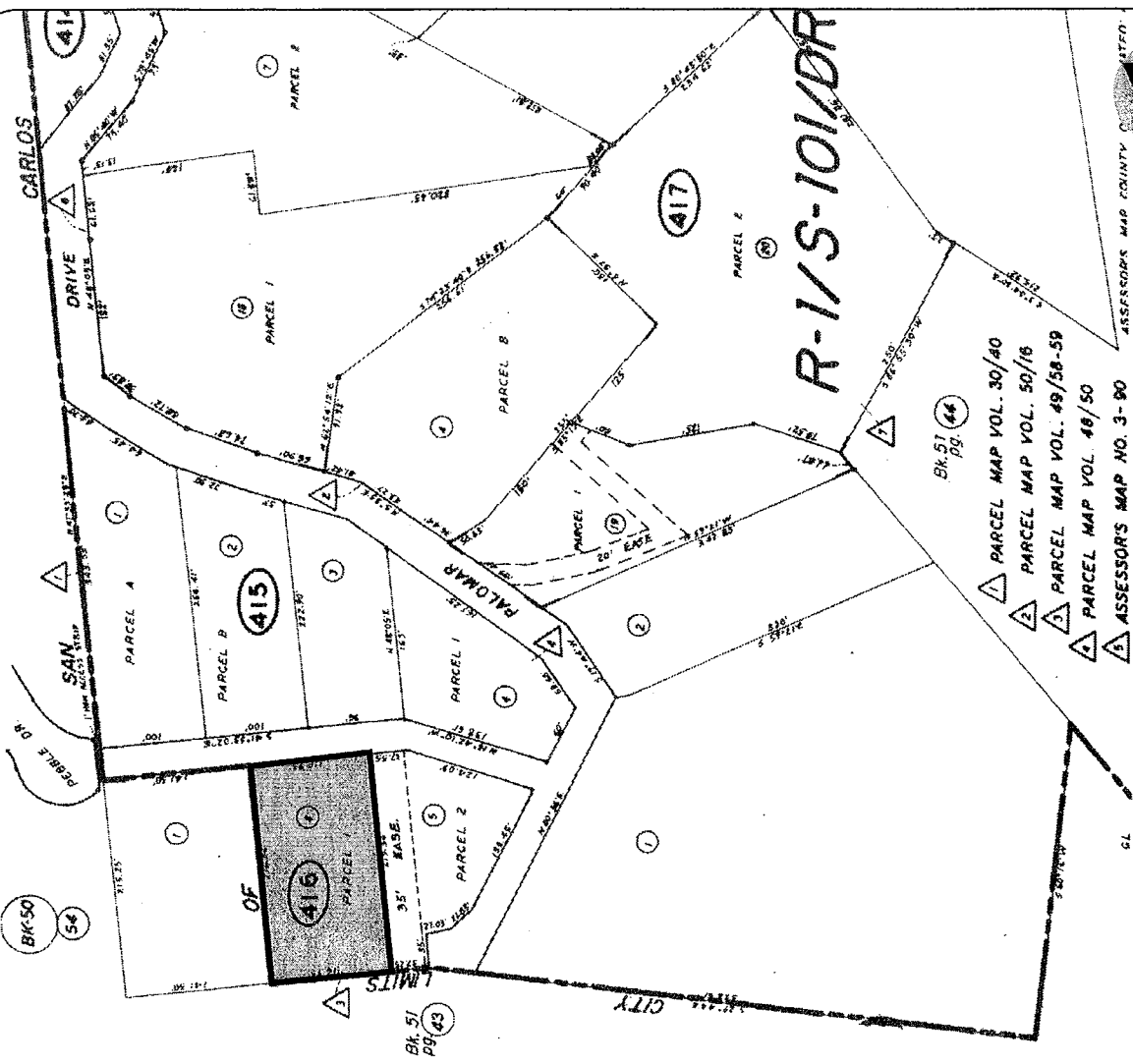
1. This approval applies only to the proposal as described in this report and plans and documents submitted to the Planning Department on July 14, 2000, except as modified by these findings and conditions of approval. Sprint will, within 180 days of the final action by the County Board of Supervisors, relocate the antennas and equipment from the Sprint monopole located on the northwest edge of the property to the Sprint monopole on the southwest edge of the property and remove the Sprint monopole located on the northwest edge of the property. Minor adjustments to the project, in the course of applying for building permits, may be approved by the Community Development Director if they are consistent with the intent of and in substantial conformance with this use permit renewal.
2. The applicant shall show completion of all aspects of the open building permit (BLD 2000-01628), within four months of use permit renewal, or shall show proof of such work sufficient to allow finalizing of the building permit. Sprint may modify the Sprint monopole located on the southwest edge of the property, its foundation, or its support structure as reasonably necessary to accommodate the installation and operation of additional antennas consistent with this approval.
3. This use permit shall be valid for a 15-year period (with the term commencing the day before the date Sprint's permit PLN 2000-00497 would have expired) and shall expire on November 17, 2020. The applicant shall file for a renewal of this permit six months prior to the expiration with the County Planning and Building Department, if continuation of this use is desired. Any modifications to this facility not specifically provided by these conditions of approval will require a use permit amendment. If an amendment is requested, the applicant shall submit the necessary documents and fees for consideration at a public hearing.
4. The monopole and antennas shall be repainted in the originally approved and painted color, "enviro-green." Metal fencing with green plastic slats shall be maintained in good condition. Any proposed change to the color shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Department prior to painting. Any new color proposed shall blend with the character of the site and the vegetation in the vicinity.
5. Construction and maintenance hours shall be Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and no construction will be allowed on Sundays or national holidays.
6. Noise levels produced by the proposed construction activity shall not exceed 80 dBA level at any one moment.
7. The installation shall be removed in its entirety at that time when this technology becomes obsolete or this facility is no longer needed.

8. The applicant shall submit an erosion control plan which implements best management practices to prevent erosion and sedimentation during the entire construction process prior to building permit issuance. The plan shall include, but is not limited to: (1) installation of silt blankets and fiber rolls below all areas of earth clearing, (2) covering of surcharges for protection from rain and wind erosion, and (3) replanting all disturbed areas immediately upon completion of construction with indigenous vegetation.
9. During project construction, the applicant shall, pursuant to Section 5022 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code, minimize the transport and discharge of storm-water runoff from the construction site into storm drain systems and water bodies by:
 - a. Disposing of removed soil in a County-approved landfill, or by spreading the soil in the immediate vicinity employing the above erosion control techniques at a depth not to exceed 6 inches in height.
 - b. Stabilizing all denuded areas and maintaining erosion control measures continuously between October 15 and April 15.
 - c. Removing spoils promptly and avoiding stockpiling of fill materials when rain is forecast. If rain threatens, stockpiled soils and other materials shall be covered with a tarp or other waterproof material.
 - d. Storing, handling, and disposing of construction materials and wastes so as to avoid their entry to the storm drain system or water body.
 - e. Avoid cleaning, fueling or maintaining vehicles on-site, except in an area designated to contain and treat runoff.
 - f. The applicant shall revegetate construction areas with native plant materials (trees, shrubs, and/or groundcover), which are compatible with the surrounding vegetation and are suitable to the climate, soil, and ecological characteristics of the area.

California Department of Forestry

10. Maintain, around and adjacent to, such buildings or structures, a fuelbreak/fire break made by removing and clearing away flammable vegetation for a minimum distance of 30 feet. Remove dead or dying portion of any tree which extends over any structure.

11. All buildings and structures must have an address posted in such a location and in such a manner that it can be easily seen while traveling in both directions on the main road day or night. Numerals shall be contrasting in color to their background and shall be no less than 4 inches in height, and have a minimum stroke of 3/4 inch.
12. All proposed enclosed structures on the site shall be equipped with an approved FM 200 fire protection system or equivalent which shall be maintained for the duration of the use permit.
13. Access must be provided from the street to the access gate at the proposed site. The access must be provided in such a manner that emergency crews can get emergency medical equipment and fire fighting equipment to the scene.
14. The existing metal fence with slats shall be maintained to protect the facility.
15. The project site shall remain accessible at all times. If an entry gate is installed, then a Knox Box is required at the entry gate to allow emergency personnel access to the site in case of an emergency. Contact the County Fire Department at 650/573-3846 for details.

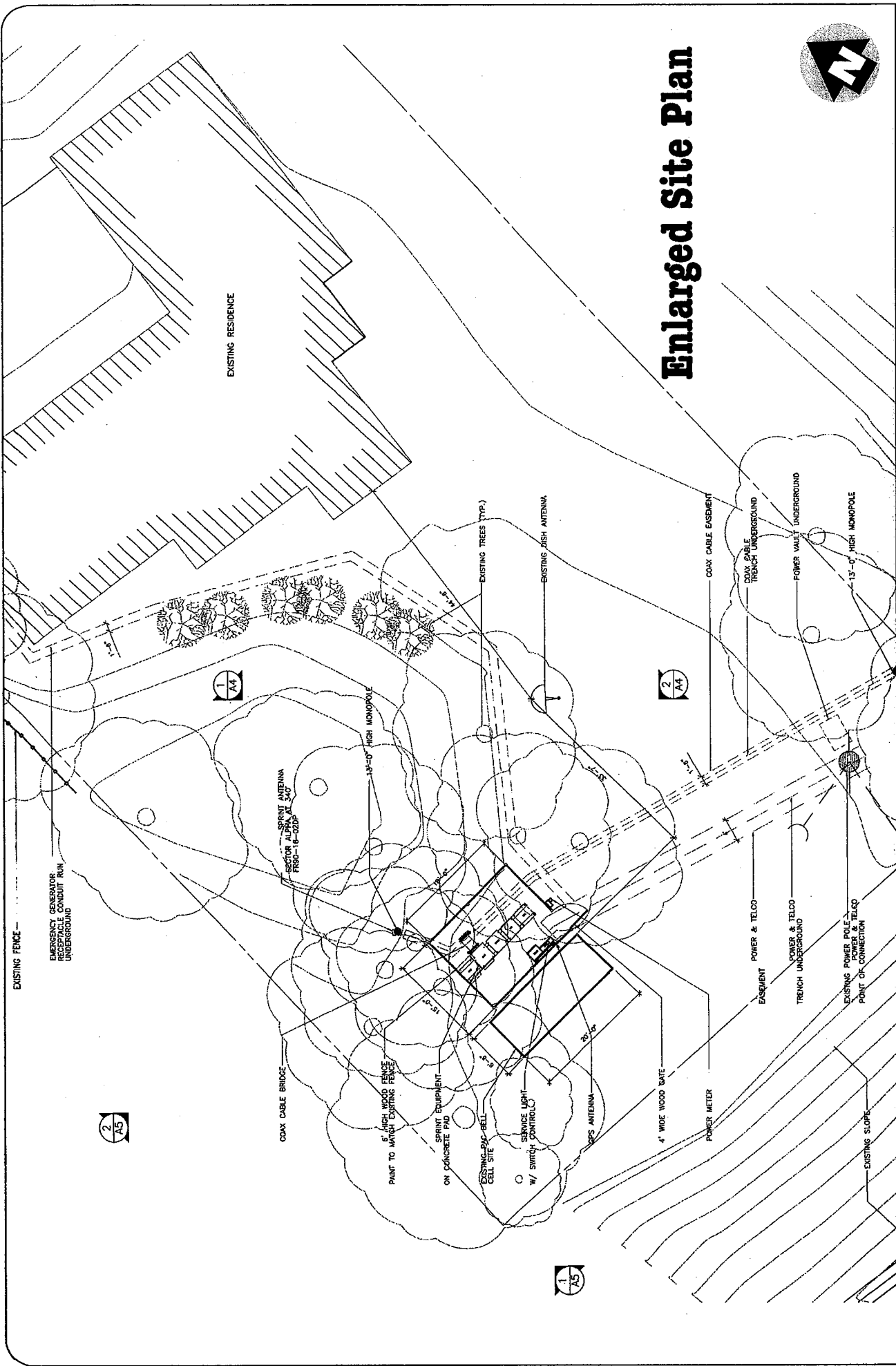


San Mateo County Board of Supervisors' Meeting

Applicant: **Sprint**

File Numbers: **PLN2000-00497**

Attachment: **B**



Enlarged Site Plan



San Mateo County Board of Supervisors' Meeting

Applicant: **Sprint**

Attachment: **C**

File Numbers: **PLN2000-00497**



Date: 12/5/08

Subject: **Executive Summary:** Alternative site study for purposes of settlement discussion between Sprint/Nextel ("Sprint") and County of San Mateo with respect to a denied Use Permit renewal for operation of an existing cellular communications facility consisting of two (2) 13-foot tall monopoles and one (1) equipment enclosure measuring 18 feet by 15 feet located in the rear yard of the residential property located at 1175 Palomar Drive in the unincorporated Palomar Park area of San Mateo County ("Cell Site").

County File No.: PLN2000-00497 (Sprint/Nextel)

OVERVIEW

As part of the parties' ongoing confidential settlement negotiations, the County has requested that Sprint provide an additional alternative site study for the Cell Site highlighting the potential impacts that removal or relocation of the Cell Site would have on coverage and public safety. On October 30, 2008, Sprint RF Engineer Chris Cubanske and Sprint Project Manager Greg Altomare re-evaluated the search area for possible additional alternative candidates. To facilitate this evaluation, additional data was collected to augment the initial report provided by Sprint's site acquisition staff from NSA Wireless, Inc., dated October 9, 2007. Sprint also conducted field evaluations in search of alternative candidates that would provide the same level of service as currently existing. The investigation resulted in the following alternatives analysis.

BACKGROUND

The Cell Site is an existing on-air site located on residential property at 1175 Palomar Drive, Redwood City, California, atop a hill overlooking Edgewood Road to the west, and Cordilleras Road to the east. The Cell Site was constructed and landscaped so as to have little to no visual impact on the surrounding properties or neighborhood. The existing Cell Site cannot be seen from Edgewood Road or the residential development at the Edgewood Drive/Crestview Drive intersection, including Fleetwood Drive and Edmond Drive (see Photos 1 and 2). Sprint's wireless CDMA service currently exists to the west via a wireless facility located at #17 PG&E tower, located north of Edgewood Road at Highway 280, and to the east via a Sprint telecommunication site located at 170 Alameda de Las Pulgas. The Cell Site is positioned directly in-between these two sites and provides for successful call completion and hand-off.



The Cell Site provides coverage for three specific geographic areas: Sector A, Sector B, and Sector C. Sector A provides coverage to the residential areas directly to the north of the site, bordered by Brittan Avenue and Crestview Drive. Currently, Sector A routes, on average, 264 successfully completed calls ("SCC") per day and 680 minutes of usage ("MOU") per day through the Cell Site. Sector B provides contiguous coverage from the PG&E tower on Edgewood Road to the west, covering Highway 280 (see Photo 3). Sector B routes, on average, 203 SCC and 625 MOU per day through the Cell Site. Sector C provides contiguous coverage along Edgewood Road to Cordilleras Road and beyond (see Photo 4). Sector C usage averages 2,215 SCC and 5,462 MOU per day. This high level of usage underscores the significant negative impacts that would result if the Cell Site were removed, a fact also illustrated by the coverage maps that Sprint submitted to the County during the zoning appeals process which depicts Sprint's coverage both with and without the Cell Site, thereby outlining the poor coverage that would result if the existing Cell Site were removed. In addition to the impact on daily usage, removing the existing Cell Site would preclude access to necessary emergency services. The Cell Site averages four (4) E-911 calls per month; if the Cell Site were removed, these critical calls could not be completed. Thus, there are significant coverage and public safety implications associated with the removal of the Cell Site.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Candidate One: The Mormon Church Located at 1475 Edgewood Road

This site is at the entrance to Palomar Park at Scenic Drive. The site is approximately 500 feet below the existing Cell Site and would not be a viable candidate to replace the existing Cell Site.

In terms of coverage, this candidate would provide less than 25% of the coverage currently provided by the existing Cell Site. The candidate sits at a substantially lower elevation than the current Cell Site. As a result of this lower elevation, the candidate could not replace coverage for Sectors A and B. Further, because of the easterly location and lower elevation, the candidate could not provide coverage along the entire length of Edgewood Drive. Even if Sprint constructed a 75 foot tower at the candidate location, coverage would drop around Crestview Drive, leaving a coverage gap between Crestwood Drive and Highway 280. Thus, at best, this candidate could merely serve as a partial replacement for Sector C.

In terms of visual impacts, a 75 foot pole or tower would provide a much more visible impact than the existing Cell Site, especially to the surrounding residential communities. This is not, however, the only visual drawback that would arise from using this location: because of the candidate's inability to replace coverage for Sectors A and C, Sprint would have to place additional antennae to compensate for the lost coverage, which would result in additional visual impacts.



Finally, in terms of cost, this alternative is significantly inferior to the existing Cell Site. While the candidate does have existing vehicular access for construction and maintenance, to operate at this location Sprint would have to construct a new structure and locate new equipment, all of which typically costs between \$100,000 and \$150,000. In addition, because multiple sites would be needed to approximate the existing coverage, the final costs could ultimately be double or triple the amounts estimated above.

Candidate Two: The Medical Building Located on Edmonds Drive

This site is next to the Cal Fire County Engine House #18 (previously known as the California Department of Forestry). This site is also approximately 500 feet below the existing Cell Site and would not be a viable candidate to replace the existing Cell Site.

In terms of coverage, this candidate would also provide less than 25% of the coverage of the existing Cell Site. While the candidate location does have a flagpole at the top of the Engine House, the pole would need to be replaced and raised to a total height of approximately 150 feet. Even with the increased pole height, however, like Candidate One, the lower elevation prevents this candidate from replacing coverage for much of Sectors A and C. Thus, this candidate location could merely serve as a potential replacement for Sector B. However, because of the close proximity of this candidate to the existing facility at the PG&E tower #17 located next to Highway 280 and Edgewood Road, even the coverage benefits with respect to Sector B would be severely diminished.

In terms of visual impacts, a pole or tower extending to a height of 150 feet would have obvious visual impacts to the residential communities around and above the site, as well as to vehicles traveling along Edgewood Road. As with Candidate One, this candidate's inability to replace coverage for Sectors A and C would force Sprint to construct multiple sites, thereby increasing the visual impact of using this location.

Finally, in terms of cost, this alternative is also markedly inferior to the existing Cell Site. While the candidate does have existing vehicular access for construction and maintenance, to operate at this location Sprint would have to construct a new structure and locate new equipment, all of which typically costs between \$100,000 and \$150,000. In addition, because multiple sites would be needed to approximate the existing coverage, the final costs could ultimately be double or triple the amounts estimated above.



Candidate Three: The Clifford K-8 School Located at Scenic Drive

This is a single story building located at approximately the same elevation as Edgewood Road. Like the other Candidates, this site is also approximately 500 feet below the existing Cell Site and would not be a viable candidate to replace the existing Cell Site.

Even if Sprint installed a pole or tower to a height of 100 to 150 feet, this location would provide replacement coverage for less than 25% of Sector A, and only a portion of Sector C. Further, the easterly location prevents this site from providing replacement coverage for the entirety of Sector B. Thus, in terms of coverage, assuming the installation of a 100 to 150 foot tower, this candidate would still provide only a very small percentage of the coverage that the existing Cell Site provides.

Visual impacts and costs would be similar to those of Candidate One. However, it is worth noting that a 100 to 150 foot pole or tower at the elementary school would have obvious visual impacts to the school students, employees, and surrounding neighborhood.

Candidate Four: The Palomar Park Open Space Location

This location is a public open space park area, consisting of undeveloped, raw land. Like the other Candidates, this site would not be a viable candidate to replace the existing Cell Site.

In terms of coverage, by placing a monopole of approximately 50 feet on top of the hill above the public parking lot off of Edgewood Road, this candidate could potentially replace a substantial percentage of Sprint's current coverage. Specifically, with a 50 foot monopole, this site could provide replacement coverage for much of Sectors B and C, and at least a portion of Sector A.

While coverage would be superior to the first three Candidate sites, in terms of visual impacts and costs, this site is extremely impractical. Unlike the other candidates, this site has no vehicular access or utilities to the proposed pole location. Accordingly, all utilities would have to be brought in from Edgewood Road via an underground trench, and a vehicular access road would have to be built from Edgewood Road. The roadway would need to be approximately 1,000 feet long. Typical construction costs for utility trenching can be \$35 a foot, and a paved road with switchbacks, erosion control and fire engine turnaround could cost \$50 a foot. Thus, in addition to the typical cell site construction costs (approximately \$100,000 – \$150,000), this location would cost Sprint an additional \$85 - \$100,000. Looking beyond the substantial cost issues, the paved road, utility trenching and communications tower would have a significant visual impact on the public open space park area. And, unlike the current Cell Site, the visual impacts associated with this location would be seen by all the surrounding residential communities.



CONCLUSION

The Sprint site at 1175 Palomar Drive provides important wireless voice and data service and critical E-911 emergency calling capabilities to a major San Mateo County thoroughfare, Edgewood Road. This site also provides "good" in-building coverage to the Palomar Park and Crestview neighborhood. The nature of wireless technology is constantly evolving from mobile phone applications to data service; mobile phones provide internet connections, air cards for laptop and home computers, and a replacement for landline phone service. The average completed call volume for just two of the three sectors in which the Cell Site provides coverage (A and C) exceeds 14,000 per month. The average completed call volume for the east facing sector servicing Edgewood Road exceeds 80,000 calls per month. While it is feasible to provide some level of replacement coverage along Edgewood Road with one or more of the alternative sites, no alternate could provide the same service coverage currently available in the residential areas or along the commuter corridor. In addition, the visual and financial impacts of constructing one or more replacement sites make removal of the existing Cell Site extremely infeasible. The existing Cell Site is the only feasible alternative with respect to coverage, visual and environmental impacts, and financial costs.

Sprint



Together with NEXTEL

Photo 1(close): From Residential Homes at Bottom of Hill
(Edgewood Road/Crestview Drive)
[The Sprint monopoles cannot be seen in this picture.
The utility pole seen provides power and landline service.]



Photo 2 (Far): From Residential Homes at Bottom of Hill
(Edgewood Road/Crestview Drive)
[The Sprint monopoles cannot be seen in this picture.
The utility pole seen provides power and landline service.]



Sprint

Together with NEXTEL

Photo 3: Sector B Existing Coverage Edgewood Road to HWY 280



Photo 4: Sector C Existing Coverage Edgewood Road to Cordilleras Road

