

**Office of Planning and
Environmental Review**
Leighann Moffitt, Director



County Executive
Navdeep S. Gill

Negative Declaration

Pursuant to Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Article 6, Sections 15070 and 15071 of the California Code of Regulations and pursuant to the Procedures for Preparation and Processing of Environmental Documents adopted by the County of Sacramento pursuant to Sacramento County Ordinance No. SCC-116, the Environmental Coordinator of Sacramento County, State of California, does prepare, make, declare, publish, and cause to be filed with the County Clerk of Sacramento County, State of California, this Negative Declaration re: The Project described as follows:

1. **Control Number:** PLNP2019-00137
2. **Title and Short Description of Project:** Kiefer Wireless Communication Facilities
A **Use Permit** to allow a new 55 foot tall monopole on a 1.89 acre, RD-5 property.
A **Design Review** to comply with the Countywide Design Guidelines. The monopole and appurtenant equipment cabinets will be placed within a fenced, 625 square foot leased area. The cell tower will be disguised as a pine tree to blend in with the surrounding landscaping. The project will also include access and underground utility easements – through the parking lot and along the eastern side of the church building.
3. **Assessor's Parcel Number:** 074-0103-008
4. **Location of Project:** The project site is located at 9242 Kiefer Boulevard, the southeast corner of Westporter Drive and Kiefer Boulevard, in the Cordova Community.
5. **Project Applicant:** Verizon Wireless
6. Said project will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:
 - a. It will not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.
 - b. It will not have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals.
 - c. It will not have impacts, which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable.
 - d. It will not have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.
7. As a result thereof, the preparation of an environmental impact report pursuant to the Environmental Quality Act (Division 13 of the Public Resources Code of the State of California) is not required.
8. The attached Initial Study has been prepared by the Sacramento Office of County Planning and Environmental Review in support of this Negative Declaration. Further information may be obtained by contacting the Office Planning and Environmental Review at 827 Seventh Street, Room 225, Sacramento, California, 95814, or phone (916) 874-6141.

[Original Signature on File]

Tim Hawkins

Environmental Coordinator

County of Sacramento, State of California

COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
INITIAL STUDY

PROJECT INFORMATION

CONTROL NUMBER: PLNP2019-00137

NAME: Kiefer Wireless Communication Facilities

LOCATION: The project site is located at 9242 Kiefer Boulevard, the southeast corner of Westporter Drive and Kiefer Boulevard, in the Cordova Community. Reference Plate IS-1.

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER: 074-0103-008

OWNER: Atonement Lutheran Church
Contact: Jim Weber

APPLICANT: Verizon Wireless
Contact: Joseph Sharp

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project consists of the following entitlements:

1. A **Use Permit** to allow a new 55 foot tall monopole on a 1.89 acre, RD-5 property.
2. A **Design Review** to comply with the Countywide Design Guidelines.

The monopole and appurtenant equipment cabinets will be placed within a fenced, 625 square foot leased area. The cell tower will be disguised as a pine tree to blend in with the surrounding landscaping. The project will also include access and underground utility easements – through the parking lot and along the eastern side of the church building. Reference Plate IS-2 through Plate IS-4 for specific site and monopole design.

Plate IS-1: Project Site Aerial Photo (2018)

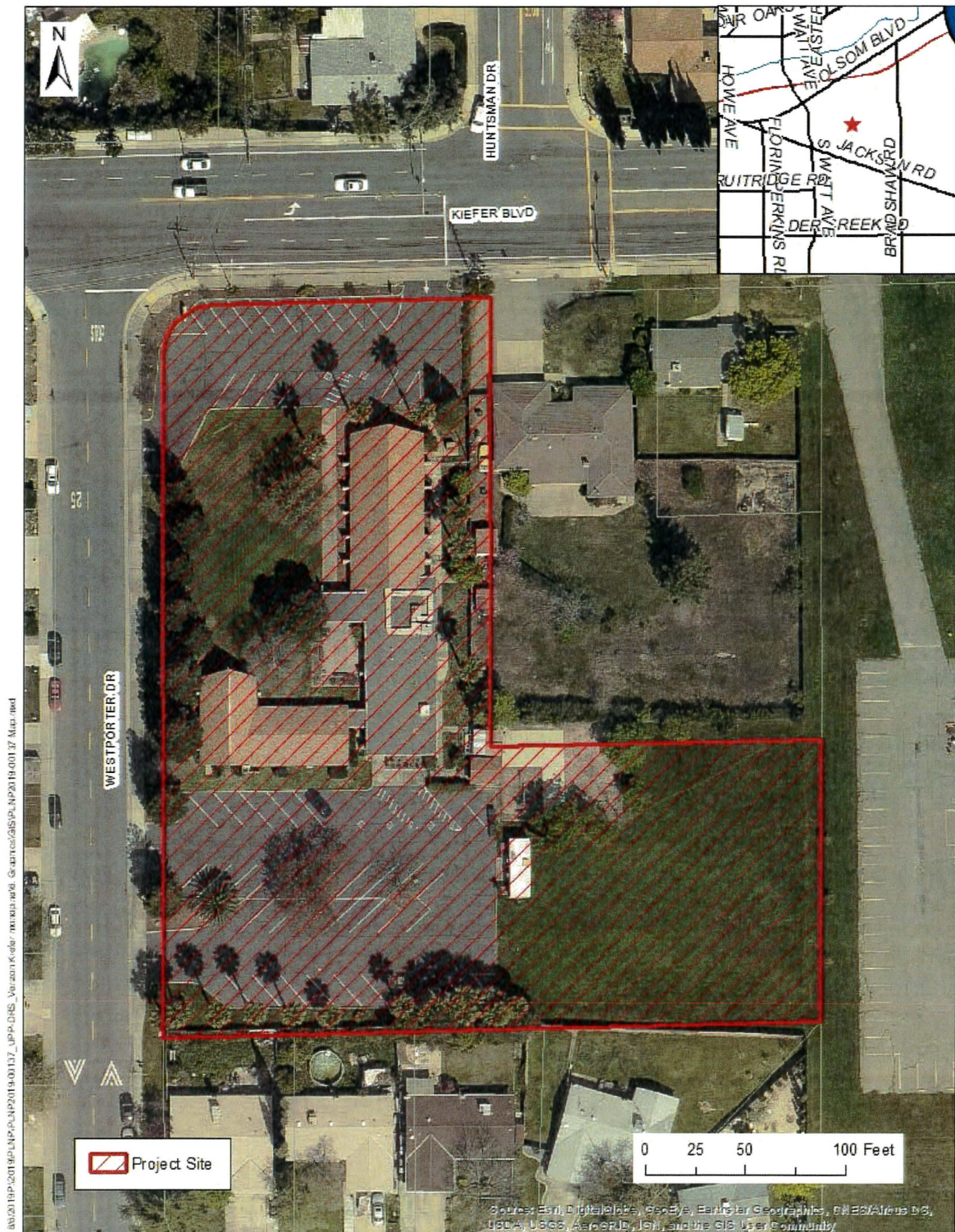


Plate IS-2: Site Plan

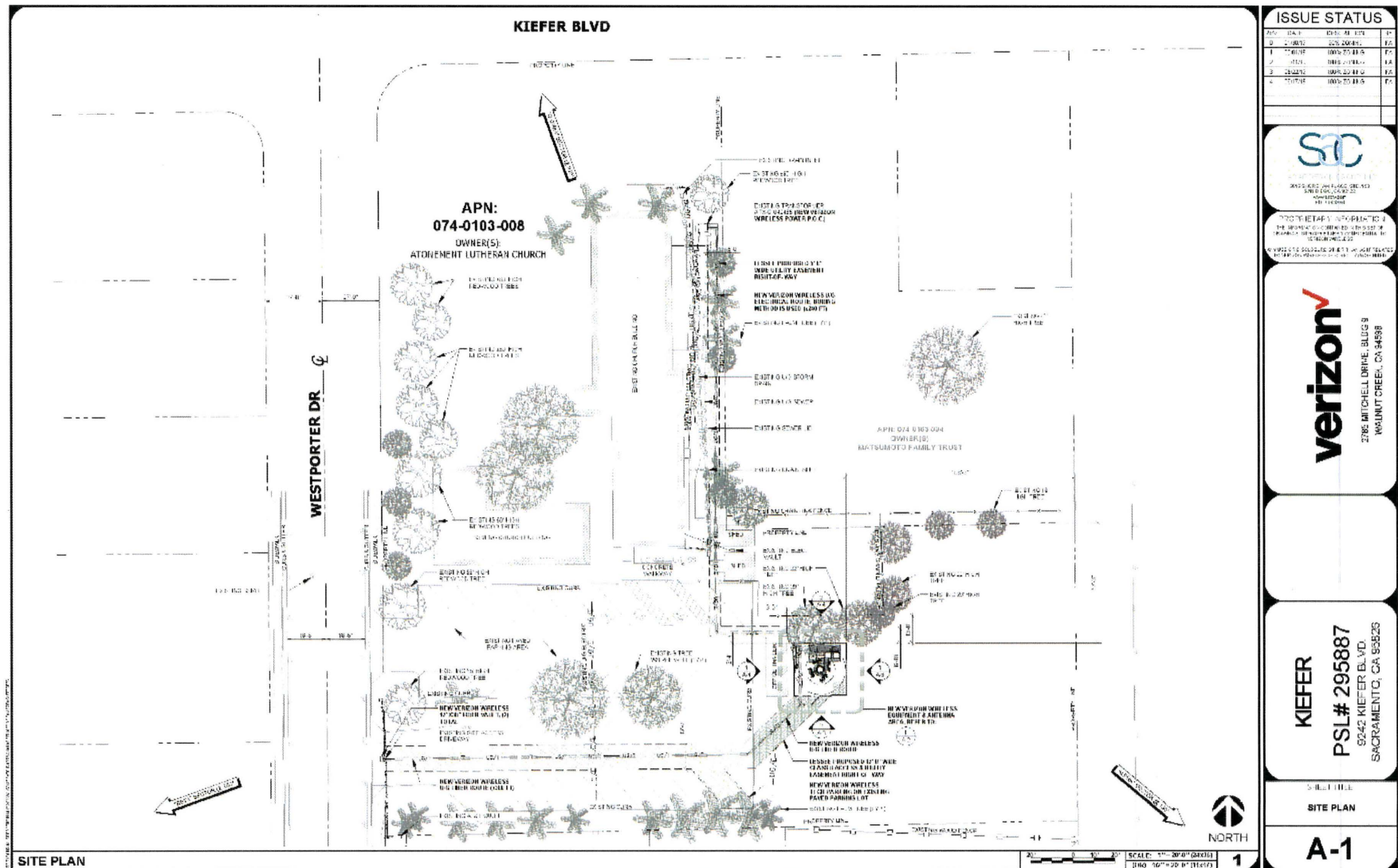


Plate IS-3: Monopole and Equipment Exhibit

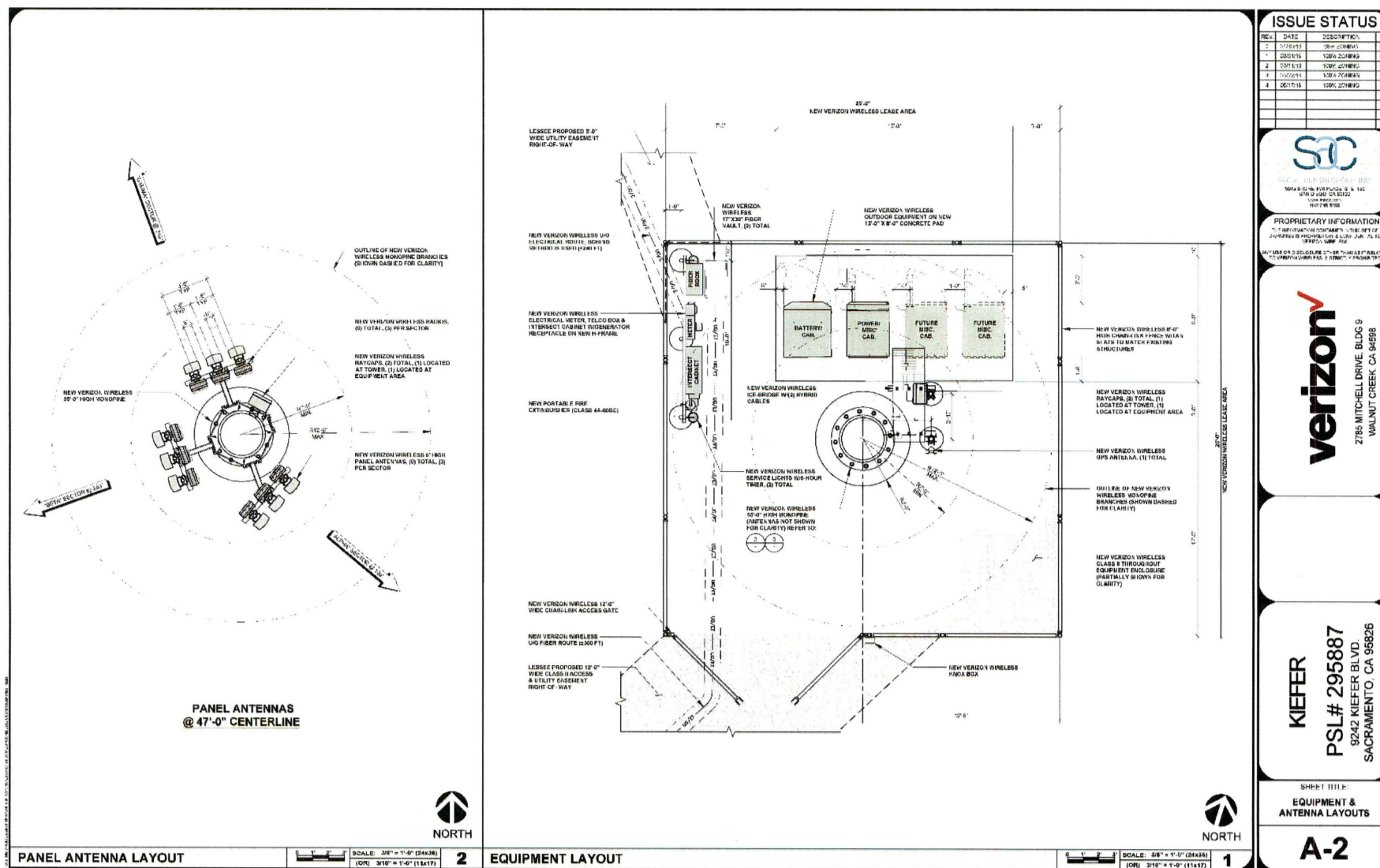


Plate IS-4: Proposed Elevation of Monopole

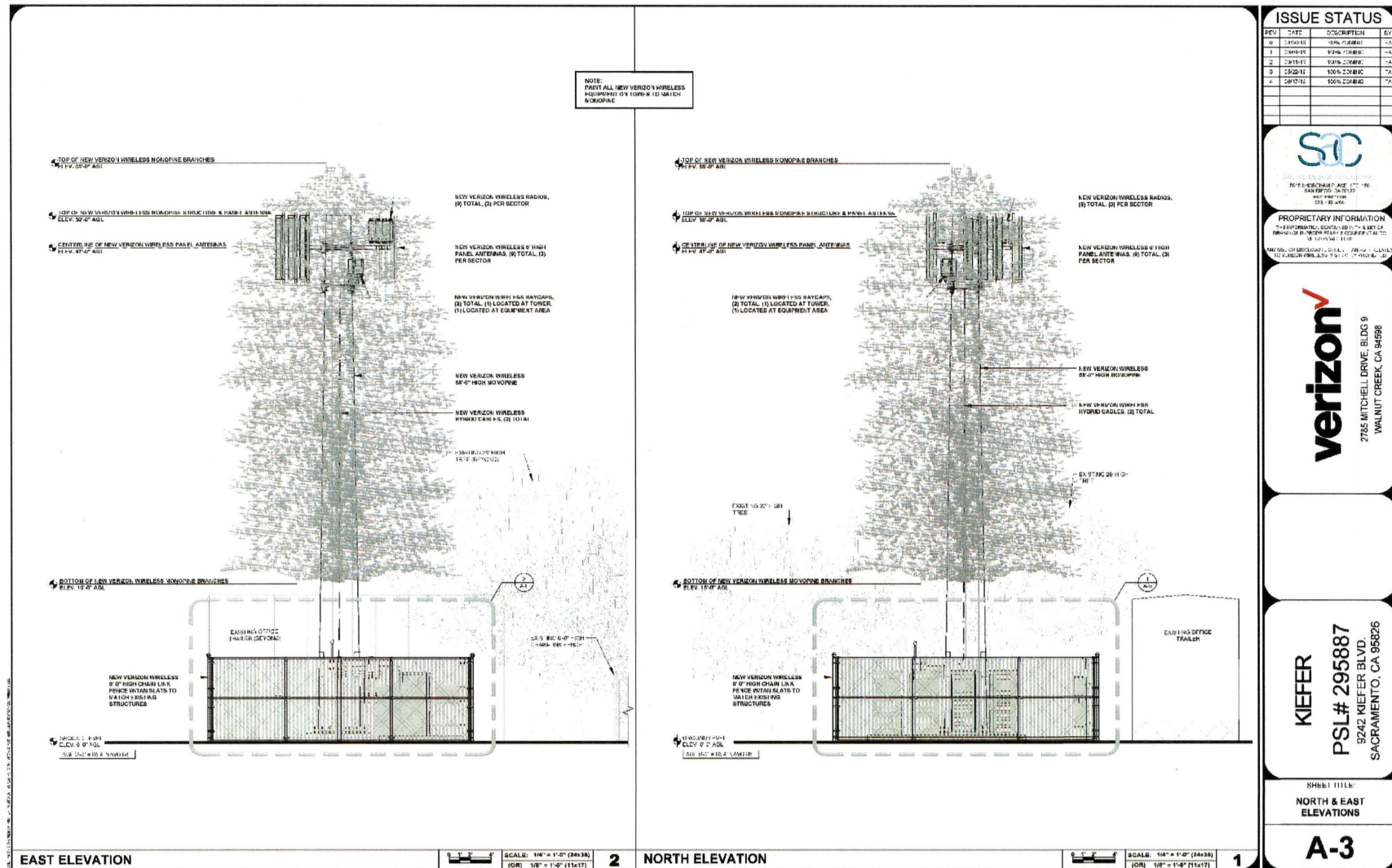
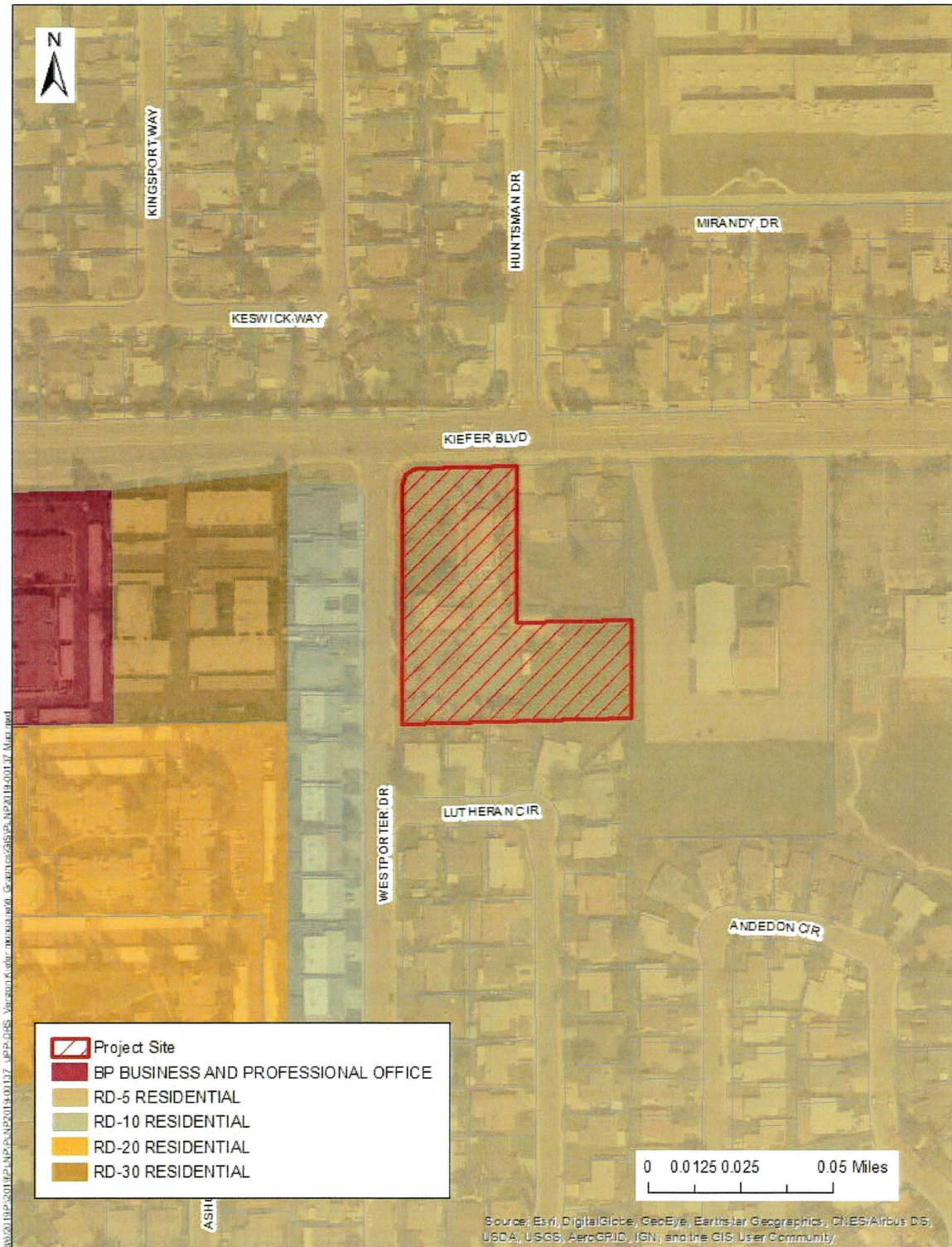


Plate IS-5: Zoning Map



ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The project is located in an open area of an existing church property. The property is developed with church buildings, parking lot, various sheds and storage trailers, and mature landscaping. Landscaping largely consists of lawn, shrubs and mature redwood, palm and Chinese hackberry trees. A small portion of the property is not developed and is left as an open field between the church parking lot and property to the east.

Kiefer Boulevard, a four-lane arterial roadway, is located along the northern boundary of the project site. Westporter Drive, residential collector, is located along the western boundary of the project site. Above ground utilities are present along Kiefer Boulevard and there are no nearby cell towers. Land uses surrounding the project site are residential and institutional (church) uses. Reference Plate IS-1 and Plate IS-5 for aerial photo of project site and existing zoning designations.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provides guidance for assessing the significance of potential environmental impacts. Based on this guidance, Sacramento County has developed an Initial Study Checklist (located at the end of this report). The Checklist identifies a range of potential significant effects by topical area. The topical discussions that follow are provided only when additional analysis beyond the Checklist is warranted.

LAND USE

This section supplements the Initial Study Checklist by analyzing if the proposed project would:

- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including but not limited to a general plan, specific plan or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Pursuant to Sacramento Zoning Code (SZC) Section 3.6.7.A, wireless communication facilities are permitted in any zone, subject to the terms of a Conditional Use Permit issued by the appropriate authority. The SZC contains specific provisions for wireless facilities depending upon whether the facility is mounted on a building façade, on a building roof, collocated on an existing wireless facility, a tower fixed to the ground, or on a tower on a non-building structure or publicly owned facility (e.g. light poles). The proposed wireless facility is a new tower designed to be fixed to the ground in the Cordova Community Residential zone, which falls within the Group I zoning district designation and is, therefore, regulated with the following SZC Sections:

Section 3.6.7.A, Wireless Communication Facility. Wireless communication facilities may be permitted in any zoning district, subject to the minimum standards and criteria of this Section. For the purposes of this use standard, zoning district designations are organized into the following: Group I: RD, AR, O, C-O, RM-2, DW, RR, and SPA zoning districts (unless otherwise specified in the particular SPA ordinance); Group II: BP, LC, and GC zoning districts; Group III: M-1, M-2, MP, AG, IR, and UR zoning districts.

4. New Monopoles

a. Appropriate Authority

(i) Any wireless facilities on new monopoles including ancillary equipment buildings that are to be located in Group I zoning districts or do not meet the development standards of this Section are subject to the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit by the Planning Commission. In addition to those conditions that the Planning Commission may impose pursuant to Section 6.4.3, "Conditional Use Permits", and development standards in Section 3.6.7.A.4.c, the Planning Commission may also impose conditions pursuant to Section 3.6.7.A.4.e.

(iii) All applications shall be referred to the Planning Director for a recommendation based upon the criteria listed in this use standard.

The proposed tower will have a height of 55 feet and is separated from any adjacent interior property boundary or public right-of-way by more than 25 feet. Therefore, the project meets SZC standards.

Additional Zoning Code requirements regarding installation of wireless facilities are found in Section 3.6.7.A (4)(e)01-13.5(f), which states the following:

e. Wireless facilities should be integrated into existing structures or co-located with existing wireless facilities to reduce the visual and potential visual intrusion of such facilities on the surrounding area, residents, and general populace of this County; and therefore:

i) Utility providers are therefore encouraged to:

- 1) Employ all reasonable measures to site their antenna equipment on existing structures as facade mounts, roof mounts, or collocation on existing towers prior to applying for new towers.
- (2) Whenever possible avoid locating towers on sites that require painting or lighting per Federal Aviation Administration Standards.
- (3) All County agencies, dependent and independent districts, and utility providers shall be encouraged to permit and streamline

collocation of cellular facilities on appropriate existing structures subject to reasonable engineering requirements.

(ii) In order to achieve these objectives and to protect the purposes of the Code, the following conditions shall be considered by the appropriate authority:

- (1) The use of screening, stealthing, use of setbacks, and use of architectural features on the subject site.
- (2) The use of mono-pines and mono-palms should be used only when it fits in with existing vegetation. Any use of tree features shall be maintained.
- (3) The use of close proximity designs when new antennas are placed on poles.
- (4) The use of materials that blend the tower or wireless facility in with the skyline, prevalent architectural or natural features of the subject site.
- (5) All unused or obsolete wireless facilities, towers or equipment shall be removed from their respective sites within six (6) months after operation has ceased.
- (6) Identification signs, including emergency phone numbers of the utility provider, shall be posted at all tower and equipment sites.
- (7) In addition to the requirements listed in this Section, wireless communication facilities are subject to all other applicable regulations and permits, including those of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California and the Federal Communication Commission.

The proposed project is not expected to significantly alter current land uses or create a use that is incompatible with current designations; nor will it divide an established community or conflict with any policy adopted for the protection of the environment.

As discussed above, the proposed project meets SZC standards for Group I zoning districts and does not conflict with a policy, plan, standard, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Therefore, potential land use related environmental impacts are considered ***less than significant***.

AESTHETICS

This section supplements the Initial Study Checklist by analyzing if the proposed project would:

- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

The degree of impact of a project, either negative or beneficial, to the visual character of the area is largely subjective. Few objective or quantitative standards are available to analyze visual quality, and individual viewers respond differently to changes in the physical environment.

One 55-foot monopole and associated ground equipment are proposed on the project site. As presented in the photosimulations (Plate IS-6 and Plate IS-8), the monopole will be visible from Kiefer Boulevard, Westporter Drive, Lutheran Circle, and from the properties to the east. The ground equipment will be screened by a chain link fence with privacy slats.

The proposed project is located in an urbanized environment with above ground utilities along Kiefer Boulevard. Kiefer Boulevard is not a State Scenic Highway, nor is the general vicinity considered to contain a scenic vista. The monopole is proposed to be disguised as a pine tree. This is compatible with the surrounding vegetation since there are redwoods planted along within the landscaping along Westporter Drive.

Even though the monopole is proposed to be disguised to blend into the background, some may still view the project as a new negative addition to the viewshed. Aesthetic perceptions are subjective. Various individuals may have different opinions about the aesthetic impacts associated with the project. Local residences and businesses surrounding the project site may object to the visual intrusion of the project. However, given the urban environment, the proposed project will not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista; substantially damage scenic resources; or substantially degrade the existing visual character. Impacts associated with aesthetics are ***less than significant***.

Plate IS-6: Photosimulation from the North

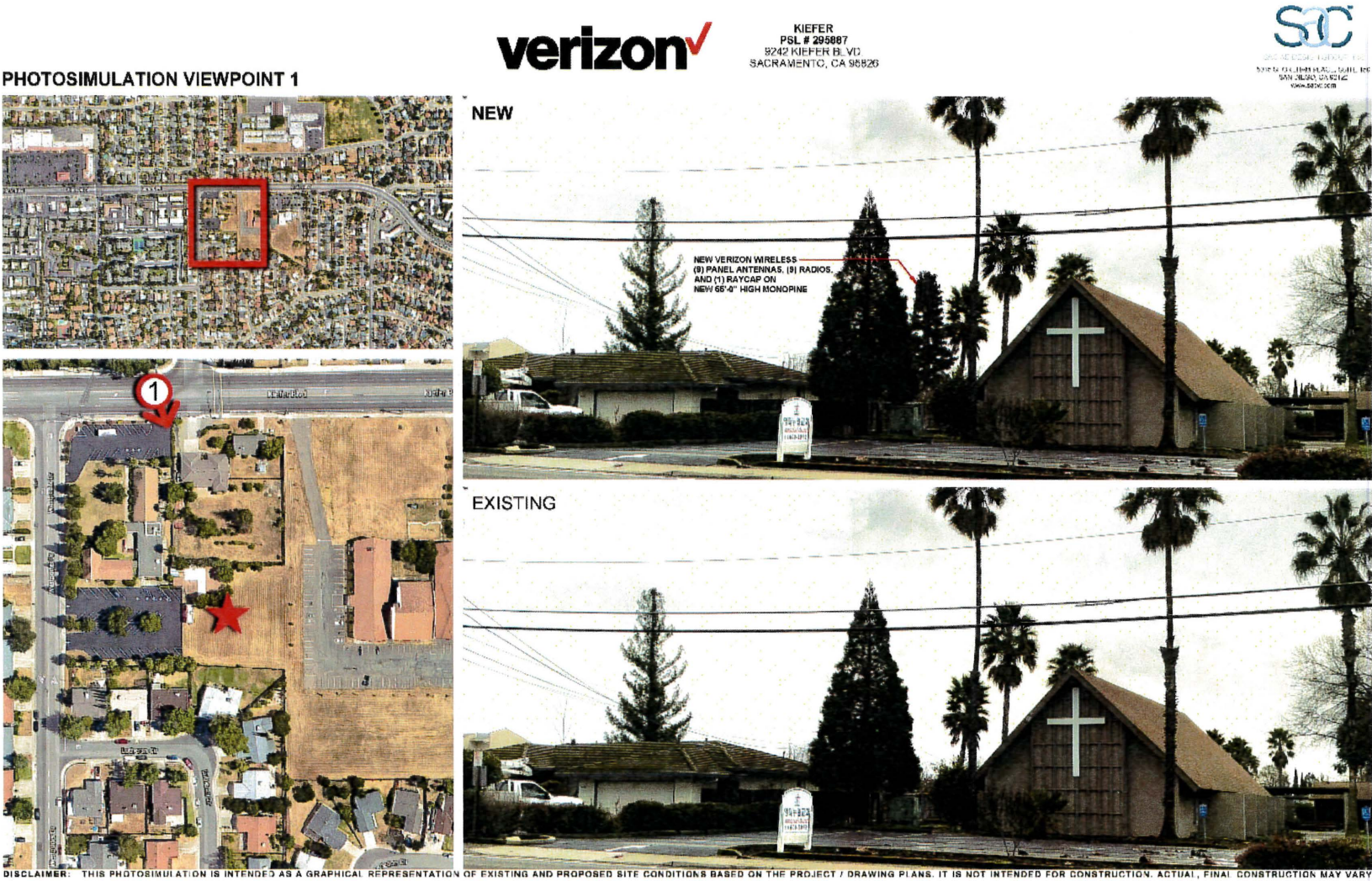


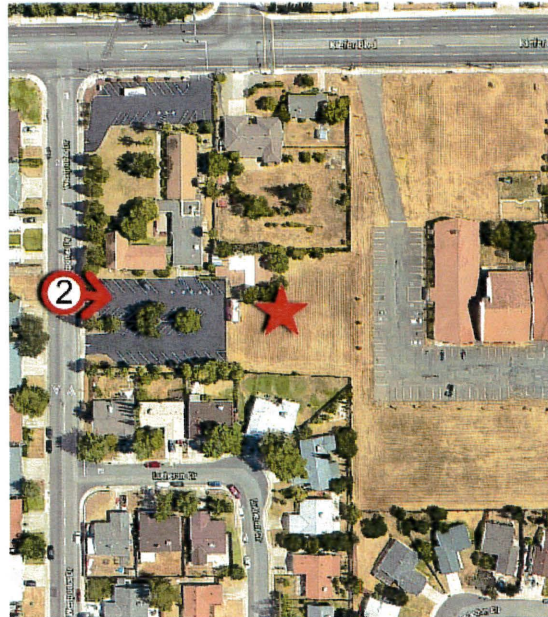
Plate IS-7: Photosimulation from the West



KIEFER
PSL # 295887
9242 KIEFER BLVD.
SACRAMENTO, CA 95826

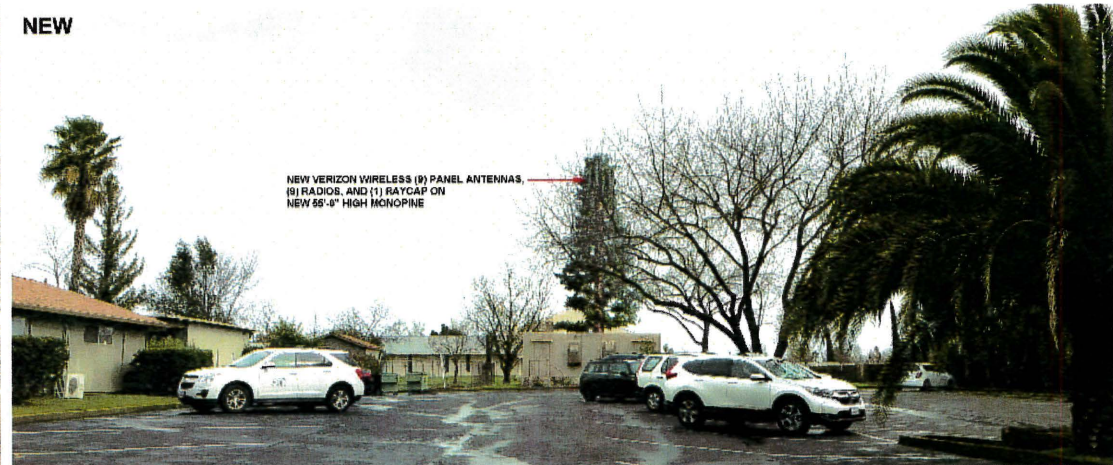


PHOTOSIMULATION VIEWPOINT 2



DISCLAIMER: THIS PHOTOSIMULATION IS INTENDED AS A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE CONDITIONS BASED ON THE PROJECT / DRAWING PLANS. IT IS NOT INTENDED FOR CONSTRUCTION. ACTUAL, FINAL CONSTRUCTION MAY VARY.

NEW



EXISTING



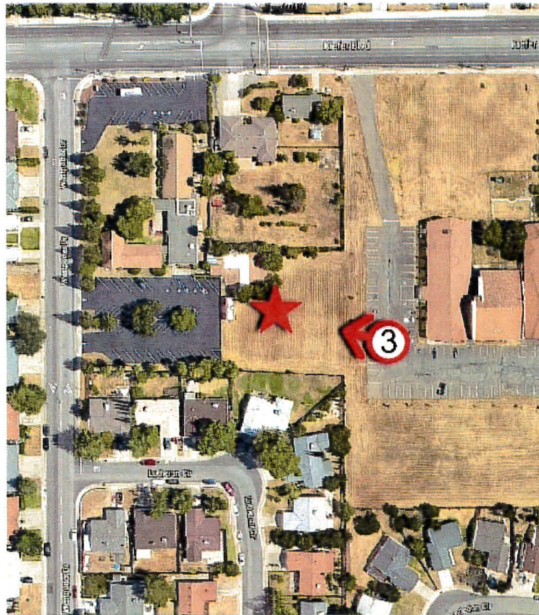
Plate IS-8: Photosimulation from the East



KIEFER
PSL # 295887
9242 KIEFER BLVD
SACRAMENTO, CA 95826



PHOTOSIMULATION VIEWPOINT 3



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NEW



EXISTING



HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

This section supplements the Initial Study Checklist by analyzing if the proposed project would:

- Create substantial sources of polluted runoff or otherwise substantially degrade ground or surface water quality.

WATER QUALITY

CONSTRUCTION WATER QUALITY: EROSION AND GRADING

Construction on undeveloped land exposes bare soil, which can be mobilized by rain or wind and displaced into waterways or become an air pollutant. Construction equipment can also track mud and dirt onto roadways, where rains will wash the sediment into storm drains and thence into surface waters. After construction is complete, various other pollutants generated by site use can also be washed into local waterways. These pollutants include; but are not limited to: vehicle fluids, heavy metals deposited by vehicles, and pesticides or fertilizers used in landscaping.

Sacramento County has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Municipal Stormwater Permit issued by Regional Water Board. The Municipal Stormwater Permit requires the County to reduce pollutants in stormwater discharges to the maximum extent practicable and to effectively prohibit non-stormwater discharges. The County complies with this permit in part by developing and enforcing ordinances and requirements to reduce the discharge of sediments and other pollutants in runoff from newly developing and redeveloping areas of the County.

The County has established a Stormwater Ordinance (Sacramento County Code 15.12). The Stormwater Ordinance prohibits the discharge of unauthorized non-stormwater to the County's stormwater conveyance system and local creeks. It applies to all private and public projects in the County, regardless of size or land use type. In addition, Sacramento County Code 16.44 (Land Grading and Erosion Control) requires private construction sites disturbing one or more acres or moving 350 cubic yards or more of earthen material to obtain a grading permit. To obtain a grading permit, project proponents must prepare and submit for approval an Erosion and Sediment Control (ESC) Plan describing erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) that will be implemented during construction to prevent sediment from leaving the site and entering the County's storm drain system or local receiving waters. Construction projects not subject to SCC 16.44 are subject to the Stormwater Ordinance (SCC 15.12) described above.

In addition to complying with the County's ordinances and requirements, construction sites disturbing one or more acres are required to comply with the State's General Stormwater Permit for Construction Activities (CGP). CGP coverage is issued by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board)

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/stormwater/construction.shtml and enforced by the Regional Water Board. Coverage is obtained by submitting a

Notice of Intent (NOI) to the State Board prior to construction and verified by receiving a WDID#. The CGP requires preparation and implementation of a site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that must be kept on site at all times for review by the State inspector.

Applicable projects applying for a County grading permit must show proof that a WDID # has been obtained and must submit a copy of the SWPPP. Although the County has no enforcement authority related to the CGP, the County does have the authority to ensure sediment/pollutants are not discharged and is required by its Municipal Stormwater Permit to verify that SWPPPs include the minimum components.

The project must include an effective combination of erosion, sediment and other pollution control BMPs in compliance with the County ordinances and the State's CGP.

Erosion controls should always be the *first line of defense*, to keep soil from being mobilized in wind and water. Examples include stabilized construction entrances, tackified mulch, 3-step hydroseeding, spray-on soil stabilizers and anchored blankets. Sediment controls are the *second line of defense*; they help to filter sediment out of runoff before it reaches the storm drains and local waterways. Examples include rock bags to protect storm drain inlets, staked or weighted straw wattles/fiber rolls, and silt fences.

In addition to erosion and sediment controls, the project must have BMPs in place to keep other construction-related wastes and pollutants out of the storm drains. Such practices include, but are not limited to: filtering water from dewatering operations, providing proper washout areas for concrete trucks and stucco/paint contractors, containing wastes, managing portable toilets properly, and dry sweeping instead of washing down dirty pavement.

It is the responsibility of the project proponent to verify that the proposed BMPs for the project are appropriate for the unique site conditions, including topography, soil type and anticipated volumes of water entering and leaving the site during the construction phase. In particular, the project proponent should check for the presence of colloidal clay soils on the site. Experience has shown that these soils do not settle out with conventional sedimentation and filtration BMPs. The project proponent may wish to conduct settling column tests in addition to other soils testing on the site, to ascertain whether conventional BMPs will work for the project.

If sediment-laden or otherwise polluted runoff discharges from the construction site are found to impact the County's storm drain system and/or Waters of the State, the property owner will be subject to enforcement action and possible fines by the County and the Regional Water Board.

Project compliance with requirements outlined above, as administered by the County and the Regional Water Board will ensure that project-related erosion and pollution impacts are ***less than significant***.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This section supplements the Initial Study Checklist by analyzing if the proposed project would:

- Conflict with a habitat conservation plan

The project is located within the urban development area of the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP). The SSHCP is a regional approach to addressing development, habitat conservation, and agricultural lands within the south Sacramento County region, including the cities of Galt and Rancho Cordova. The specific geographic scope of the SSHCP includes U.S. Highway 50 to the north, the Sacramento River levee and County Road J11 (connects the towns of Walnut Grove and Thornton, it is known as the Walnut Grove-Thornton Road) to the west, the Sacramento County line with El Dorado and Amador counties to the east, and San Joaquin County to the South. The SSHCP Project area excludes the City of Sacramento, the City of Folsom, the City of Elk Grove, most of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and the Sacramento community of Rancho Murieta.

The SSHCP will consolidate and enhance wetlands, primarily vernal pools and upland habitats to provide ecologically viable conservation areas. It also intends to minimize regulatory hurdles and facilitate the permitting process for development projects. The SSHCP covers 28 species of plants and wildlife, including 10 that are State and/or federally-listed as threatened or endangered. The SSHCP is an agreement between State/federal wildlife and wetland regulators and local jurisdictions, which allows land owners to engage in the “incidental take” of species in return for conservation commitments from local jurisdictions. All projects that are within the SSHCP and are a covered activity, must be reviewed and if necessary authorized under the SSHCP permit(s).

PROJECT IMPACTS

The area that the monopole is being proposed is considered Valley grassland land cover type. In total the property contains less than ½ acre of this land cover type and the remaining property is considered developed. Further, the project site is largely surrounded by developed land with no remaining habitat value. The majority of SSHCP land cover types were determined using discernible information from aerial photographs and defined by vegetation, water, or human uses. Taking a closer look at the subject property, surrounding uses, and viable habitat value, the Valley grassland land cover type identified was not accurately identified during the initial mapping exercise. The subject property is mowed regularly and weedy species are present; therefore, the more appropriate land cover type is Disturbed. Disturbed land cover type is defined as “open space that have been subject to previous or ongoing disturbances...is vegetated with diverse weedy flora” (SSHCP Appendix E-1, pp. E1-20).

The SSHCP land cover type map will be updated to reflect the more appropriate Disturbed land cover type. With the update, the subject property is no longer subject to

the SSHCP. The project will not impede the goals and policies of the SSHCP and impacts are *less than significant*.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section supplements the Initial Study Checklist by analyzing if the proposed project would:

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PUBLIC SAFETY

MICROWAVE EMISSIONS

Potential impacts associated with microwave emissions will be less than significant, per the following analysis.

PERSONAL WIRELESS SERVICE FACILITIES BACKGROUND

Three of the major types of personal wireless communication services currently in use are described below (information from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) website at http://wireless.fcc.gov/services/index.htm?job=wtb_services_home).

CELLULAR TELEPHONE SERVICE

Cellular telephone service is an extension of ordinary telephone services, except that it utilizes radio waves instead of wire to transmit and receive telephone calls. The cellular radiotelephone service is intended to provide customers with mobile telephone service over a broad geographic area. A cellular system operates by dividing a large geographic service area into cells and assigning the same frequencies to multiple, non-adjacent cells. This is known as “frequency reuse”. When a cellular subscriber makes or receives a call, the call is connected to the nearest cell site. As a subscriber travels within a cellular provider’s service area, the cellular telephone call in progress is transferred, or “handed-off”, from one cell site to another without noticeable interruption. The smaller and more numerous a provider’s cells are, the more it can reuse frequencies and the more users it can accommodate. In addition, all the cells in a cellular system are connected to a mobile telephone switching office (MTSO) by wireline (landline) or microwave links. The MTSO switches wireline-to-mobile and mobile-to-wireline calls between the public switched telephone network (PSTN) and the cell site. Cellular radio systems operate in the 824 – 849 MHz and 869 – 894 MHz frequency range, per FCC allocation.

PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES (PCS)

PCS encompasses two different licensed services offered over two different frequency bands, as well as certain unlicensed service. “Narrowband” PCS operates on frequencies in the 901 – 941 MHz range and is suitable for offering a variety of specialized services such as Messaging and two-way paging. “Broadband” PCS is similar to cellular radiotelephone service, except that PCS operates in a higher frequency band (1850 – 1990 MHz) which allows for a wider variety of communications

services such as digital, voice, data and paging transmissions, over the same spectrum. Because PCS operates at a higher frequency than cellular service, PCS systems may require more antenna transmitters in the same geographic area.

WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE (WCS)

WCS may provide fixed, mobile, radiolocation or satellite communication services to individuals and businesses within their assigned spectrum block and geographical area. The WCS is capable of providing advanced wireless phone services which are able to pinpoint subscribers in any given locale. WCS is used to provide a variety of mobile services, including an entire family of new communication devices utilizing very small, lightweight, multi-function portable phones and advanced devices with two-way data capabilities. WCS systems are able to communicate with other telephone networks as well as with personal digital assistants, allowing subscribers to send and receive data and/or video messages without connection to a wire. By FCC allocation, WCS operates in one of two bands: 2305 – 2320 MHz and 2345 – 2360 MHz.

ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS (EMFs) AND SAFETY STANDARDS

The FCC published "A Local Government Official's Guide to Transmitting Antenna RF Emission Safety: Rules, Procedures, and Practical Guidance" (June 2, 2000, hereafter called RF Guide), the purpose of which is to ensure that the antenna facilities located in communities comply with the FCC's limits for human exposure to radiofrequency (RF) electromagnetic fields. The RF Guide explains the science of RF and the electromagnetic spectrum, the exposure guidelines and rules, and explains the procedures for compliance. The FCC Office of Engineering and Technology has also published Bulletin 56 (and 65, an addendum) in 1999, which answers many common questions about RF and about exposure limits. The RF Guide and Bulletins 56 and 65 are incorporated by reference and are available for review at the Division of Planning and Environmental Review, 827 7th Street, Room 225, Sacramento or online at <http://www.fcc.gov/oet/rfsafety/>. The information below is based entirely upon the incorporated publications.

As discussed above, personal wireless service facilities utilize radio waves to transmit and receive telephone calls. Radio waves and microwaves are forms of electromagnetic energy that are collectively described by the term "radiofrequency" or "RF." RF emissions can be discussed in terms of "energy," "radiation" or "fields." Radiation is simply defined as the movement of energy through space in the form of waves or particles. Electromagnetic radiation is when both electric and magnetic energy move together. The term "electromagnetic field" is used to indicate the presence of electromagnetic energy at a specific location. Like any wave-related phenomenon, electromagnetic energy is described by a wavelength and a frequency. RF signals are transmitted over a wide range of frequencies. The frequency of an RF signal is expressed in terms of cycles per second, or "Hertz" (Hz).

The range of wavelengths and frequencies of electromagnetic radiation is known as the electromagnetic spectrum. The frequency of the wave corresponds to its energy: a high frequency wave has high energy. Waves with sufficient energy are "ionizing", that is, they are capable of stripping electrons from atoms and molecules, which results in a

fundamental alteration of the nature of those molecules. Only very high-frequency waves, such as X-rays and gamma rays, have sufficient energy to ionize atoms and molecules. At the low-frequency end of the electromagnetic spectrum are low-energy, non-ionizing waves such as radio waves and visible light. Radiation described as non-ionizing does not have sufficient energy to alter the nature of the atoms and molecules it encounters.

Electromagnetic energy is common in the environment, resulting from numerous human-made and natural sources. Human-made sources include electrical wiring, utility lines, appliances, computers, and television and radio broadcasts. Natural sources include the human body, the earth's magnetic field, and visible light. Electric and magnetic fields produced by every-day electrical appliances, radio waves, and microwaves are low-energy – even visible light is higher energy than these sources. High-energy waves at the top of the spectrum are X-rays and gamma rays.

The rate at which an organism will absorb RF energy is specific to the type of organism – this is referred to as the specific absorption rate (SAR), defined as the power absorbed per mass of tissue (watts per kilogram). Therefore, standards for maximum safe exposure are set to limit the specific absorption rate (SAR) below a maximum permissible level as averaged over the human body. The absorption of this energy can result in thermal effects – that is, the energy produced causes heating of the tissues. At low-level RF radiation exposure, such as what is generated by appliances, cellular phones, and cellular towers, significant heating effects or health hazards are not observed.

To ensure that exposure remains well below safe limits, in August 1996 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted guidelines for evaluating the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions (FCC, (1996) Report and Order, ET Docket No. 93-62 Washington, D.C.). The guidelines effectively set a national radio frequency (RF) exposure standard based on elements of both the 1992 revision of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standard for RF exposure and the exposure criteria recommended by the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP).

The 1996 FCC limits for maximum permissible exposure specifies two tiers of exposure criteria, one tier for “controlled environments” (usually involving occupational environments) and a second, more stringent tier for “uncontrolled environments” (usually involving the general public). The FCC limits set the allowable specific absorption rate (SAR) level from *localized* exposure (e.g., hand-held devices) at 1.6 watts per kilogram (W/kg) for the general public (uncontrolled environments), as averaged over 1 gram of tissue. The FCC recommended exposure limits for generalized exposure are summarized in Table 1 of Bulletin 56, which includes maximum power density levels for RF energy originating from communication sites (as well as other sources). The levels are determined based on continuous exposure, are dependent on the frequency which is transmitted from the site, and are usually expressed in milliwatts per square centimeter (mW/cm²).

Generally, personal wireless services such as cellular, PCS, and WCS transmit in a frequency range of 300 – 3000 MHz (megahertz). Power density limits for uncontrolled environments (i.e., general public) from transmitters in this range are calculated by dividing the frequency by 1500 (f/1500). Therefore, a facility transmitting at a frequency of 870 MHz would have a maximum recommended power density of 0.58 mW/cm². At frequencies of 1500 – 100,000MHz the maximum power density is set at 1.0 mW/cm².

REGULATORY BACKGROUND

Section 704 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (the “1996 Act”) addresses federal, state and local government oversight of site selection for personal wireless service facilities such as towers for cellular, personal communication services, and specialized mobile radio transmitters. The 1996 Act states the following regarding a local government’s jurisdiction pertaining to the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions (FCC, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (1996), Fact Sheet #1 National Wireless Facilities Siting Policies, Washington, D.C.):

“No state or local government or instrumentality thereof may regulate the placement, construction, and modification of personal wireless service facilities on the basis of the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions to the extent that such facilities comply with the Commission’s regulations concerning such emissions.”

On January 1, 1997, the new Guidelines adopted by the FCC (referred to as “the Commission” in the 1996 Act section cited above) went into effect. As discussed above, the new guidelines set a national RF exposure standard which is based on elements of both the 1992 revision of the ANSI/IEEE standard and the exposure criteria recommended by the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements. In addition, the updated guidelines are based on recommendations from those federal agencies responsible for health and safety, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The FCC has stated that the updated guidelines will ensure that the public and workers are adequately protected from exposure to potentially harmful RF emissions.

PROJECT SPECIFIC INFORMATION

There are no known significant biological effects associated with cellular facilities when they are operated at or below FCC-adopted standards. At this location, the site will be leased to Verizon which is proposing a 55-foot monopole that will accommodate nine antenna and nine wireless radios (RRHs). The applicant provided a Radio Frequency Emissions Compliance Report prepared David Kiser, Registered Professional Engineer, which included an engineering statement confirming compliance with radiofrequency radiation exposure limits. There are specific FCC regulations regarding radiofrequency exposure that address the actions necessary to bring an accessible area into compliance with the 5% power density exposure limit. Waterford Consultants, LLC performed predictive modeling, following the FCC requirements, for the proposed

project. No significant environmental impacts related to EMF emissions are expected as a result of this project; impacts are ***less than significant***.

TOWER FAILURE

Communication towers are manufactured under rigid conditions and the design and required safety factors are specified in the Uniform Building Code. The pole fabrication process is subject to independent inspection. The tower and foundation designs will be engineered to meet or exceed all requirements of the Uniform Building Code. The codes take into account the various stress loads that could be placed on the tower structure by earthquake, winds, storms, and any other combinations of high stress factors. The safety factors involved in the manufacture of these poles and their installation results in a very large margin of safety.

Accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), a Standard entitled "Structural Standards for Antenna Supporting Structures and Antennas" has been established for the design, superstructure, and foundation of telecommunication towers. This standard is designated as ANSI/TIA-222, provisions F and G, and is the governing document for telecommunication towers in the United States. The development of the standard was sponsored by the *Telecommunication Industry Association* (TIA) subcommittee TR-14.7. The key aspects discussed in the document are: modernization of the design of new towers and existing towers, definition of wind and ice load, and applicable requirements in the case of seismic activity.

The "fall drop zone" for the proposed project is estimated to be within a 55± foot radius of the tower center. The area that would be affected by potential pole collapse contains portions of the parking lot, the storage trailer, the playground (if used), and open field. No residential structures occur within the potential fall zone of the tower. Monopole failure has the potential to impact vehicles being stored within the fall drop zone and children playing in the playground (if used). However, as the monopole is an engineer-designed structure that will comply with the safety factors specified in the Uniform Building Code, monopole failure is considered extremely unlikely. Potential impacts as a result of monopole collapse are therefore considered ***less than significant***.

INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provides guidance for assessing the significance of potential environmental impacts. Based on this guidance, Sacramento County has developed the following Initial Study Checklist. The Checklist identifies a range of potential significant effects by topical area. The words "significant" and "significance" used throughout the following checklist are related to impacts as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act as follows:

- 1 Potentially Significant indicates there is substantial evidence that an effect MAY be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant" entries an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required. Further research of a potentially significant impact may reveal that the impact is actually less than significant or less than significant with mitigation.
- 2 Less than Significant with Mitigation applies where an impact could be significant but specific mitigation has been identified that reduces the impact to a less than significant level.
- 3 Less than Significant or No Impact indicates that either a project will have an impact but the impact is considered minor or that a project does not impact the particular resource.

	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant	No Impact	Comments
1. LAND USE - Would the project:					
a. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including but not limited to a general plan, specific plan or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				X	The project is consistent with environmental policies of the Sacramento County General Plan and Sacramento County Zoning Code.
b. Physically disrupt or divide an established community?				X	The project will not create physical barriers that substantially limit movement within or through the community.
2. POPULATION/HOUSING - Would the project:					
a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of infrastructure)?				X	The proposed infrastructure project is intended to service existing or planned development and will not induce substantial unplanned population growth.
b. Displace substantial amounts of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X	The project will not result in the removal of existing housing, and thus will not displace substantial amounts of existing housing.
3. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES - Would the project:					
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance or areas containing prime soils to uses not conducive to agricultural production?				X	The project site is not designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance on the current Sacramento County Important Farmland Map published by the California Department of Conservation. The site does not contain prime soils.
b. Conflict with any existing Williamson Act contract?				X	No Williamson Act contracts apply to the project site..

	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant	No Impact	Comments
c. Introduce incompatible uses in the vicinity of existing agricultural uses?				X	The project does not occur in an area of agricultural production.
4. AESTHETICS - Would the project:					
a. Substantially alter existing viewsheds such as scenic highways, corridors or vistas?				X	The project does not occur in the vicinity of any scenic highways, corridors, or vistas.
b. In a non-urbanized area, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?				X	The project is not within a non-urbanized area.
c. If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?			X		It is acknowledged that aesthetic impacts are subjective and may be perceived differently by various affected individuals. Nonetheless, given the urbanized environment in which the project is proposed, it is concluded that the project would not substantially degrade the visual character or quality of the project site or vicinity. Refer to the Aesthetics discussion in the Environmental Effects section above.
d. Create a new source of substantial light, glare, or shadow that would result in safety hazards or adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				X	The project will not result in a new source of substantial light, glare or shadow that would result in safety hazards or adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.
5. AIRPORTS - Would the project:					
a. Result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the vicinity of an airport/airstrip?				X	The project occurs outside of any identified public or private airport/airstrip safety zones.
b. Expose people residing or working in the project area to aircraft noise levels in excess of applicable standards?				X	The project occurs outside of any identified public or private airport/airstrip noise zones or contours.
c. Result in a substantial adverse effect upon the safe and efficient use of navigable airspace by aircraft?				X	The project does not affect navigable airspace.

	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant	No Impact	Comments
d. Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?				X	The project does not involve or affect air traffic movement.
6. PUBLIC SERVICES - Would the project:					
a. Have an adequate water supply for full buildout of the project?				X	The project will not result in increased demand for water supply.
b. Have adequate wastewater treatment and disposal facilities for full buildout of the project?				X	The project will not require wastewater services.
c. Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?				X	The Kiefer Landfill has capacity to accommodate solid waste until the year 2050.
d. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the construction of new water supply or wastewater treatment and disposal facilities or expansion of existing facilities?				X	The project will not require construction or expansion of new water supply, wastewater treatment, or wastewater disposal facilities.
e. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of storm water drainage facilities?				X	Project construction would not require the addition of new stormwater drainage facilities.
f. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of electric or natural gas service?			X		Minor extension of utility lines would be necessary to serve the proposed project. Utility extensions along the existing building will be bored to minimize disruption to the hardscape and landscaping. No significant new impacts would result from utility extension.
g. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of emergency services?				X	The project would not incrementally increase demand for emergency services, but would not cause substantial adverse physical impacts as a result of providing adequate service.

	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant	No Impact	Comments
h. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of public school services?				X	The project will not require the use of public school services.
i. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of park and recreation services?				X	The project will not require park and recreation services.
7. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC - Would the project:					
a. Result in a substantial increase in vehicle trips that would exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the County?				X	The project will not increase vehicle trips.
b. Result in a substantial adverse impact to access and/or circulation?				X	No changes to existing access and/or circulation patterns would occur as a result of the project.
c. Result in a substantial adverse impact to public safety on area roadways?				X	No changes to existing access and/or circulation patterns would occur as a result of the project; therefore no impacts to public safety on area roadways will result.
d. Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?				X	The project does not conflict with alternative transportation policies of the Sacramento County General Plan, with the Sacramento Regional Transit Master Plan, or other adopted policies, plans or programs supporting alternative transportation.
8. AIR QUALITY - Would the project:					
a. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?					The project does not exceed the screening thresholds established by the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District and will not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is in non-attainment.

	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant	No Impact	Comments
b. Expose sensitive receptors to pollutant concentrations in excess of standards?			X		There are no sensitive receptors (i.e., schools, nursing homes, hospitals, daycare centers, etc.) adjacent to the project site. See Response 8.a.
c. Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?				X	The project will not generate objectionable odors.
9. NOISE - Would the project:					
a. Result in exposure of persons to, or generation of, noise levels in excess of standards established by the local general plan, noise ordinance or applicable standards of other agencies?				X	The project is not in the vicinity of any uses that generate substantial noise, nor will the completed project generate substantial noise. The project will not result in exposure of persons to, or generation of, noise levels in excess of applicable standards.
b. Result in a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity?			X		Project construction will result in a temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity. This impact is less than significant due to the temporary nature of the these activities, limits on the duration of noise, and evening and nighttime restrictions imposed by the County Noise Ordinance (Chapter 6.68 of the County Code).
c. Generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels.				X	The project will not involve the use of pile driving or other methods that would produce excessive groundborne vibration or noise levels at the property boundary.
10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY - Would the project:					
a. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or substantially interfere with groundwater recharge that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?				X	The project will not substantially increase water demand over the existing use.

	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant	No Impact	Comments
b. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the project area and/or increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site?			X		The project does not involve any modifications that would substantially alter the existing drainage pattern and or/increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would lead to flooding.
c. Develop within a 100-year floodplain as mapped on a federal Flood Insurance Rate Map or within a local flood hazard area?				X	The project is not within a 100-year floodplain as mapped on a federal Flood Insurance Rate Map, nor is the project within a local flood hazard area.
d. Place structures that would impede or redirect flood flows within a 100-year floodplain?				X	The project site is not within a 100-year floodplain.
e. Develop in an area that is subject to 200 year urban levels of flood protection (ULOP)?				X	The project is not located in an area subject to 200-year urban levels of flood protection (ULOP).
f. Expose people or structures to a substantial risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				X	The project will not expose people or structures to a substantial risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam.
g. Create or contribute runoff that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems?				X	The minor increase in impervious surface area would not contribute runoff that would exceed the capacity of the existing stormwater drainage system.
h. Create substantial sources of polluted runoff or otherwise substantially degrade ground or surface water quality?			X		Compliance with the Stormwater Ordinance and Land Grading and Erosion Control Ordinance (Chapters 15.12 and 14.44 of the County Code respectively) will ensure that the project will not create substantial sources of polluted runoff or otherwise substantially degrade ground or surface water quality.

	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant	No Impact	Comments
11. GEOLOGY AND SOILS - Would the project:					
a. Expose people or structures to substantial risk of loss, injury or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?				X	Sacramento County is not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. Although there are no known active earthquake faults in the project area, the site could be subject to some ground shaking from regional faults. The Uniform Building Code contains applicable construction regulations for earthquake safety that will ensure less than significant impacts.
b. Result in substantial soil erosion, siltation or loss of topsoil?			X		Compliance with the County's Land Grading and Erosion Control Ordinance will reduce the amount of construction site erosion and minimize water quality degradation by providing stabilization and protection of disturbed areas, and by controlling the runoff of sediment and other pollutants during the course of construction.
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, soil expansion, liquefaction or collapse?			X		Pursuant to Title 16 of the Sacramento County Code and the Uniform Building Code, a soils report will be required prior to building construction. If the soils report indicates that soils may be unstable for building construction then site-specific measures (e.g., special engineering design or soil replacement) must be incorporated to ensure that soil conditions will be satisfactory for the proposed construction.
d. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available?				X	No sewer service is required to serve the project.
e. Result in a substantial loss of an important mineral resource?				X	The project is not located within an Aggregate Resource Area as identified by the Sacramento County General Plan Land Use Diagram, nor are any important mineral resources known to be located on the project site.
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site?				X	No known paleontological resources (e.g. fossil remains) or sites occur at the project location.

	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant	No Impact	Comments
12. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES - Would the project:					
a. Have a substantial adverse effect on any special status species, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, or threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community?				X	No special status species are known to exist on or utilize the project site, nor would the project substantially reduce wildlife habitat or species populations.
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities?				X	No sensitive natural communities occur on the project site, nor is the project expected to affect natural communities off-site.
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on streams, wetlands, or other surface waters that are protected by federal, state, or local regulations and policies?				X	No protected surface waters are located on or adjacent to the project site.
d. Have a substantial adverse effect on the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species?				X	The project site is already developed. Project implementation would not affect native resident or migratory species.
e. Adversely affect or result in the removal of native or landmark trees?				X	No native and/or landmark trees occur on the project site, nor is it anticipated that any native and/or landmark trees would be affected by off-site improvement required as a result of the project.
f. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources?				X	The project is consistent with local policies/ordinances protecting biological resources.
g. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan or other approved local, regional, state or federal plan for the conservation of habitat?				X	The project is within the Urban Development Area of the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP). The project will need to comply with the applicable avoidance and minimization measures outlined in the SSHCP. Refer to the Biological Resources discussion in the Environmental Effects section above.

	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant	No Impact	Comments
13. CULTURAL RESOURCES - Would the project:					
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource?				X	No historical resources would be affected by the proposed project.
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on an archaeological resource?				X	The Northern California Information Center was contacted regarding the proposed project. A record search indicated that the project site is not considered sensitive for archaeological resources.
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?				X	The project site is located outside any area considered sensitive for the existence of undiscovered human remains.
d. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code 21074?				X	Notification pursuant to Public Resources Code 21080.3.1(b) was provided to the tribes and request for consultation was not received. Tribal cultural resources have not identified in the project area.
14. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS - Would the project:					
a. Create a substantial hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				X	The project does not involve the transport, use, and/or disposal of hazardous material.
b. Expose the public or the environment to a substantial hazard through reasonably foreseeable upset conditions involving the release of hazardous materials?				X	The project does not involve the transport, storage, use, and/or disposal of hazardous material.
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?			X		The project will emit radio frequency emissions within ¼ mile of an existing school. The Federal Communications Commission regulates the operation of cell tower facilities. The project will not result in exposure above federal regulations. Refer to the Public Safety discussion in the Environmental Effects section above.

	Potentially Significant	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant	No Impact	Comments
d. Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, resulting in a substantial hazard to the public or the environment?				X	The project is not located on a known hazardous materials site.
e. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or emergency evacuation plan?				X	The project would not interfere with any known emergency response or evacuation plan.
f. Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to or intermixed with urbanized areas?				X	The project is within the urbanized area of the unincorporated County. There is no significant risk of loss, injury, or death to people or structures associated with wildland fires.
15. ENERGY – Would the project:					
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impacts due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction?			X		Compliance with Title 24, Green Building Code, will ensure that all project energy efficiency requirements are met resulting in less than significant impacts.
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?				X	The project will not conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.
16. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS – Would the project:					
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			X		The project will not have the potential to interfere with the County meeting the goals of AB 32 (reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020); therefore, the climate change impact of the project is considered less than significant.
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases?				X	The project is consistent with County policies adopted for the purpose of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

LAND USE CONSISTENCY	Current Land Use Designation	Consistent	Not Consistent	Comments
General Plan	Low Density Residential	X		
Community Plan	RD-5 (PQP)	X		
Land Use Zone	RD-5	X		

INITIAL STUDY PREPARERS

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