



REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION City of Sacramento

8

915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2671

PUBLIC HEARING
July 22, 2010

To: Members of the Planning Commission

Subject: Natomas High School Cellular Modification (Z10-022)

A request for a Special Permit Modification in order to eliminate a previously approved antenna shroud and to raise the height location for a previously approved telecommunications antennas installation project.

- A. Environmental Determination: Exempt CEQA Guidelines section 15301;
- B. Special Permit Modification to install three (3) panel antennas, three (3) microwave dishes, and related equipment at the 81 foot centerline elevations on an existing 100' stadium light tower, on an approximately 57.24 acre parcel in the Agricultural (A) zone.

Location/Council District:

3301 Fong Ranch Road, Sacramento, CA 95834

Assessor's Parcel Number: 225-0170-063-0000

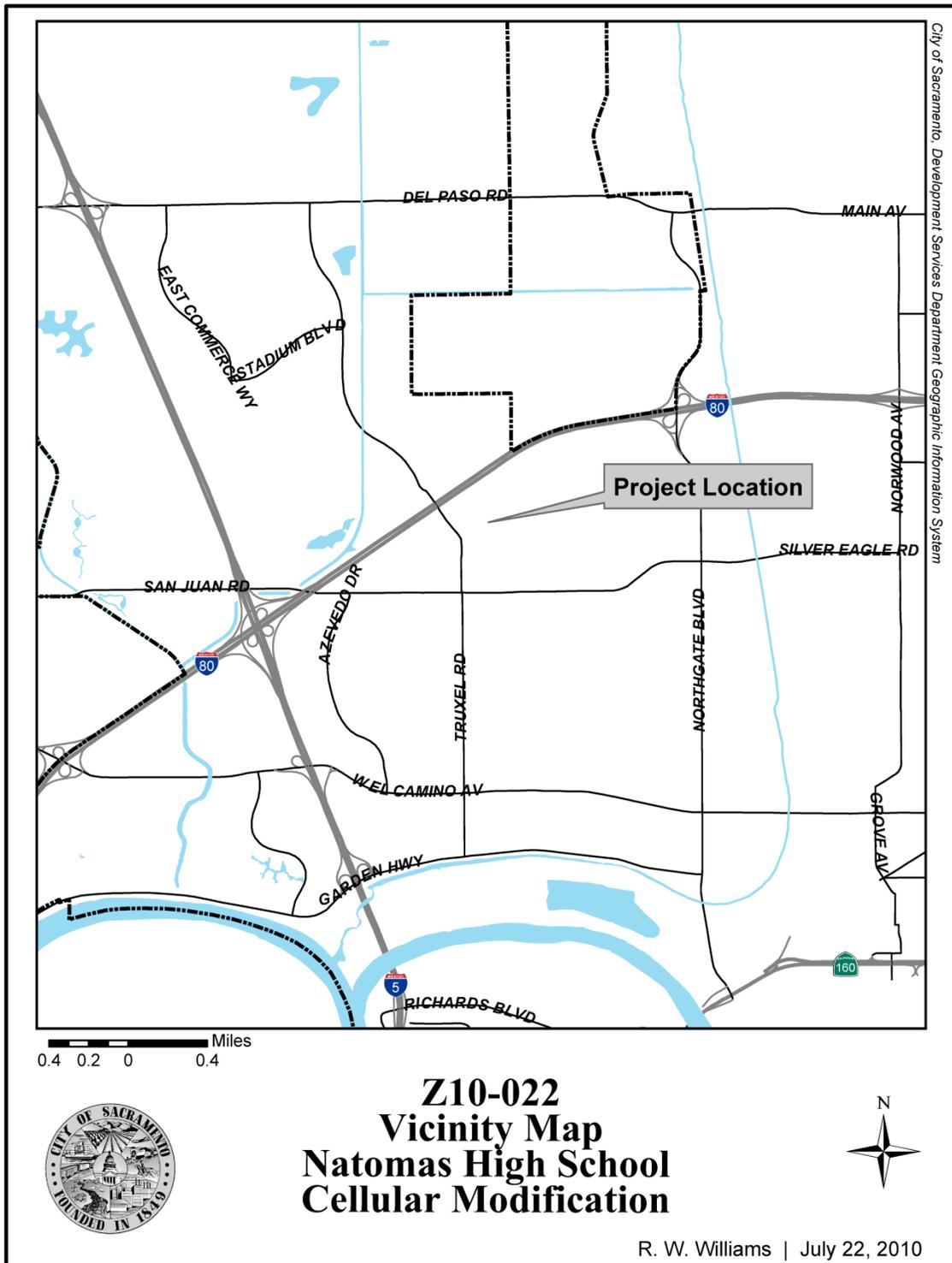
Council District 1

Recommendation: Staff recommends the Commission deny the request based on the findings listed in Attachment 1. The Commission has final approval authority over items A-B above, and its decision is appealable to City Council.

Contact: Robert W. Williams, Associate Planner, (916) 808-7686,
Sandra Yope, Senior Planner, (916) 808-7158.

Applicant: Jillian Faria for ClearWire, (916) 214-7178,
4412 Harlin Drive, Sacramento, CA 95826

Owner: Natomas Unified School District, (916) 567-5457,
1515 Sports Drive, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95834



Summary: The applicant is proposing to modify a previously approved special permit minor modification that was approved by the Zoning Administrator on August 6, 2007 (Z07-084). That project was for the installation of three (3) new flat panel microwave dish antennas and three (3) standard flat panel antennas, with all antennas to be placed within an antenna shroud, at the 68 foot centerline elevation on an existing 100' stadium light tower. This equipment has not been installed. The new proposal consists of three (3) 42" panel antennas and three (3) 26" in diameter microwave dishes (instead of the previously approved flat microwave dishes). The proposal does not have a shroud covering and the antennas are proposed to be moved up by thirteen feet to the 81 foot centerline elevations.

Staff does not support this request at this time. Staff believes that the proposed antennas are visually obtrusive as they do not meet the "close proximity" standards of the Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities. Staff notified all property owners within 500 feet of the site of this public hearing and, at the time of the writing of this report, has not received any calls of concern from the surrounding neighborhood.

Table 1: Project Information
General Plan designation: Public/Quasi-Public (PUB)
Community Plan Area: South Natomas
Existing zoning of site: Agricultural (A).
Existing use of site: High School with Football Stadium
Property area: 57.24 acres

Background Information: On October 25, 2001, the Planning Commission approved a Special Permit to replace a 100-foot stadium light tower with a new stadium light tower of the same height, and to add six antennas (P01-086). This special permit expired because work was not commenced within the (then) two year time frame. On December 9, 2004 the Planning Commission approved new Special Permit to replace the existing 100-foot stadium light tower with a new 100-foot light for the collocation of three antenna arrays of three panel antennas each for a total of nine panel antennas. This project included the initial installation of one set of panel antennas at 86 foot centerline elevation, (and two future arrays below at the 76 foot and 66 foot elevations), and to erect an equipment shelter adjacent to the light tower (P04-166). This stadium light tower was subsequently constructed initially with the top array and middle array was added in 2005.

The applicant is now requesting to modify the project which was approved by Z07-084, in order "to allow ClearWire utilize a higher centerline and to better incorporate antenna array with current wireless installations".

Public/Neighborhood Outreach and Comments: The notice of the Zoning Administrator hearing of June 24 2010 was sent to all property owners within three hundred feet of the project site, as well as the Natomas Community Association, the Gardenland/Northgate Neighborhood Association, and the North Natomas Community

Association. City staff did not receive any phone calls or comments on the proposed project, prior to that hearing. Additionally, all property owners within five hundred feet of the project site and the above neighborhood associations received notice of the Planning Commission hearing. City staff has not received any phone calls or comments from the neighborhood concerning this project.

Environmental Considerations: The Community Development Department, Environmental Planning Services Division has reviewed this project and determined that the project is exempt under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Class 1, Section number 15301. However, staff is recommending denial of the Special Permit modification request. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) does not apply to projects that are denied by the public agency. Therefore, if staff's recommendation is accepted, no action or further findings pursuant to CEQA are required.

Policy Considerations:

2030 General Plan: The subject site is designated Public/Quasi-Public (PUB) in the 2030 General Plan. The General Plan promotes working with service providers to ensure access and availability of a wide range of state of the art telecommunication systems and services for households businesses, institutions, and public agencies throughout the city (U7.1.1). Though the existing stadium pole meets the intent of the General Plan to promote access to telecommunication services, the proposed antennas are inconsistent with the City's Telecommunications Design Guidelines. Staff believes that the cellular provider can provide more slim line design than has been submitted with this application.

Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities: The Guidelines for Telecommunication Facilities, adopted by the City Council on April 29, 1997, emphasize minimizing the visibility of new telecommunication facilities through construction and design techniques. One of the key objectives of the design guidelines is for carriers to consider using "close proximity/bi-polar or tight antenna arrays" that are the preferred type, over the "top-hat" antenna arrays. The existing pole has a "close proximity" panel design.

Project Design: The existing stadium light pole is located on the site of Natomas High School, at the existing football field with an equipment compound located at the base of the pole (see Exhibits 1B through 1D). The original antenna design that was approved by the planning commission called for three sets of three panel antennas each at the 86, 76, and 66 foot elevations for a total of nine panel antennas (see Exhibit 1O). All of these panel antennas were proposed to be the "tight array" type. The top array was installed during construction, and the middle array was added later. The bottom array was never installed.

The previously approved modification that was approved by the zoning administrator (Z07-084) was to modify the proposed bottom array to allow the addition of the microwave dish antennas to the panel antennas (see Exhibits 1L through 1N). The

shroud addition may have been requested as a revision by staff in order to decrease the visibility of the dish antennas from nearby residential areas.

The current proposed design would be much wider on the pole, mostly due the fact that there is less than six feet of length between the two existing arrays. In order to place the all of the equipment at this elevation, the equipment will need to be mounted on bars and pipes extending out from the stadium pole (see Exhibit s 1E through 1H).

This application was submitted as a minor modification to special permit, which would not have required a public hearing. However, when the current proposal was submitted, staff had concerns about the increased visibility of the proposed antenna array. Staff was concerned that the new proposal was not consistent with the intent of the original slim line antenna project that had been approved by the planning commission. Staff asked the applicant to consider some type of covering shroud. However due to the width that would be required for such a covering, after further review by staff, this proposal not considered to be a practical solution.

Since staff was not supportive of the applicant's proposed project, the proposed minor modification could not be approved has a staff level project. The applicant chose to have the project elevated to a public hearing before the zoning administrator (a major modification), rather than withdrawing the project.

Zoning Administrator Hearing: A public hearing before the Zoning Administrator was held on July 1, 2010. At the hearing, staff continued to voice their concerns about the proposed design of the project. After listening to staff concerns and testimony from the applicant, the Zoning Administrator chose to elevate the project to the planning commission for a decision. The Zoning Administrator is seeking policy guidance from the Planning Commission regarding the aesthetics of these proposed designs. We have received numerous applications where the dish array is much more visibly obtrusive then the panels, particularly on a slim line line pole design. The proposed design does not appear to meet the Planning Commission's original intent. The Zoning Administrator elevated the proposed project for the Planning Commission to make the policy decision on design for these situations.

Land Use

In order to locate microwave dishes on an existing stadium light tower previously approved by the Planning Commission for telecommunications antennas, a Special Permit Modification is required (Zoning Code Section 17.24.050 footnote 58(d)(v)(b)). In evaluating Special Permit modification proposals of this nature, the Commission is required to make the following findings:

A. A special permit shall be granted upon sound principles of land use.

Based on the City's Facility Location & Design Guidelines section of the Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities the carriers should consider using "close proximity/bi-polar or tight antenna arrays" configurations on monopoles instead of "traditional top hat" antenna arrays. The existing pole was approved by the Planning Commission with a tight antenna array design. Staff believes the current proposal is contrary to these design guidelines.

B. A special permit shall not be granted if it will be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or if it results in the creation of a nuisance.

The installation of the dish antennas will result in the creation of a visual nuisance. The stadium light tower was originally approved to be a slim line design.

Summary: While the proposed project complies with the 2030 General Plan and the Zoning Code, staff feels that the project does not comply with the City's Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities, or the slim line design intent that was reviewed by the planning commission when the stadium light pole was originally approved.

Staff recommends the planning commission deny the proposed project, based on the findings of fact listed in Attachment 1.

Respectfully submitted by: *Robert W. Williams*
ROBERT W. WILLIAMS
Associate Planner

Recommendation Approved:

Joy Patterson
for SANDRA YOPE
Senior Planner

Attachments:

Attachment 1	Recommended Findings of Fact for Denial
Exhibit 1A	Title Sheet
Exhibit 1B	Overall Site Plan
Exhibit 1C	Site Plan
Exhibit 1D	Equipment Plan and Detail
Exhibit 1E	Antenna Plan and Details
Exhibit 1F	Elevations
Exhibit 1G	Photo simulation - View 1
Exhibit 1H	Photo simulation - View 2
Exhibit 1I	Propagation Map with Candidate
Exhibit 1J	Propagation Map without Candidate
Exhibit 1K	Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities
Exhibit 1L	Z07-084 Previously Approved Elevations
Exhibit 1M	Z07-084 Previously Approved Antenna Layout
Exhibit 1N	Z07-084 Previously Approved Photo simulation
Exhibit 1O	P04-166 Previously Approved Elevation
Attachment 2	Aerial 1
Attachment 3	Aerial 2
Attachment 4	Land Use & Zoning Map

Attachment 1
Recommended Findings of Fact for Denial
Natomas High School Cellular Modification (Z10-022)
3301 Fong Ranch Road

Findings Of Fact

A. Environmental Determination: Exemption

Based on the determination and recommendation of the City's Environmental Planning Services Manager and the oral and documentary evidence received at the hearing on the Project, the Planning Commission finds that the Project is exempt from review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities as follows: This project consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

B. The Special Permit Modification to install three (3) panel antennas, three (3) microwave dishes, and related equipment at the 81 foot centerline elevation on an existing 100' stadium light tower, on an approximately 57.24 acre parcel in the Agricultural (A) zone is denied subject to the following Findings of Fact:

1. The proposed project is not based upon sound principles of land use in that the proposed antenna installation is inconsistent with the City's Guidelines for Telecommunication Facilities.
2. The proposed project would be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare in that the proposed installation of the dish antennas will result in the creation of a visual nuisance. The stadium light tower was originally approved to be a slim line design and the proposed installation does not visually minimize the proposed wireless equipment on the existing pole.

Exhibit 1B – Overall Site Plan

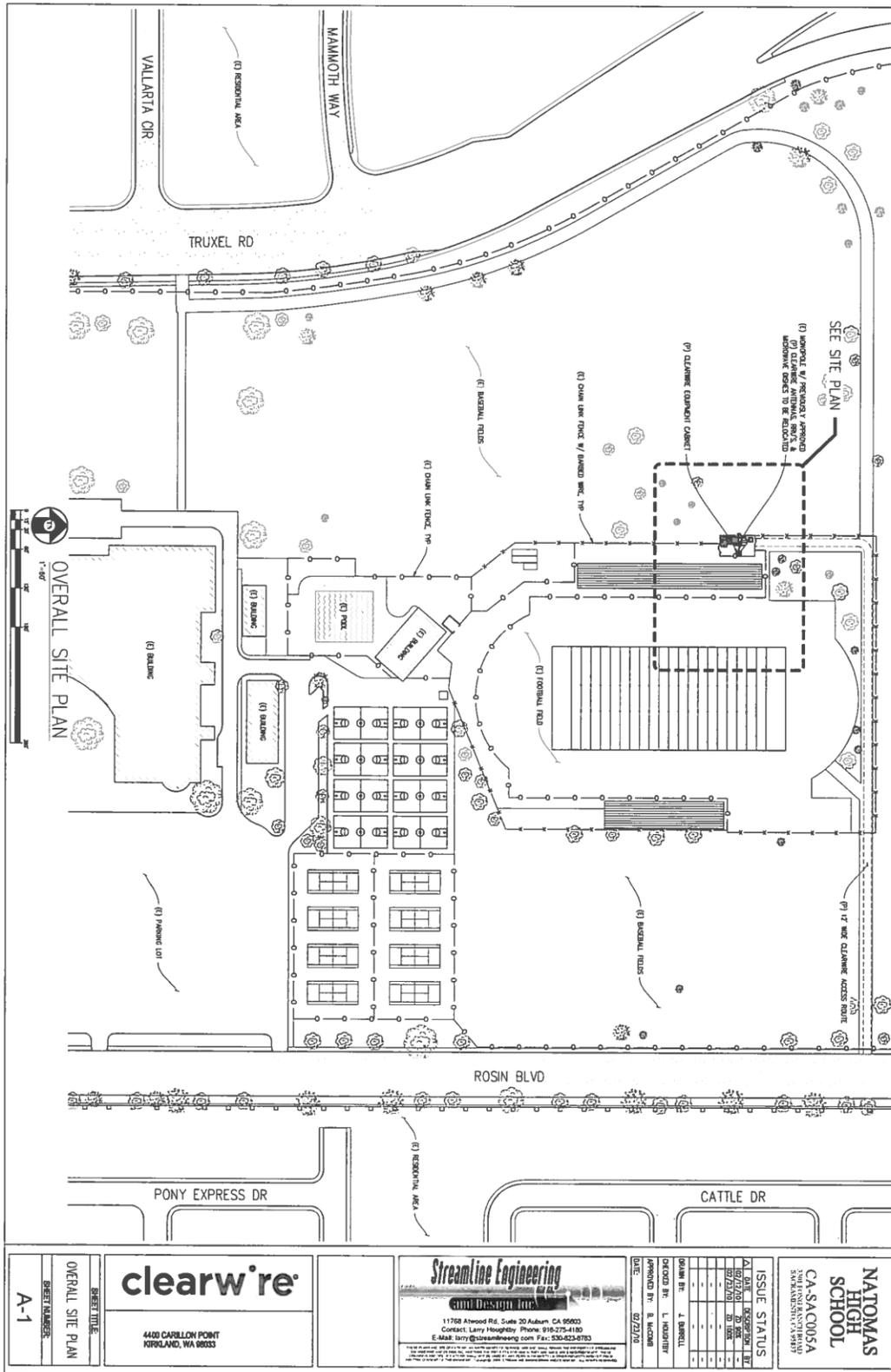
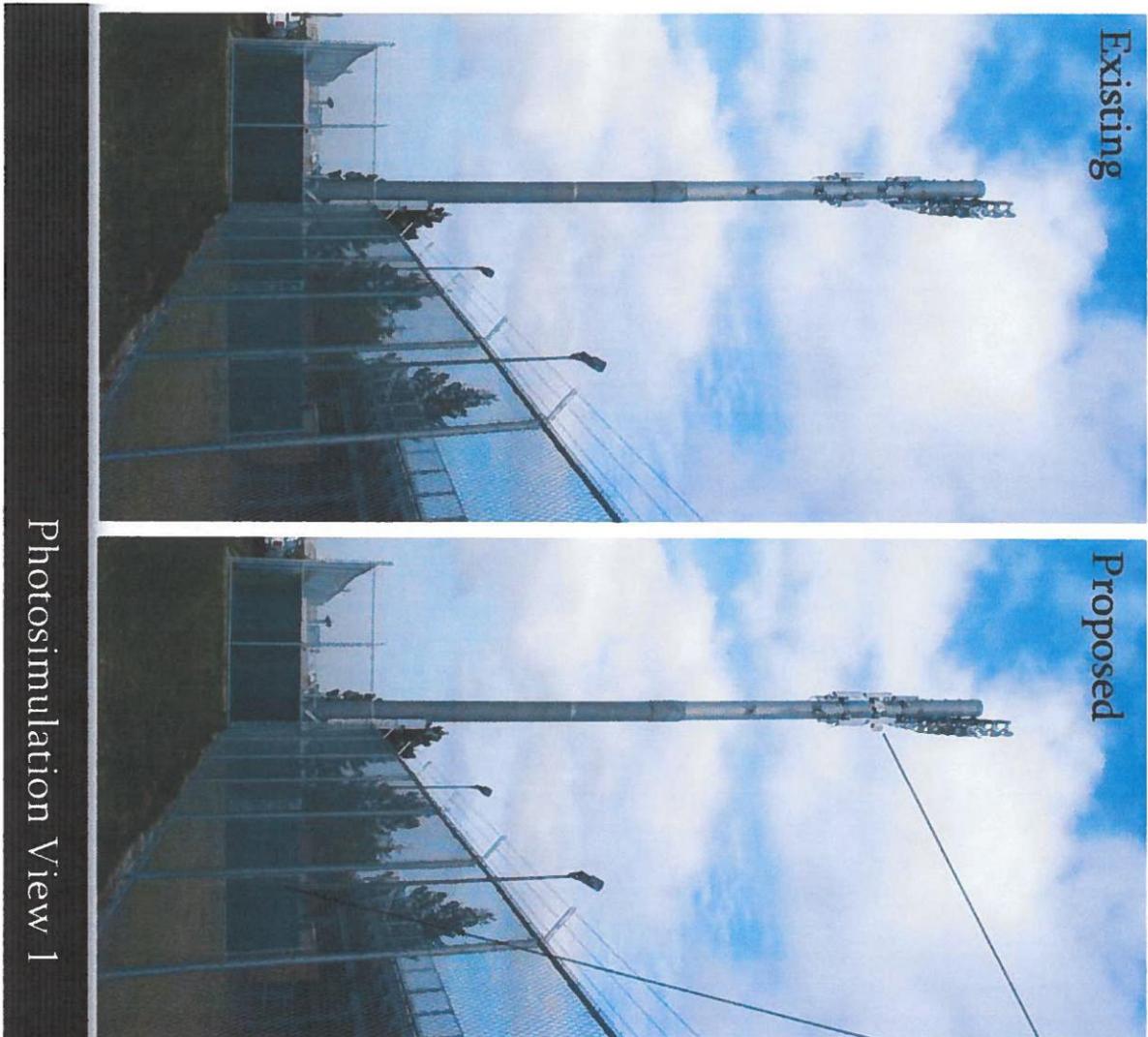


Exhibit 1G – Photo simulation View 1



PROPOSED THREE PANEL ANTENNAS & RRUS, WITH THREE MICROWAVE DISHES ATTACHED TO EXISTING MONOPOLE. PROPOSED EQUIPMENT CABINET (NOT SHOWN) BEHIND EXISTING CHAIN LINK FENCE.

**NATOMAS
HIGH
SCHOOL**

CA-SACC005A
3301 FONG RANCH ROAD
SACRAMENTO, CA 95837

clearwire
wireless broadband



Z10-022

FEBRUARY 26, 2010

Photosimulation View 1

Exhibit 1H – Photo simulation View 2



PROPOSED THREE PANEL ANTENNAS & RRUS, WITH THREE MICROWAVE DISHES ATTACHED TO EXISTING MONOPOLE. PROPOSED EQUIPMENT CABINET (NOT SHOWN) BEHIND EXISTING CHAIN LINK FENCE.

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Z10-022
FEBRUARY 26, 2010

Photosimulation View 2

Exhibit 1I –Propagation Map with Candidate

Composite Coverage W Site CA-SAC005

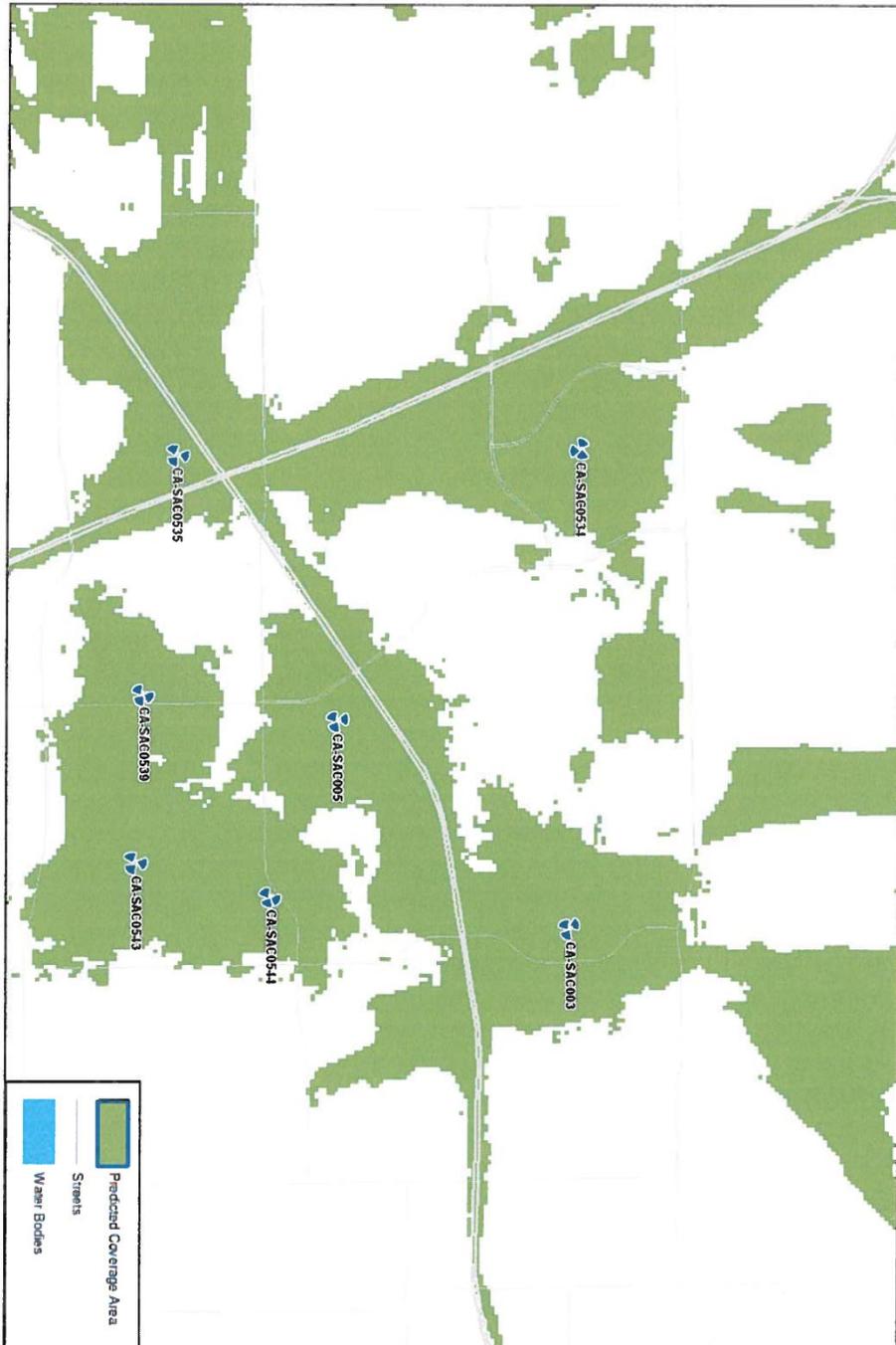


Exhibit 1J –Propagation Map without Candidate

Composite Coverage WO Site CA-SAC005

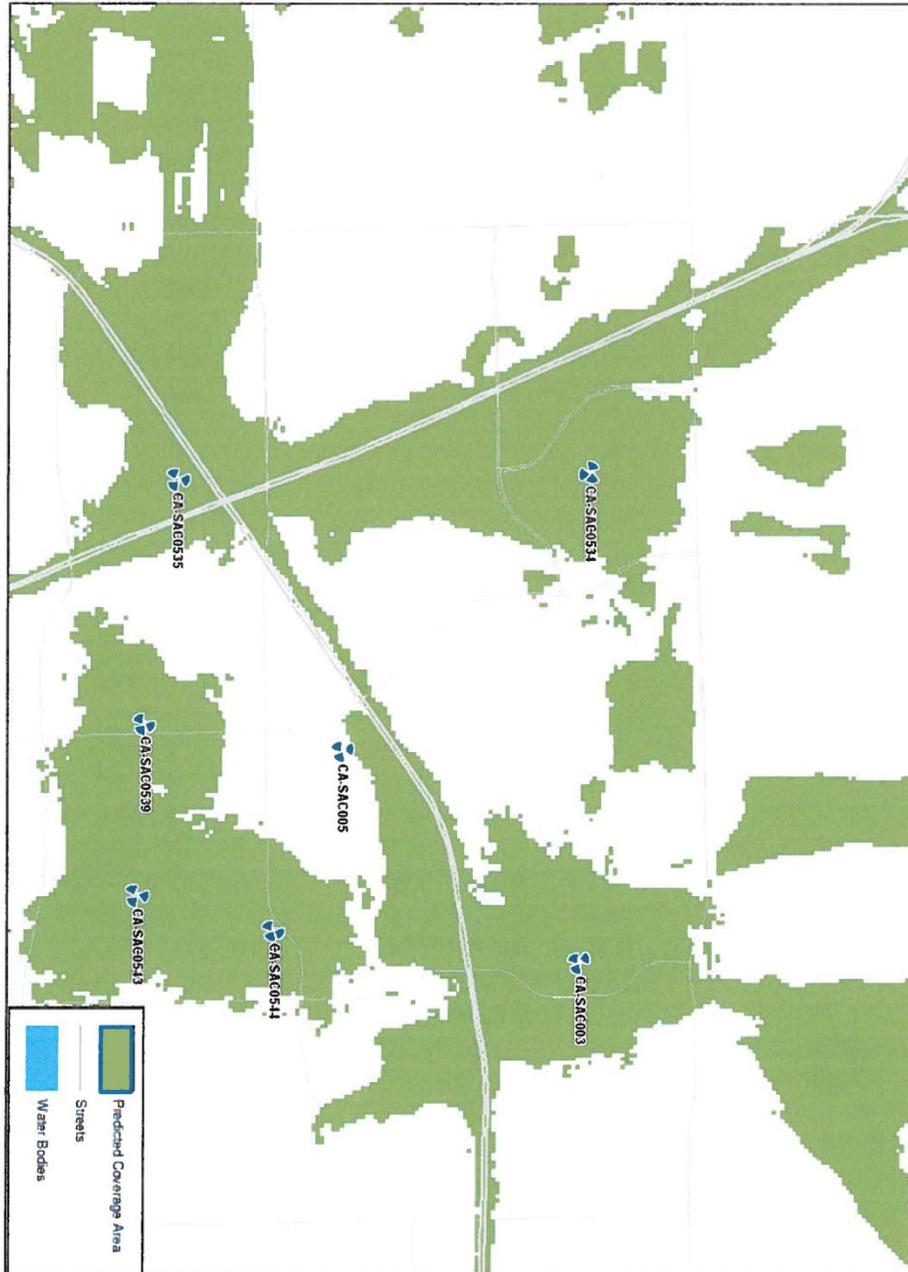


Exhibit 1K – Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities

Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities

<http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/planning/long-range/planning-library/telecommunications-facilities.cfm>

Background

- Zoning Ordinance Amendment and Policies adopted by the City Council on April 29, 1997
- Policies were created through an 18 month process of regular meetings between City and County Planning Staff, wireless carrier representatives, and community group representatives.
- Policies provide location criteria and guidelines for evaluating proposed telecommunication facilities project requests for which planning entitlements are required.
- Policies recognize dramatic changes and growth in the telecommunications industry and the value of the increased services gained by the City's business community and private citizens.
- Key objectives for the City are to maximize the number of "invisible" telecommunications facility sites, provide locational opportunities on City owned property or right-of-ways, encourage co-location of facilities, and maximize the proliferation of monopoles.

Facility Siting Highlights

Siting Preferences (Listed in order of preference)

- Located completely within an existing or constructed structure.
- Existing structures (public or private) that allow a facade mounted antenna
- Existing structures (public or private) which require a modification of the structure architecturally or in height in order to mount antennas (includes roof mounts)
- Collocation on existing poles or light standards at a lower height
- Collocation on existing poles or light standards at a higher height
- New monopole (whether co-developed or single carrier)

Facility Location & Design Guidelines

- Antenna panels should match the building colors and/or architectural character so as to not be visible.
- Antennas should be screened with stealthing materials so as not to be visible (as much as possible).

Exhibit 1K (cont.) – Guidelines for Telecommunications Facilities

- Roof mounted antennas should be located in the center of the roof or as close to the center of the roof as possible. Projections above the roof should be "invisible" to pedestrians passing the site from the opposite side of the street. Although the current standard allows a maximum projection height of 12 feet; the intent is not to interpret that height as a solution for a building that is not as tall as is needed to serve the carrier.
- Carriers should consider constructing new parapets or structures on building roof tops that are in keeping with the building architecture so that roof mounts can actually be constructed as facade mounts.
- Monopoles should be constructed of materials that match the prevalent poles and/or buildings and landscaping in the area or provide stealthing for the pole (i.e. wood, metal, palm/pine tree). Also carriers should consider using "close proximity/bi-polar or tight antenna arrays" configurations on monopoles instead of "traditional top hat" antenna arrays.
- Monopoles should be painted to match either the sky line (dull matte gray) or other prevalent architectural or natural features (i.e. trees).
- Antennas that are collocated on another facility should be designed to coordinate and compliment the existing design of the facility.
- Carriers should consider enclosing the antennas within another structure such as a sign or an architectural feature.
- Carriers should avoid sites that will require monopoles to be painted or lighted per FAA standards.
- Carriers should consider siting as much as possible on existing infrastructure such as highway structures, transmission towers/poles, light standards etc.
- Carriers should consider the distance from residentially zoned properties when considering the placement of additional antennas on an existing monopole (or other collocation), or when installing a facade mounted antenna. The objective is to have the facility be invisible when viewed from the residentially zoned property.
- Carriers should include landscaping in proposals to better screen equipment building or cabinets.
- Carriers should locate all equipment shelters or cabinets to the rear of existing buildings away from the streetscape view.
- New telecommunications towers in sensitive areas may be subject to a term limit or required periodic review as part of the conditioning of any approved entitlements.

Exhibit 1L – Z07-084 Previously Approved Elevation

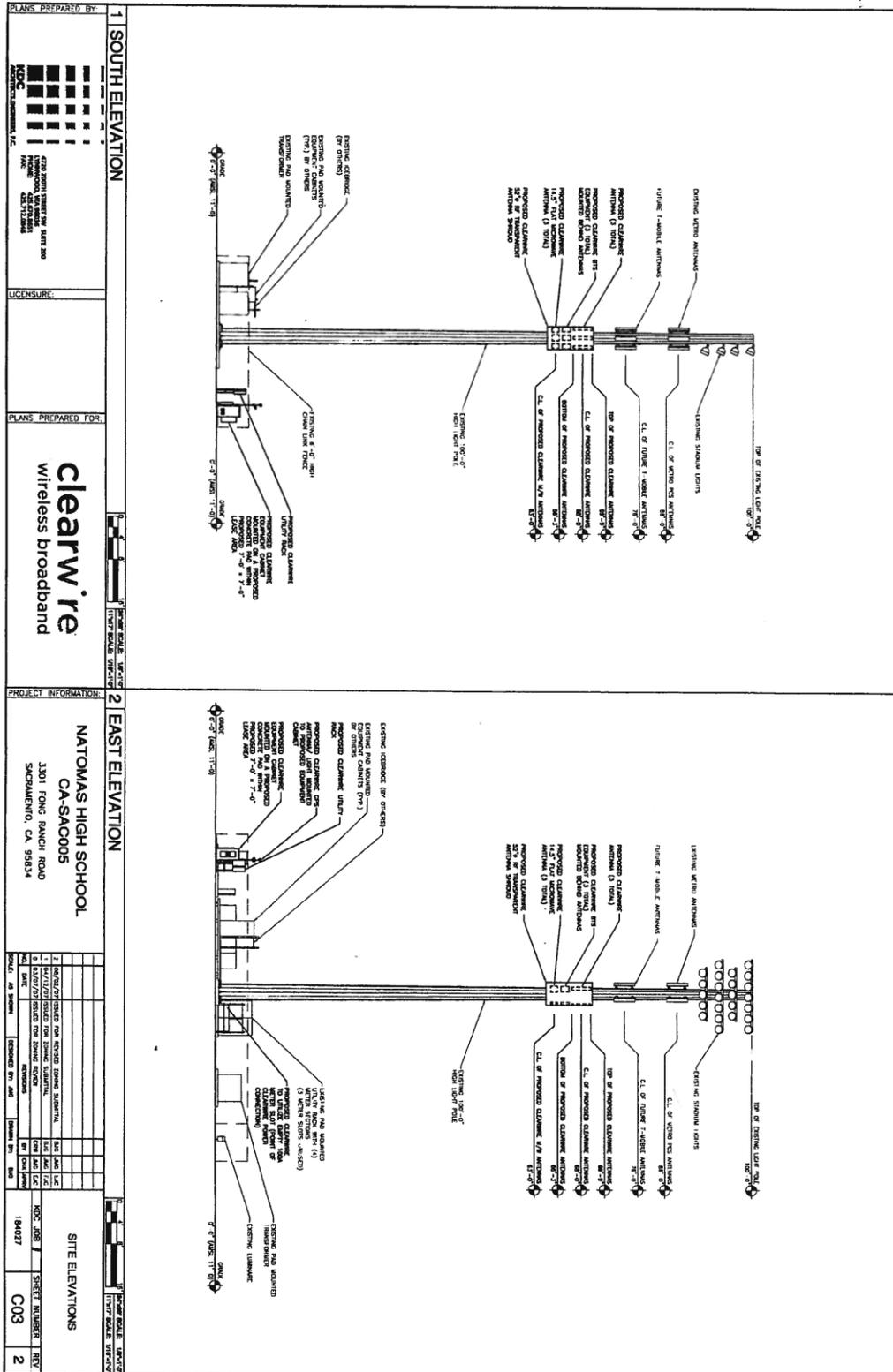


Exhibit 1M – Z07-084 Previously Approved Antenna Layout

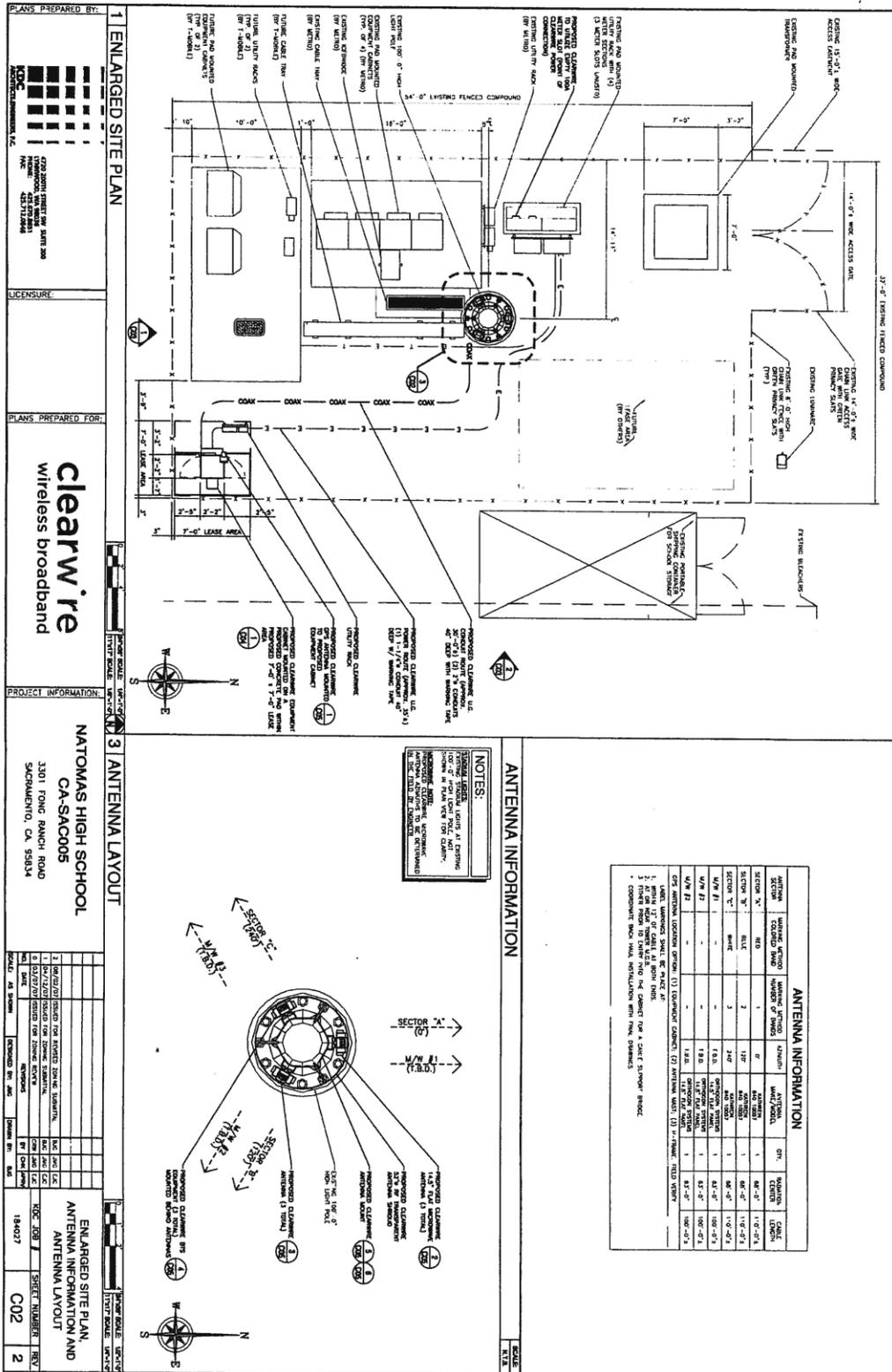


Exhibit 1N – Z07-084 Previously Approved Photo simulation

 **KDC**
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clearw're[®]
wireless broadband
CA-SAC005 VIEW 3
NATOMAS HIGHSCHOOL

EXISTING VIEW



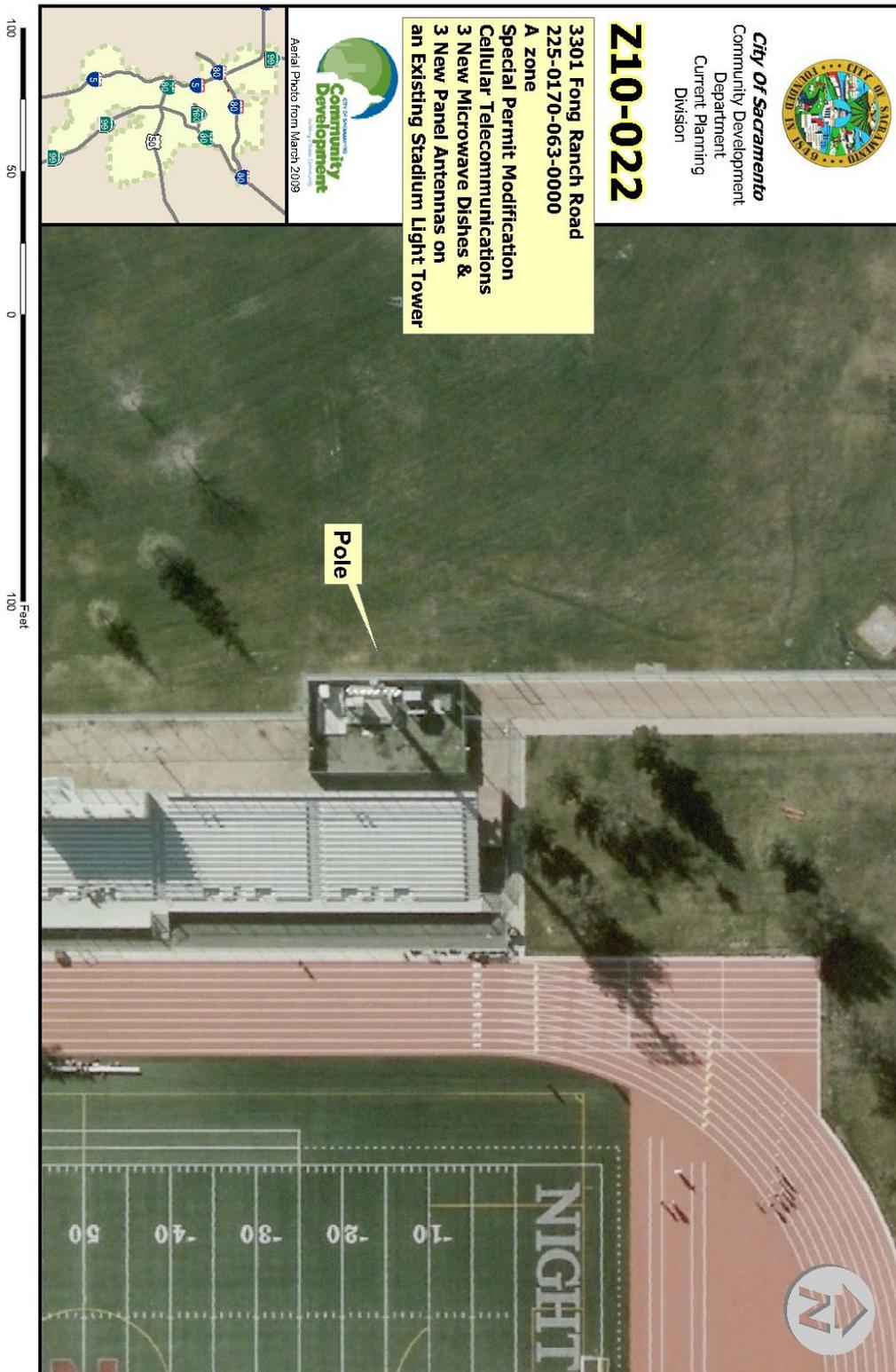
PROPOSED VIEW



Attachment 2 – Aerial 1



Attachment 3 – Aerial 2



Attachment 4 – Land Use & Zoning Map

