



CITY OF SIGNAL HILL
STAFF REPORT

2175 Cherry Avenue • Signal
Hill, California 90755-3799

8/19/2025

AGENDA ITEM

TO:
**HONORABLE CHAIR
AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

FROM:
**SUSANA MARTINEZ
ASSOCIATE PLANNER**

SUBJECT:
**PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 25-01
A REQUEST TO CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE A WIRELESS
TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY CONSISTING OF A 75-FOOT-HIGH MONO-
PALM AND AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT LOCATED AT 2766 SAINT LOUIS AVENUE
WITHIN THE COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL (CI) ZONING DISTRICT**

Summary:

Form of Notice: Notice was published in the Signal Tribune newspaper per Government Code §65091(a)(4) on August 8, 2025; was mailed to property owners within a 300' radius of the subject site on August 8, 2025; and was posted in accordance with Signal Hill Municipal Code (SHMC) Section 1.08.010 at City Hall, Signal Hill Library, Reservoir Park, and Discovery Well Park on August 8, 2025.

The applicant, Smartlink, on behalf of Verizon Wireless, is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit to install a new mono-palm wireless communication facility at the southeast corner of the property located at 2766 Saint Louis Avenue. The proposed mono-palm would host twelve (12) new wireless telecommunication antennas. The project also proposes auxiliary equipment for the antennas and a standby gas generator for the auxiliary equipment.

Strategic Plan Goal(s):

Goal 4: Maintain and improve the City's physical infrastructure, water system, and recreational spaces.

Recommendation:

Adopt the following resolution, entitled:

Attachment A

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 25-01 ALLOWING THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITY CONSISTING OF A 75-FOOT-HIGH MONO-PALM AND AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT LOCATED AT 2766 SAINT LOUIS AVENUE WITHIN THE COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL (CI) ZONING DISTRICT AND FINDING THAT SAID ACTION IS CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO STATE CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15332

Background:

The applicant, Smartlink, on behalf of Verizon Wireless, is requesting to install a new wireless telecommunication facility at the southeast corner of the property located at 2766 Saint Louis Avenue within the Commercial Industrial (CI) zoning district. The wireless telecommunication facility incorporates a stealth design intended to resemble a palm tree. This type of design is commonly known as a mono-palm. The subject site measures approximately 12,500 square feet and is currently developed with a 6,000 square-foot industrial building. According to city business license records, the current operator is an industrial welding business.

The wireless telecommunication facility is proposed at the southeast corner of the site which abuts an alley at the rear of the site. The proposed lease area measures approximately 522 square feet. The lease area would be occupied by the proposed mono-palm structure, auxiliary equipment (cabinet equipment, electrical panel, etc.) and a standby gas generator.

On November 11, 2024, the applicant submitted an application for a Conditional Use Permit and subsequent documents. A deposit to the developer account was made on November 26, 2024, to commence formal review. The application was deemed incomplete on December 23, 2024, and the applicant was provided with incomplete letter requesting additional information and revisions to the plans.

On April 1, 2025, the applicant resubmitted revised plans and supplemental information. The application was reviewed by Community Development and the Public Works department. The revised plans and additional documentation generated questions about existing easements on site and the effect the easements would have on an access agreement as part of the project. After review of the second submittal, the application was deemed incomplete for a second time, and an incomplete letter was issued on April 30, 2025.

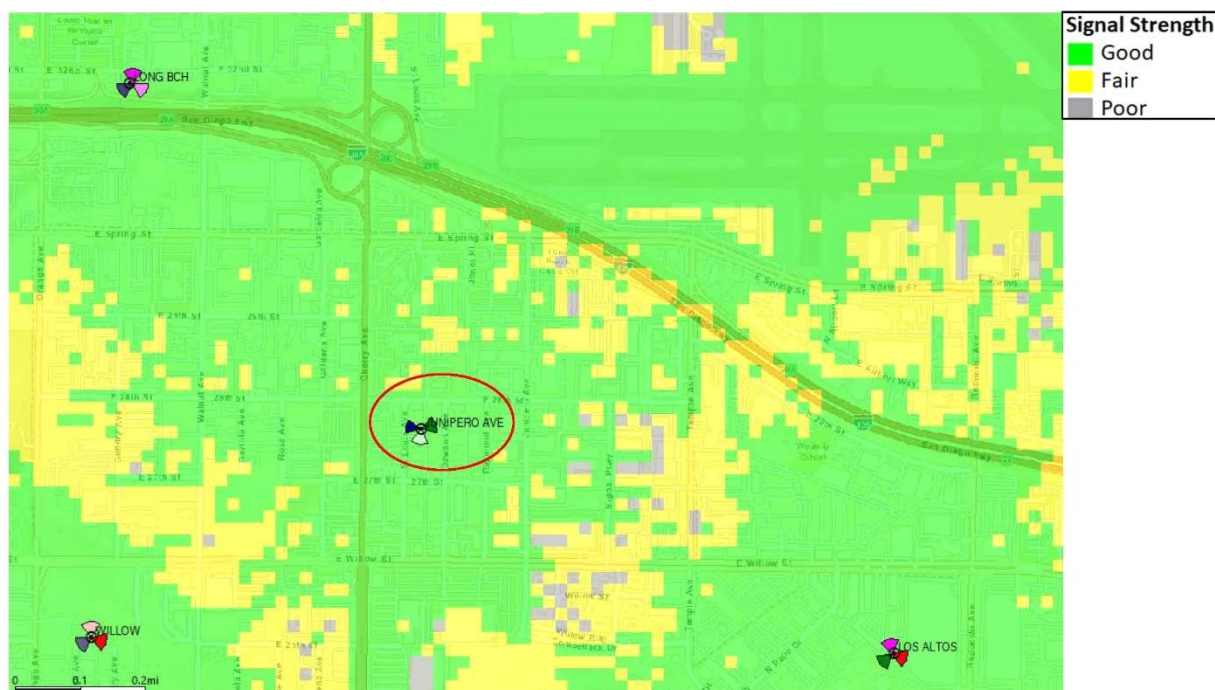
On June 12, 2025, the applicant resubmitted revised plans for a third time addressing the questions surrounding the easements and access agreement area. Staff reviewed the revised plans, and the application was deemed complete on July 1, 2025.

Analysis:

Wireless telecommunication facilities are permitted in the CI zoning district, with approval of the Conditional Use Permit. The applicant proposes installing a 75-foot-high mono-palm within the proposed lease area. The maximum height permitted in the CI zone is 90 feet and the proposed mono-palm is in compliance with this height maximum. The plans submitted (Attachment A) specify that the mono-palm will host twelve (12) panel antennas, providing additional coverage along Cherry

The applicant submitted coverage maps (attachment C) identifying Verizon coverage with and without the proposed telecommunication facility. Currently, without the proposed wireless telecommunication facility, coverage ranges between “fair” to “poor” within the area. The applicant foresees that with the proposed installation of the mono-palm, coverage will increase to “good” signal strength within the area.

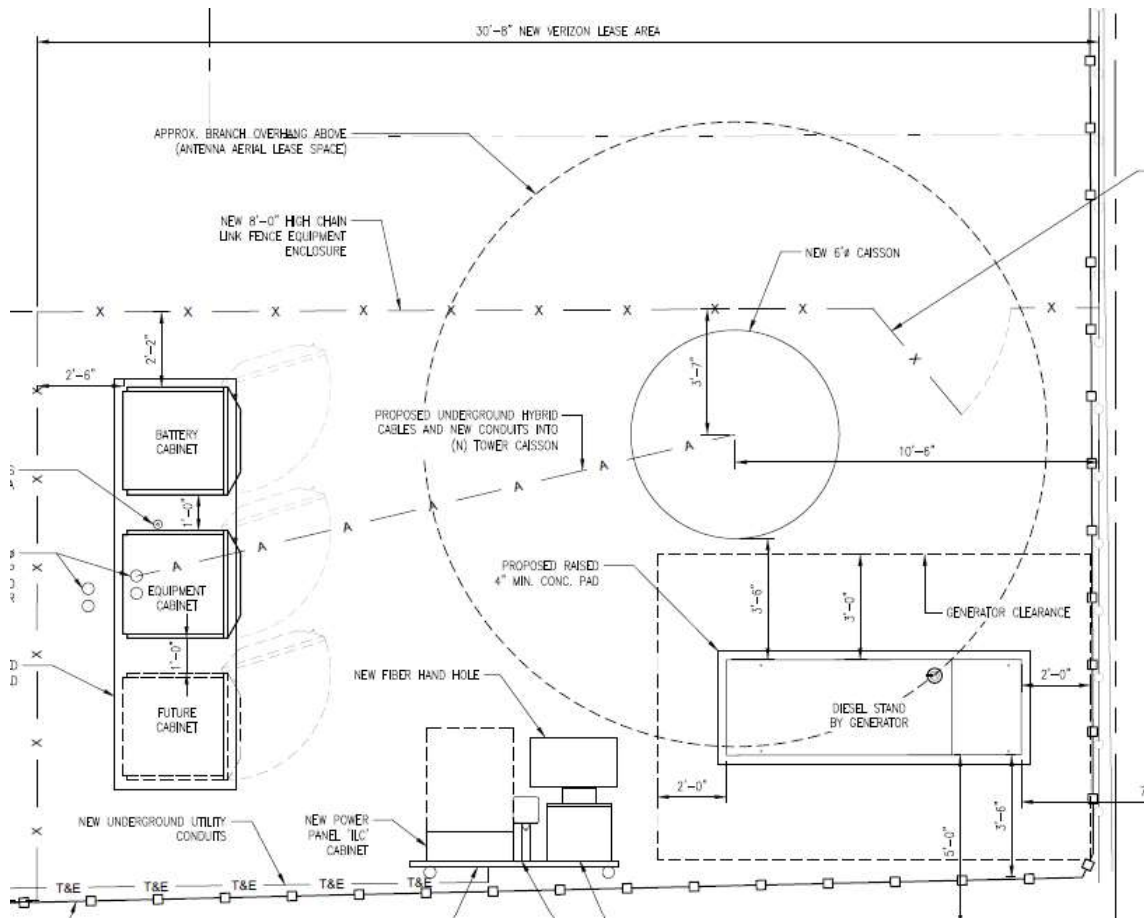
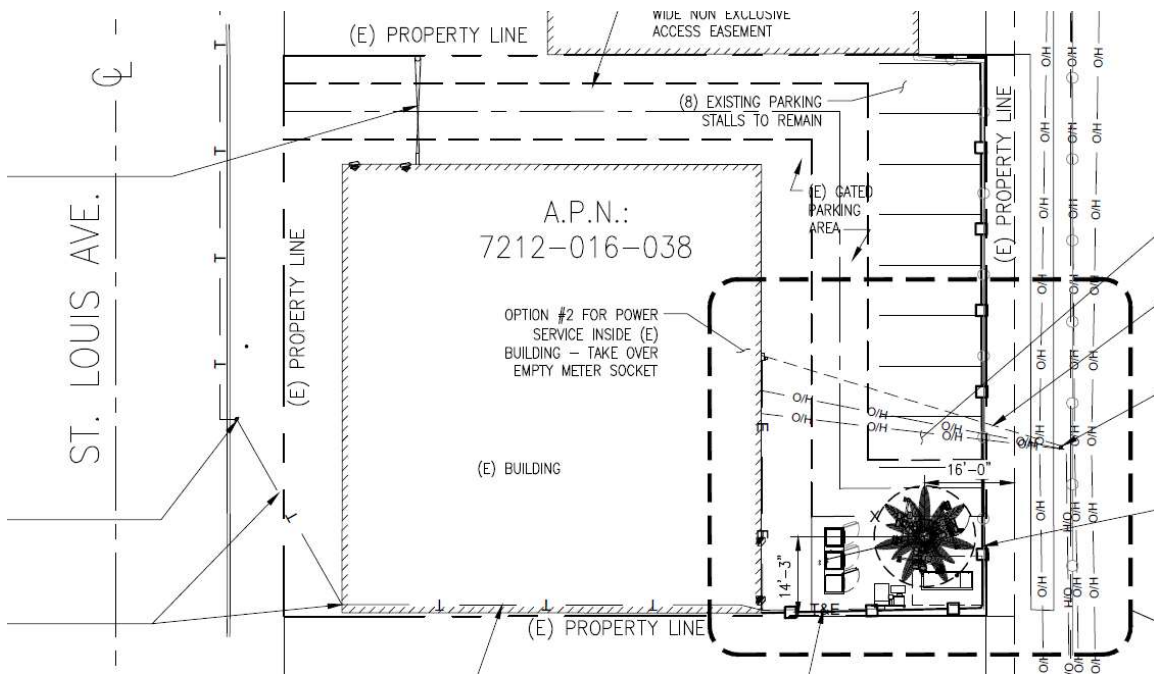
Verizon Coverage with Junipero Ave



Auxiliary equipment is also proposed as part of the project. Auxiliary equipment includes an equipment cabinet, power panel cabinet, battery cabinet, and a diesel standby generator. The diesel standby generator is proposed to operate only in the event of an emergency, where power is not available for the mono-palm and auxiliary equipment. The California Building Code provides standards for standby power systems. Additionally, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) requires review and approval. A condition of approval has been included that the standby generator shall be reviewed and approved by AQMD and, prior to permit issuance, the applicant shall provide the Building Division with the approvals (COA #9).

The applicant proposes to test the generator once a month to ensure it is still operational. Test time is anticipated to last fifteen minutes. A condition of approval has been included that the standby generator be tested Monday through Friday during regular business hours only (COA #10).

All the equipment will be housed within a proposed eight-foot-high chain-link fence with slats. The slats shall be made of a durable material that is UV resistant. The material and color shall be reviewed and approved by the Community Development (COA # 14). The fence is proposed to secure the equipment and minimize noise during test times or operation of the standby generator. The site plan and enlarged site plan are provided below.



Off-Street Parking

The lease area is proposed within an approved parking area. Permit history identifies that the parking area is located at the rear of the building along the Easterly property line. The site currently has eleven (11) parking spaces. As part of the project, the applicant is proposing to remove three (3) parking stalls to accommodate the mono-palm and auxiliary equipment, leaving eight (8) parking stalls on site. The applicant provided parking calculations for the existing industrial use to ensure compliance with the Signal Hill Municipal Code (SHMC).

The existing building measures 6,000 square feet and is currently used for a welding business. The building contains 5,100 square feet of open warehouse and 900 square feet of office space. Pursuant to section 20.70.030 of the SHMC, warehouse space is calculated at one (1) space per one thousand (1,000) square feet of gross floor area. Office is calculated at one (1) space per two-hundred fifty (250) square feet of gross floor area. Based on the parking calculations, the office space would require four (4) parking spaces, and the warehouse space would require five (5) parking spaces. The total number of parking spaces required for the existing building is nine (9) spaces. A breakdown is provided below.

Off-Street Parking Breakdown				
Use	Required Parking Ratio	Parking calculation (fractions resulting in 0.5 or greater are to be rounded up, all others rounded down)	Total Required	Total Provided
Office	1/250 SF	900 SF/250 SF = 3.6 spaces	4 spaces	
Warehouse	1/1000 SF	5100 SF/1000 SF = 5.1 spaces	5 spaces	
			9 spaces	
				8 spaces (1 deficient)

As the breakdown identifies with the addition of the mono-palm, the site would be deficient one (1) parking stall. However, section 20.84.110 titled Minor Deviations allows for a deviation of the parking requirements in commercial and industrial uses, by not more than ten percent, provided that the reduction does not exceed two parking spaces for any lot. For this project, one (1) parking stall would be deviated. In approving the minor deviation, the Community Development Department Director shall find the following:

1. There are practical reasons or benefits of improved design which justify a deviation from prescribed development standards.

2. The adjustment, with any conditions imposed, will provide equal or greater benefit to adjacent property.
3. The adjustment is not in conflict with the objectives of the general plan or the general intent of this title.

The project will bring additional and improving wireless coverage for the surrounding area, providing additional telecommunication services to businesses, residents, and patrons. The proposed telecommunication wireless facility is permitted within the subject zone and general plan designation with the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit. It is worth noting that the Minor Deviation is only contingent on approval of the Conditional Use Permit (COA #12).

Design and Surrounding Compatibility

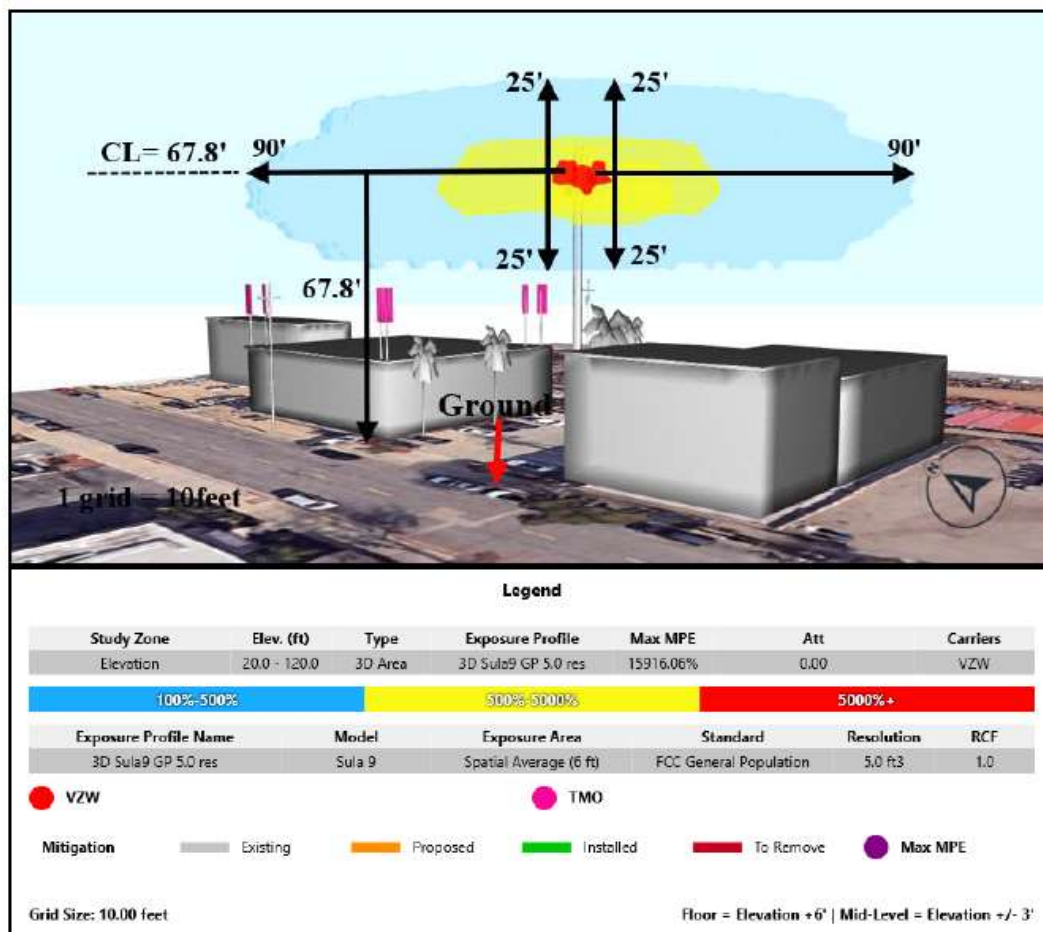
The proposed wireless telecommunication facility is planned with a stealthed design in the form of a mono-palm (faux-tree). The surrounding area is developed with industrial uses on all sides. The applicant designed the wireless telecommunication facility as a mono-palm to be compatible with the surrounding composition of the area by matching existing landscaping in the area. Landscaping in the vicinity area includes palm trees ranging in size and shape as identified in the photo simulations (attachment D).

While the mono-palm is proposed to be installed at the rear of the property of an industrial building, due to the proposed height, it would be visible from the public right of way and neighboring property owners. With the faux-tree design, the wireless telecommunication facility would be compatible with existing conditions including other palm trees in the area. The photo simulation images below identify the existing and proposed after the installation of the mono-palm. Attachment D provides the complete photo simulation for the mono-palm providing three views.



Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Compliance

The applicant submitted a Radio Frequency Emissions Compliance Report (Attachment E) certified by a licensed engineer, which identifies the proposed frequency for the general population and occupational workforce. Based on the compliance report, the antennas will not exceed the Radio Frequency Radiation limits under the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) guidelines. Therefore, the telecommunication facility will not expose members of the public to concerning levels of RF energy at ground level or in adjacent buildings. The report distinguishes occupational/controlled exposure limits that apply for situations where people are exposed due to consequences of their employment. Occupational/controlled exposures are aware of the potential for exposure and can exercise control over their exposure. According to the compliance report, the FCC general population limit is five times more restrictive than occupational limits. The figure below identifies an elevation identifying the exposure levels at the antenna level.



While the compliance report identifies that the proposed telecommunication facility will be in compliance with the FCC guidelines, a condition of approval (COA) has been included requiring that the facility maintain compliance with the FCC guidelines as future upgrades or modifications are proposed to the tower (COA # 11). It should be noted that the City requires Compliance Reports with upgrades or modifications to ensure COA # 11 is met.

Departmental Review

The application was reviewed by applicable City departments. The Signal Hill Police Department recommends the site be secured to ensure that conduits or equipment are not subject to vandalism or trespassing. The project scope includes the installation of an eight-foot-high fence that secures the mono-palm and equipment. Additionally, the Radio Frequency Emissions Compliance Report states that the installation will contain alerting signage and restrict access to the antennas to authorized personnel. A condition of approval has been included that the site always be secure (COA # 25).

The Public Works department is recommending two conditions of approval. The first is that all servicing and maintenance to the tower, antennas, or auxiliary equipment be completed from private property and not along the alley. The second is for the applicant to obtain Encroachment Permits for any trenching and that any new utility communication lines or electrical connection lines shall be underground. No other City departments had comments or concerns about this project.

CEQA Exemption

The project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article 19, Section 15332, Class 32 for Infill Development. The proposed project is characterized as in-fill development meeting the conditions in section 15332, as described below.

- a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general
- b) plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.
- c) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.
- d) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.
- e) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.
- f) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

If the project is approved by the City Council, a Notice of Exemption (NOE) will be filed with the State Clearinghouse and Los Angeles County Recorder/Registrar and County Clerk within five days, if the project obtains approval.

Conclusion

Staff is recommending adoption of Resolution No. XXX-08-19 recommending the City Council approval for the Conditional Use Permit 25-01. The new wireless telecommunication facility will provide additional wireless options for businesses, residents, and patrons within the coverage area. The overall design and location of the telecommunication facility will not affect the surrounding area and as conditioned, the project is not anticipated to have any negative impacts to the surrounding area

Approved:

Colleen T. Doan

Attachments:

- A. Project Plans
 - B. Project Description
 - C. Coverage Maps
 - D. Photo Simulations
 - E. Radio Frequency Emissions Compliance Report
 - F. Radio Frequency Compliance Letter
- Resolution XXX-08-19