

May 21, 2025

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF A REGULAR COASTAL PERMIT, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT, DESIGN REVIEW, AND SITE PLAN REVIEW TO CONTINUE OPERATION OF AN EXISTING TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITY MOUNTED ON A LIGHT POLE WITH ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT SHELTER AT 911 SEACOAST DR. (0600-20)

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:

Community Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

An application (USE-24-0047) has been submitted for a Regular Coastal Permit (CP-25-0002), Conditional Use Permit (CUP-24-0004), Design Review Case (DRC-24-0007), and Site Plan Review (SPR-24-0007) and a categorical exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15301 Class 1 (Existing Facilities) requesting approval to continue operating а telecommunications facility mounted on a light pole with an associated equipment shelter located at 911 Seacoast Drive (APN 625-351-01-00) in the



C/MU-2 (Seacoast Commercial and Mixed Use) Zone. The original wireless facility was approved by the City Council in 2009 (Reso. 2009-6719) and new authorizations are required to continue operation per Imperial Beach Municipal Code Chapter 19.90, Wireless Communications Facilities. The facility was built per the original approval and no significant alterations to the building or property are proposed beyond what exists today and what was originally approved.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council adopt Resolution 2025-027, approving Regular Coastal Permit (CP-25-0002), Conditional Use Permit (CUP-24-0004), Design Review Case (DRC-24-0007), and Site Plan Review (SPR-24-0007) to continue operating a telecommunications facility mounted on a light pole with an associated equipment shelter located at 911 Seacoast Drive (APN 625-351-01-00) in the C/MU-2 (Seacoast Commercial and Mixed Use) Zone.

OPTIONS:

In addition to adopting staff's recommendations, the City Council can:

- Approve the project with modifications; or
- Disapprove the project and deny the requested permits by making specific findings for denial; or
- Continue the Public Hearing to a specific future meeting to allow staff to provide additional information upon which a decision can be rendered.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The original wireless facility at 911 Seacoast Drive was approved by the City Council in 2009 (Reso. 2009-6719) and new authorizations are required to continue operation per Municipal Code Imperial Beach Chapter 19.90. Wireless Communications Facilities. The facility was built per the original approval and no significant alterations to the building or property are proposed beyond what exists today and what was originally approved.

The existing telecommunications facility consists of three antennas mounted on a thirty-foot (30') light standard with a twenty-four inch (24") radome and ten ten-foot (10') tall equipment shelter ($15' \times 16'$) on the eastern portion of the property.



Electric and telephone services are provided to the project area via underground conduits.

The existing 30-foot light standard with the shrouded antenna and the base station equipment are the most conspicuous aspects of the facility. The light standard is designed to match the same height and color of the surrounding light standards, with a radome (cylinder shaped cover) at the upper segment of the standard to conceal the antennas. The radome section where the antennas are be hidden is wider than the pole (24" in diameter).

<u>Design</u>

The existing equipment shelter is stucco-finish and painted to match the existing buildings on site. The light standard provides function in that it provides light for two off-street parking spaces located off the existing driveway along Elm Street, which was . An alternate design with the antenna on top of the pole is not feasible because mounting three panel antennas would have a less balanced appearance if placed on top of the light standard.

Landscaping

The equipment shelter is located behind an existing driveway and adjacent to landscaping intended to enhance the aesthetic appeal of this mechanical enclosure. No modifications to the existing landscape areas are proposed.

<u>Height</u>

The height and location of the antenna is integral to the facilities performance because the signal must be elevated above ground level at a height that provides a clear line-of-sight to clear any topographical barriers and the existing natural and built environment. The antennas are not functional at a lower height because the signal would be significantly reduced and obstructed by nearby buildings and trees. Imperial Beach Municipal Code (IBMC) Section 19.90.070(C) states that wireless facilities must meet the height requirement of the underlying zone (C/MU-2), which is a maximum height limit of 30 feet. Furthermore, placing the antenna on the existing building is not possible because of the building's low height.

Location

According to the applicant, the proposed site was chosen because it offered an area to place an antenna at the proposed height and space to house the base station equipment. Originally, other locations were explored: City Hall, Dempsey Holder Safety Center, Elkwood parking lot, co-locating with the T-Mobile facility at 933 Seacoast Drive (Argus Village), co-locating at a wireless facility that previously existed at Sports Park, and the property to the north of the proposed project site. Each alternate site would not provide the necessary service coverage. As such, continuing use of the existing site would provide optimal service.

Co-location

Co-location is not proposed with this design because the light standard would have to increase beyond the height restrictions in the C/MU-2 zone, would no longer blend in among the other light standards along Seacoast Drive, and because there would be insufficient space for another provider's base station equipment.

General Plan/Zoning Consistency:

The proposed development is subject to Imperial Beach Municipal Code Chapter 19.90, Wireless Communications Facilities. The purpose of the chapter is to establish standards for the siting, development and maintenance of wireless communications facilities and antenna throughout the city. The chapter is also intended to protect and promote the public health, safety and welfare, as well as the aesthetic quality of the city as set forth in the goals, objectives and policies of the General Plan. The proposed development meets the Development and Design Standards as outlined in Chapter 19.90. The project is located in the C/MU-2 (Seacoast Commercial) Zone. The purpose of the C/MU-2 Zone is to meet the demand for goods and services required by the tourist population and local residents who use the beach area. Providing telecommunication services to an area providing insufficient service would be consistent with the General Plan and Zoning.

Design Review Standards.

STANDARDS	PROVIDED/PROPOSED
The installation of wireless communications facilities may not reduce the number of required parking spaces on a proposed site.	No parking demand to be generated and the facility would not reduce existing parking.
Wireless communications facilities and accessory equipment must meet the required setbacks of the underlying zone, except that in a residential zone, the minimum setback for an antenna or	There are no setbacks for the C/MU-2 Zone.

equipment building from any property line is twenty feet.		
Wireless communications facilities must meet the height requirement of the underlying zone, unless a greater height is approved through the conditional use permit.	There is a 30 foot height limit in the C/MU-2 zone. The project would maintain a light standard of 30 feet and equipment shelter of 10 feet.	
A service provider with a wireless communications facility in the city must obtain a city business license.	This would be a condition of approval for the CUP.	
The visual impact of wireless communications facilities must be minimized to the maximum extent feasible, taking into consideration technological requirements, through the use of placement, screening, camouflage, and landscaping, so that the facility is compatible with adjacent uses, existing architectural elements, topography, neighborhood landscaping, building materials, and other site characteristics.	The antennae are concealed on a light standard to match existing light standards on Seacoast Drive. The electrical/ mechanical equipment would continue to be contained in an existing equipment shelter.	
The colors and materials of wireless communications facilities must blend into their backgrounds.	The light standard is painted to match the existing light standards along Seacoast Drive. The equipment shelter is stucco finish and painted to match the existing buildings.	
Facade-mounted antennae must be integrated architecturally into the style and character of the structure to which they are attached; they must be painted and textured to match the existing structure; and they may not project more than eighteen inches from the face of the building or other support structure unless approved by a conditional use permit.	There are no proposed façade-mounted facilities.	
Roof-mounted antennae may not exceed the minimum height necessary to serve the operator's service area, while complying with the building height requirements of this title; they must be designed to minimize their visibility from surrounding areas; and they must be painted and textured to match the existing structure or building.	There are no proposed roof-mounted facilities.	
Freestanding facilities, including towers, lattice towers, and monopoles, are discouraged unless no reasonable alternative is possible. If a freestanding facility is necessary, it may not exceed the minimum functional height and width	The freestanding antenna is concealed on a light standard structure designed to blend in with the surrounding area and other light standards on Seacoast Drive. The proposed 30-foot light standard is the desired functional height for the transmitting antennae.	

required to support the proposed wireless facility.	
Proposed freestanding facilities must be stealth facilities; they must be painted and designed to blend in with the surrounding area; and they must be landscaped, if necessary, to minimize visual impacts.	The freestanding antenna would continue to be concealed on a light standard structure designed to blend in with the surrounding area.
Wireless facility support structures, such as equipment buildings, cabinets, cables, air conditioning units, and fencing, must be painted and textured to match the surrounding physical area and screened with landscaping in order to minimize visual impacts.	The base station equipment would continue to be concealed within an existing equipment shelter that was built as part of the original approval.
No advertising signs may be placed on any facility or equipment.	There are no proposed advertising signs.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

North	C/MU-2 (Seacoast Commercial and Mixed-use Zone)	Commercial
South	C/MU-2 (Seacoast Commercial and Mixed-use Zone)	Retail/Residential/Commercial
East	R-2000 (Medium-Density Residential Zone)	Residential
West	C/MU-2 (Seacoast Commercial and Mixed-use Zone)	Commercial (parking lot)

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The project may be categorically exempt pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15301 Class 1 (Existing Facilities)

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Applicant has paid \$23,228.00 to fund processing of this application.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATT 1 - Resolution 2025-027

- ATT 2 Verizon Plans
- ATT 3 Photo Simulations