



20223 Elfin Forest Road
Elfin Forest, CA 92029

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San Dieguito Planning Group

January 31, 2012

PROJECT: **P11-024 FORTUNA DEL ESTE SPRINT CELL SITE**

Dear Doug,

The Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Town Council fully supports the position of the Paint Mountain Association and the residents on Fortuna Del Este who oppose having a cell tower located on the OMWD property. Besides the points made by the Road Association, which we repeat below, our approved Community Plan contains the following policy on page 39 regarding telecommunication equipment:

http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/docs/CP/ELFIN_FOR_HARM_GROVE_CP.pdf

f. Telecommunications

Issue CM-10.4 While improved telecommunication technology is necessary and desirable there are sometimes negative impacts on communities.

Goal CM-10.4 Telecommunications equipment properly located that minimally impacts the Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove communities.

Policy CM-10.4.1 Require mitigation of noise to adjacent residential properties.

Policy CM-10.4.2 Require, to the maximum extent feasible, telecommunication infrastructure at Elfin Forest's Community Facilities sites – the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Fire Station and the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve.

Policy CM-10.4.3 Utilize masking systems to cause new towers to resemble natural vegetation

Since Sprint already located at the Fire Station in October 2011, there is likely no additional value for our community from improved cell service for a second Sprint installation less than a mile from our preferred location. Instead our residents would bear the burden of the impact of the project, to improve cell coverage in the neighboring community of Rancho Santa Fe. Further, the policy goals are to “minimally impact the Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove communities.”; It appears that in this case the impact would be substantial and severe and, we therefore urge the Planning Group and DPLU to deny this application.

The points made by PMA which we support are as follows: there are several compelling reasons why this location is inappropriate:

- When Sprint originally tried to locate on the Sohaey property six years ago, they were directed to locate instead on the Gaty water tank on the hill opposite Paint Mountain. That location is much more suitable because it is far from any residences, and there already is a cell carrier at that location.
- This location is surrounded by some of the most expensive homes in Elfin Forest, with a combined value of \$xx million (John?). Several studies point to a decrease in property values once a cell tower is installed, and California law requires disclosure of cell towers within 1,000 ft. All four properties are within that radius, and so would be devalued anywhere between 2 to 20%.
- This location is situated on a private cul de sac road on which OMWD has an easement. However the local property owners object out of privacy concerns to what is essentially their private driveway being accessed by random Sprint and AT&T employees and used to create a business use in a residential area.
- A related concern about the private nature of the road is the wear and tear on Fortuna Del Este from both construction traffic and equipment, and ongoing use for maintenance purposes. Because all roads in Elfin Forest other than Elfin Forest Road are private roads, they are maintained at the sole expense of the property owners without assistance from public financing. This segment was recently resurfaced and the road owners object to it being dug up for trenching for utilities for this project.
- This location is situated in an extremely fire prone area, surrounded by pristine coastal sage scrub and hundreds of acres of permanently preserved biological open space. With the risk of fire inherent in cell towers, especially in this case with close to 6,000 watts of power being drawn 24 hours a day, the neighborhood would be placed at severe risk of loss of life and property, and the public investment as well, should the preserved habitat be destroyed in a fire originated by the facility.
- Noise and traffic disturbance from the construction phase in an otherwise extremely quiet residential area will impact residents.
- Residents will be impacted by the residual noise of heat exchangers from normal operation in an area of extreme quiet where sound is carried by prevailing breeze up to the residences above, especially in case of power failure when generators take over.
- Aesthetics will be affected by placing a fake tree at a prominent location surrounded by low growing native chaparral in an area where the public has invested millions of dollars preserving native habitat, most recently in November 2011 with \$6 million to purchase 100 acres below the proposed project.
- There is significant risk of proliferation related to other vendors and more equipment (construction, traffic, added fire risk as electrical load increases, etc) being added once the initial application is approved – already OMWD indicated AT&T requested to co-locate with Sprint at this location.

These being the legitimate concerns of the neighborhood, we urge the San Diego Planning Group and the County Department of Planning and Land Use to deny a permit for this location, and instead direct the applicant to co-locate on the water tank on the opposite hill.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline Arsivaud-Benjamin
Chair, Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Town Council Board