



STAFF REPORT 5/6/2026

TO: Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Anahi Fernandez, Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Resolution No. PC2026-14: Request for conditional approval of the Conditional Use Permit application for the construction of an 85-foot high wireless communication facility designed as a mono-palm on a 2,500 square foot leased space located at 49640 Oates Lane (APN 603-300-013). The proposed project includes a waiver request for the design and/or other requirements and restrictions set forth in Section 17.86.090 of the Coachella Municipal Code, and determining that the proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction or Conversation of Small Structures and 15332, In-fill Development. Applicant: APC Towers, David Elliott, Eukon Group.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Resolution No. PC2026-14 approving Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 399, a request for the construction of an 85-foot mono-palm wireless communication facility pursuant to height waiver request, and determining that the project is compliant with Section 15303 and 15332 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The applicant, APC Towers, is requesting the approval of Conditional Use Permit No. 399 for the installation, operation, and maintenance of a wireless communications facility located at 49640 Oates Lane (APN 603-300-013). The proposed facility will consist of an 85-foot high Mono-Palm (monopole designed to look like a palm tree) on a 2,500 square foot (SF) leased space within an existing truck storage yard. Figure 1 shows the proposed location.

The project requires the approval of Conditional Use Permit No. 399, pursuant to Sections 17.86 and 17.74 of the Coachella Municipal Code. In addition, the applicant is requesting a waiver for



the proposed height of the mono-palm. Pursuant to Coachella Municipal Code 17.86.070 (G), Stand-alone wireless facilities may not exceed fifty-five (55) feet in height unless a waiver request is granted by the Planning Commission. The applicant conducted a colocation analysis, and no existing wireless towers or structures can accommodate the equipment at the required height, configuration, or location. The applicant finds the height waiver request essential to maintain reliable wireless coverage in the area. The applicant further claims adherence to the City of Coachella’s current regulations has the effect of prohibiting wireless service, and thus, a waiver is appropriate.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The project site is located north of the Avenue 50 and Oats Lane/Peter Rabbit Lane intersection. The proposed project site has an existing truck storage yard that was previously approved under Architectural Review No. 16-04 in 2016 and includes a security trailer and site improvements for the parcel including an 8-foot high slump-stone wall, two gated entries, sidewalk, truck parking stalls and perimeter landscaping. If approved, Condition of Approval No. 38 of Resolution No. 2026-14 will require the applicant and/or property owner to address any existing code violations on the property and either remove or legalize all unpermitted structures and complete any required improvements.

The project site is bounded by an existing automotive repair services use to the north, an existing storage yard to the south, vacant land to the east, and an existing RV storage use to the west. Table 1 provide the existing conditions, including General Plan and Zoning designations for the site and its surroundings.

**Table 1
General Plan, Zoning, and Surrounding Existing Uses**

	General Plan	Zoning	Surrounding Existing Uses
Site:	Industrial District	Manufacturing Service (M-S)	Storage Yard
North:	Industrial District	Manufacturing Service (M-S)	Automotive Repair Services
South:	Industrial District	Manufacturing Service (M-S)	Storage Yard
East:	Suburban Neighborhood	Suburban Neighborhood (S-N)	Vacant
West:	Industrial District	Manufacturing Service (M-S)	RV Storage

CONSISTENCY WITH GENERAL PLAN

The Project site is located in an Industrial District, and further located in Subarea 8 as designated in the General Plan.

The Industrial District is envisioned to be made up of larger lots and buildings that support concentrations of business activity, with supporting retail and office uses. Projects are to be served by major City streets, and provide internal roadways that provide for internal circulation. Buildings are to be one- and two-story structures, with simple, attractive facades that face the street. Building

materials should consist of masonry or concrete, and larger buildings should include multiple simple masses. Industrial Districts are intended to be separate from the City's neighborhoods and districts. Subarea 8 is envisioned as a transforming area that will create employment opportunities with a variety of industrial and office uses that take advantage of SR 86 and railroad proximity.

The Project conforms with the vision and policies established for the Industrial District and Subarea 8. It will provide essential utility infrastructure that supports existing and future industrial and commercial uses within the Subarea. The facility will improve wireless coverage and service reliability in an area designated for industrial development and infrastructure expansion. The project provides necessary infrastructure that supports industrial operations and economic activity.

General Plan Consistency:

The project site is within the Industrial District land use designation, which accommodates light, heavy, and general industrial uses. The proposed project will improve communication infrastructure. The project is consistent with the Goals and Objectives identified in the General Plan Infrastructure and Public Services Element, particularly Goal No. 6, which promotes easy access to quality internet services, modern telecommunication services, and reliable energy throughout the City.

CONSISTENCY WITH ZONING

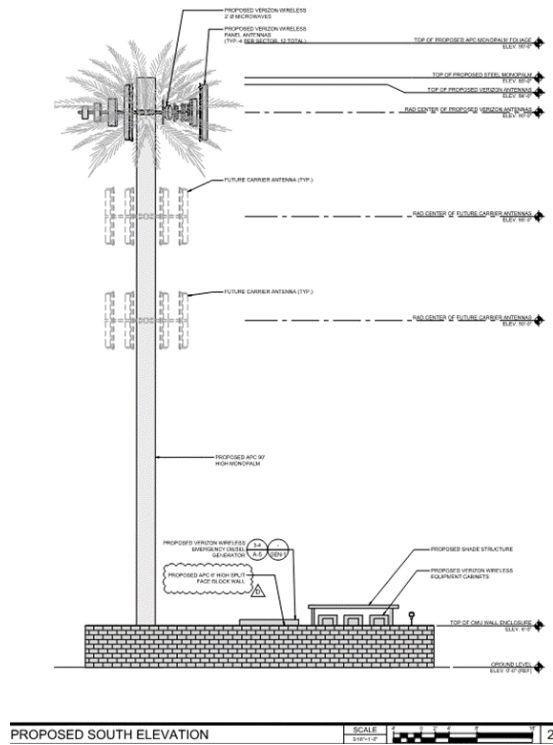
The proposed project site for CUP 399 has a zoning designation of M-S (Manufacturing Service).

Wireless communication facilities are permitted pursuant to approval of a Conditional Use Permit application in the M-S zone. Municipal Code Section 17.86.010 outlines the requirements for placement, design, and screening criteria to regulate wireless communication facilities to protect the public health, safety, general welfare, and quality of life in the City. Additionally, pursuant to Section 17.86.090 of the Municipal Code upon approval of a waiver request the proposed 85-foot height would be allowed, pursuant to the Planning Commission granting the waiver request. With the imposition of the recommended conditions of approval, the proposed project is generally consistent with the intent and purpose of the "Manufacturing Service" (M-S) zone as articulated in Section 17.30 of the C.M.C.

SITE UTILIZATION

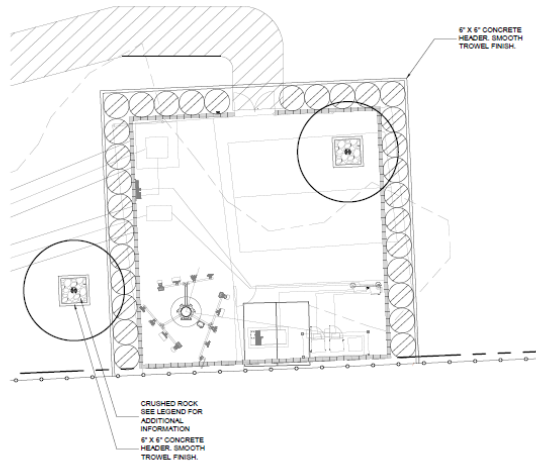
The proposed wireless communication facility will be located within a 2,500 square foot leased area of the existing truck storage yard. The site is more than 150 feet from the nearest residential uses to the east. The equipment shelter includes the construction of a 6-foot high split-face block wall around all four sides of the equipment cabinets. The southern elevations in Figure 2 below show the site design, height, and antenna placement.

Figure 2: South Elevation



Landscape will be planted to meet current City landscape requirements as shown on Figure 3 below. The design includes two date palm trees adjacent to the wireless tower, shrubs planted along the perimeter of the block wall, and crushed rock used as ground cover. The applicant is also required to prepare and submit a detailed landscaping plan for review and approval prior to the issuance of building permits. Figure 3 below is the submitted landscape plan for the project. The landscape plan has also been included in Attachment 1, Exhibit B.

Figure 3: Landscape Plan



PLANT LEGEND

SYM	BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	SIZE	QTY.	REMARKS	WATER USE
REGION 6						
●	TREES					
	PHOENIX DACTYLIFERA	DATE PALM	25' B.T.H. 2		BROWN TRUNK HEIGHT	MOD
○	SHRUBS/GROUNDCOVERS					
	LEUCOPHYLLUM LANGMANIAE LYNNE'S LEGACY	CANYON RAIN SAGE	5 GAL.	30	5'-0" O.C.	LOW
■	CRUSHED ROCK	PEWEE GREY	1"-3" DIA. 50 S.F.	MIN. 3" LAYER		

PLANTING NOTE

1. CRUSHED ROCK SHALL BE PLACED AS SHOWN PER THE PLAN.
2. ALL PLANTING AREAS TO RECEIVE LOW VOLUME HIGH EFFICIENCY SPRAY HEADS, BUBBLERS, OR DRIP EMITTERS AND SHALL FOLLOW CITY AND LOCAL AGENCY GUIDELINES. CALCULATIONS FOR WATER EFFICIENCY SHALL BE INCORPORATED INTO CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENT PHASE.

PROPOSED FINDINGS FOR CUP NO. 399:

1. **The proposed use will not be in conflict with, but will be in harmony with and in accordance with the objectives of the General Plan in that the project is generally consistent with the goals, policies and implementing actions of the Coachella General Plan.**

The proposed project increases existing communication infrastructure to expand service to wireless customers in the vicinity. This project is consistent with the Goals and Objectives identified in the General Plan Infrastructure and Public Services Element, because Goal No. 6 promotes easy access to quality internet services, modern telecommunication services, and reliable energy throughout the City.

2. **The proposed use will be located, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained so as to be compatible with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity and shall not change the essential character of the same area.**

The Mono-Palm design provides a stealthing solution that integrates the facility into its surrounding environment. Additionally, the proposed project is in conformance with the City of Coachella Zoning Ordinance as specified in Section 17.86 of the Zoning Code.

3. **Consideration is to be given to harmony in scale, bulk, coverage and density, to the availability of public facilities and utilities, to harmful effect, if any, upon desirable neighborhood character, to the generation of traffic and the capacity of surrounding streets, and to any other relevant impact of the development.**

No new construction or modification to the already existing infrastructure and no additional points of access to the private property. Access to the wireless communication facility will be minimal as it is an un-manned facility. Additionally, the proposed project is required to comply with the standard conditions of approval applicable to this Conditional Use Permit request.

4. Where the proposed use may be potentially hazardous or disturbing to existing or reasonably expected neighboring uses, it must be justified by the common public interest as a benefit to the community as a whole.

The proposed wireless communication facility provides an essential public utility function by improving wireless network coverage, capacity, and reliability for residents, businesses, and emergency response services in the surrounding area. The facility is located within an existing industrial storage yard and is designed as a stealth monopalm structure to reduce visual impacts and maintain compatibility with surrounding industrial and utility-related uses. In addition, the project's Radio Frequency Emissions Compliance Report demonstrates that the facility will operate in compliance with applicable Federal Communication Commission (FCC) radiofrequency exposure standards, ensuring protection of public health and safety. Any potential impacts associated with the project are outweighed by the substantial public benefit of expanded and improved telecommunications service.

5. The proposed use will include vehicular approaches to the property designed for reasonable minimal interference with traffic on surrounding public streets or roads.

The proposed use will include only limited vehicular access associated with maintenance and servicing of the wireless facility. The project does not include permanent staffing or customer visits. Vehicular access will utilize existing driveway improvements serving the approved truck storage yard, and no new access points to public streets are proposed. The project will operate in a manner consistent with existing industrial site access patterns and the intent of the Manufacturing Service (M-S) zone.

PROPOSED FINDINGS FOR WAIVER REQUEST:

1. Pursuant to Coachella Municipal Code Section 17.86.090, the Applicant submitted a height waiver request. The applicant submitted its request via a letter dated October 8, 2025. The applicant has the burden of demonstrating that a waiver is necessary pursuant to section 17.86.090. The applicant claims the proposed 85-foot wireless communication facility is necessary to ensure adequate wireless coverage and capacity within the service area. The applicant submitted a radio frequency propagation map demonstrating that the height of 85 feet significantly provides wider coverage and reliability compared to a facility limited to 55 feet (Attachment 4). Verizon's engineering analysis confirms that a 55-foot cell tower would result in significant signal loss, coverage degradation, and potential service interruptions. The applicant claims adherence to the City of Coachella's current regulations has the effect of prohibiting wireless service, and thus, a waiver is appropriate.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The City of Coachella has determined that the proposed project is exempt from environmental review under Section 15303 and 15332 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. This exemption applies to projects characterized as in-fill development meeting the following conditions; (a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations (b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses; (c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species; (d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; (e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. The project satisfies the above criteria and as such, no environmental review is required.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE:

A public hearing notice for the Project was published in the Desert Sun, the newspaper of record, on April 26, 2026, and a public hearing notice was mailed to property owners within a radius of 300 feet of the subject property on April 22, 2026, pursuant to Section 17.70.050(F) of the Coachella Municipal Code. At the time of issuance of this staff report, staff had not received public comments on this application.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Approve Resolution No. PC 2026-14 Conditional Use Permit No. 399 with the findings and conditions as recommended by Staff.
- 2) Approve Resolution No. PC 2026-14 Conditional Use Permit No. 399 with modification to the proposed findings and conditions as recommended by Staff.
- 3) Deny Resolution No. PC 2026-14.
- 4) Continue these items and provide staff and the applicant with direction.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends Alternative #1.

Attachments:

1. Resolution No. PC 2026-14 for CUP No. 399
Exhibit A: Conditions of Approval for CUP No. 399
Exhibit B: Architectural Exhibits
2. Project Narrative and Waiver Request
3. Photo Simulations
4. Propagation Map