



REPORT to the MAYOR and MEMBERS of the CITY COUNCIL
From the CITY MANAGER

DATE: July 8, 2025

SUBJECT: RATIFICATION OF DESIGN REVIEW OF A NEW WIRELESS FACILITY; PROJECT NO. 2024-1135 (4200 LOWELL STREET)

DESCRIPTION: CITY COUNCIL RATIFICATION OF DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL OF A NEW WIRELESS COMMUNICATION FACILITY CONSISTING OF A 185 SQUARE FOOT 8 FOOT HIGH EQUIPMENT SHELTER AND ASSOCIATED ANTENNAE MOUNTED ON A LIGHT POLE AT 4200 LOWELL STREET, APN 475-050-06-00, IN THE URBAN RESIDENTIAL (R1) ZONE.

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Community Development

SUMMARY:

Issues:

Should the City Council ratify the Design Review Board's determination that the proposed project design meets the intent of the Design Guidelines for Wireless Telecommunication Facilities?

Recommendation:

That City Council ratify the Design Review Board approval of Project 2024-1135 **(Attachment 1)**.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no impact to the General Fund related to this project. The City's policy is to recover 100% of the cost of staff time through application processing fees.

BACKGROUND:

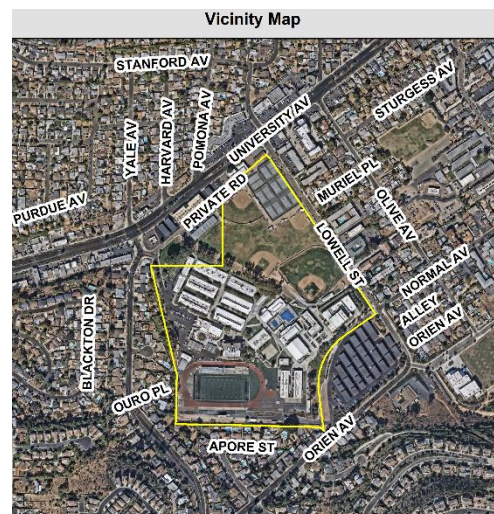
The proposed wireless communication facility (wireless facility) is proposed to be located on the Helix Charter High School site, located on Lowell Street between University Avenue and Orien Avenue, as seen on the Vicinity map below. Development on Lowell Street is primarily residential, and the school represents a significant majority of development on Lowell, south of University Avenue.



The project includes the replacement of a 78-foot-tall light pole that will house the antennae, and a new 185 square foot, eight-foot-tall shelter to house the equipment. The subject light pole would match the surrounding baseball field light poles and no other light poles would be impacted as a result of the project.

The existing parcel is primarily landscaped with street trees, grass, and other vegetation; however, the proposed leased area and surrounding areas are not currently landscaped.

Review by the City's Design Review Board (DRB) is required for wireless facilities per the City of La Mesa's 2001 Wireless Communication Facilities Ordinance. The Design Review Board considered and approved the proposed project on April 14, 2025 (**Attachment 1**).



DISCUSSION:

As mentioned above, the applicant proposes to replace an existing 78-foot-high light pole to add wireless communication equipment and construct a 185 square foot 8-foot-tall concrete masonry unit (CMU) brick equipment enclosure. The DRB determined that the proposed project is consistent with the City's Design Guidelines for Wireless Telecommunication Facilities (**Attachment 2**) as follows:

Location. Although co-locating wireless infrastructure on existing facilities is encouraged by the Design Guidelines for Wireless Facilities, there currently are no other cellular facilities available to co-locate with in the nearby area. The existing cell sites in the vicinity are either in the process of co-locating with another carrier or did not meet the antenna

elevation that the applicant required to provide sufficient coverage. Therefore, the proposed location would provide the best coverage for the applicant while maintaining the existing character of the neighborhood and minimizing the visual impact of the site **(Attachment 3)**.

Color and Materials. To create a cohesive design, the project will utilize the same light pole design with the equipment enclosed in a cylindrical enclosure painted the same grey color as the existing pole. The ground level equipment enclosure would be constructed out of CMU brick wall with a height of eight feet, and painted brown to match the surrounding ground cover.

Scale and Form. The location of the cylinder on the pole would help conceal the equipment out of the normal sightlines of persons within the area and would not change the existing scale of the light pole. The proposed 185 square foot and 8-foot-high equipment shelter is consistent with the scale and form of other buildings on the site and therefore would not create a negative visual impact.

Landscaping. Consistent with the existing condition, no further landscaping is proposed. To further integrate with the surrounding area, the equipment enclosure will be painted a brown color to minimize impacts to viewers from the street. Viewers from the school and baseball field would experience minimal visual impacts from the enclosure due to the netting blocking views of the street.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the City Council ratify the Design Review Board approval of Project 2024-1135.

Reviewed by:



Greg Humora
City Manager

Respectfully submitted by:



Lynnette Santos
Director of Community Development



Amanda Lee
Assistant City Manager

Attachments:

1. Design Review Board Certificate of Action
2. Design Guidelines for Wireless Telecommunications Facilities
3. Photo Simulations