Moraga Planning Commission

New Verizon Wireless Communication Facility and Grading of an Access Road from the End of Sanders Ranch Road – (APN 258-300-019)

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OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

1. **PROJECT BACKGROUND**
   - Requested Actions
   - Background
   - Site Location
   - Project Overview

2. **Key Issues**
   - Ridgeline Protection and MOSO
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   - RF-EME Report
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3. **CEQA**

4. **RECOMMENDATION**

Requested Actions:

Approve the collocation of a new wireless facility on an existing PG&E transmission tower and construction of an access road with the following two resolutions:

- A Resolution Adopting:
  - A Mitigated Negative Declaration in Accordance with the Requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- A Resolution Approving:
  - Conditional Use Permit (UP 06-22)
  - Design Review (DR-03-22)
  - Grading Permit (GR 02-22)
  - Hillside Development Permit (HDP 02-22)

Background:

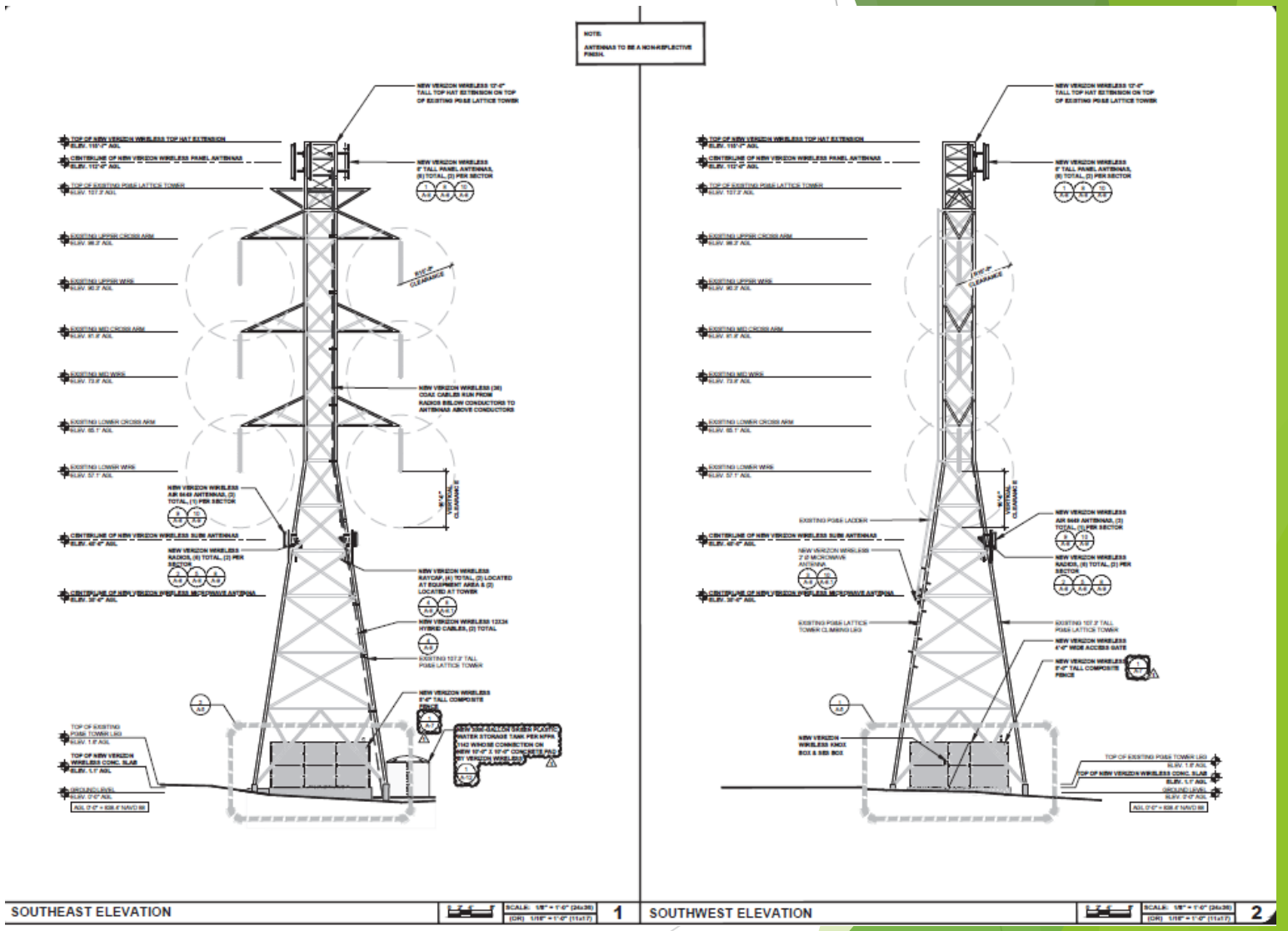
- Primary purpose of this project is public safety
  - 2019 Merrill Fire: During a PG&E power shutoff approximately 40 acres of pen space area burned within the Sanders Ranch Subdivision.
  - Communication for first responders and residents in the presented a challenge as there was not adequate cell service within the subdivision.
  - Moraga Police Chief approached the SRHOA and Verizon encouraging them to collaborate on wireless coverage for the Sanders Ranch area.

Vicinity Map

Aerial of Project Area

Project Overview:

- Tower mounted equipment
  - 12-foot-high top hat extension would be installed on top of an existing PG&E transmission tower with six panel antennas
  - Increasing the height from 107.3 feet to 116 feet.
  - At 45-foot centerline, three antennas and ancillary equipment would be installed
  - At 35-foot centerline a microwave antenna would be installed



Project Overview:

- Ground Mounted
  - The facility equipment, including a backup generator, on a 19’ by 19’ concrete pad and enclosed by an 8-foot-tall brown composite fence within the footprint of the PG&E transmission tower.
  - A 3,000-gallon water tank north of the PG&E transmission tower.
  - A new PG&E transformer north of the transmission tower and west of the water tank.

Project Overview/Access Road:

- Access Road connecting wireless facility near to the end of Sanders Ranch Road
  - 15-feet wide
  - 1,330 feet in length
  - Class II aggregate
  - 487 cubic yards of cut
  - 529 cubic yards of fill
  - Crosses and runs along a minor MOSO ridgeline for approximately 300 feet

Photosimulation with zoom detail callouts of the view looking to the southwest from above Sanders Ranch.

Key Issues/Ridgeline Protection and MOSO:

- MMC §8.128: Ridgeline Protection - Intent Summarized: To maintain undeveloped hillsides and ridgelines in a scenic natural setting, substantially free of development, but allowing for a reasonable amount of development to support a range of community goals, including:
  - economic vitality,
  - public safety,
  - recreation
  - increasing housing choices.
- This project would increase cellular service to provide stronger, more reliable wireless communication and data service for public safety personnel and residents,

Key Issues:

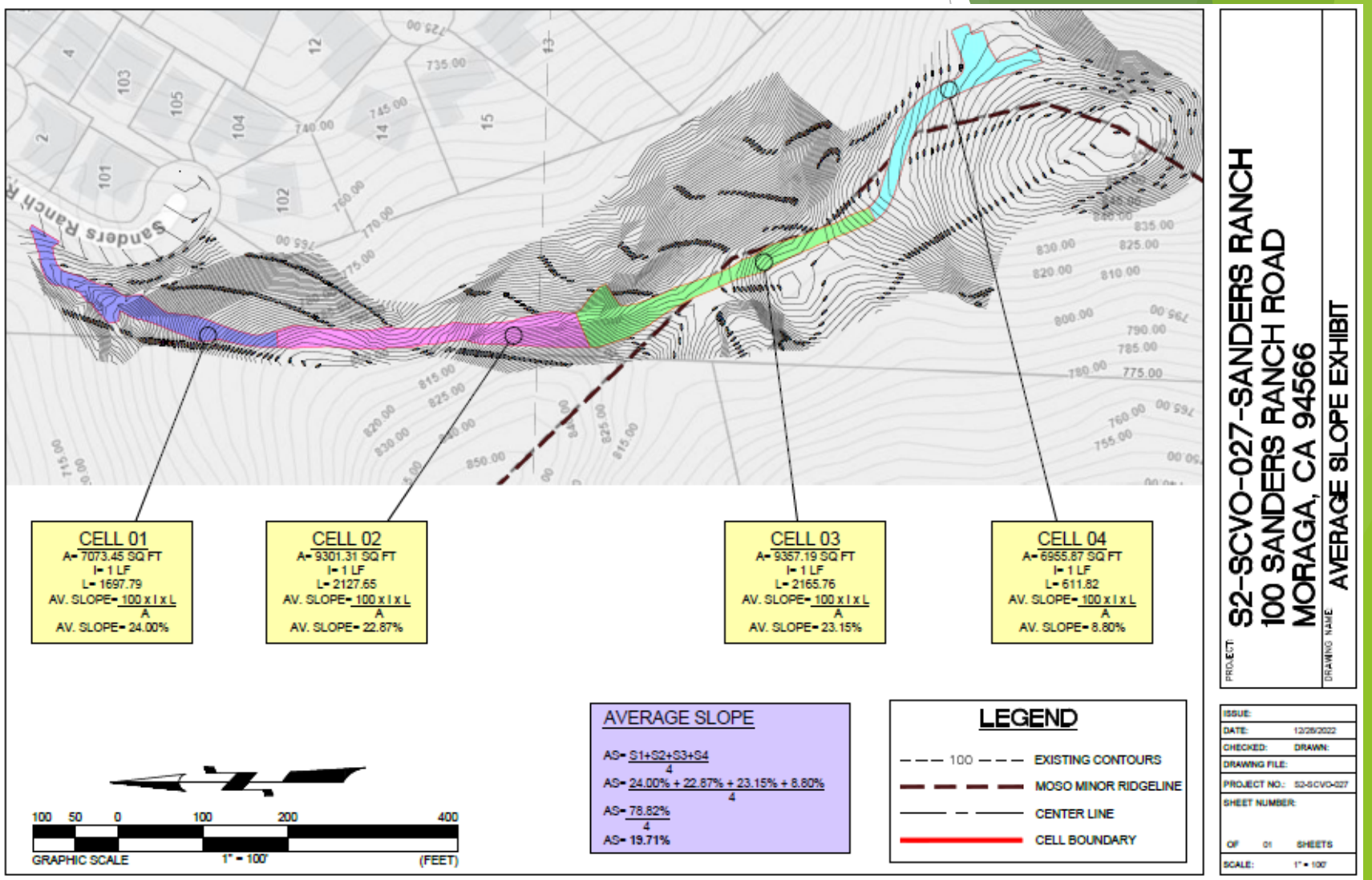
- Ridgeline Protection and MOSO/Aesthetics
  - Facility Aesthetics
    - The facility is collocated with an existing utility structure consistent with MMC §8.144.030.D
    - Tower mounted equipment will be painted to match the tower
    - Ground mounted shelter and water tank will be earthtone colors, compatible with surrounding area.
    - Ground mounted equipment will be obscured from many views by existing vegetation and topography. Will not be visible outside of Sanders Ranch
    - Access road will be surfaced with Class II aggregate, so visible portions will be compatible with the semi rural character of the area.
    - The SRHOA has reviewed and approved the proposed plans.

Key Issues:

- Road Crossing a Minor MOSO Ridgeline (MMC§8.128.060.A)
  - A road may be located within 200 feet of the crest of the minor MOSO ridgeline for only the minimum necessary to cross the ridgeline
    - The proposed route is the most direct and was preferred by MOFD (a switchback design was considered at one point)
  - The road is substantially consistent with the standards and design guidelines for crossing a ridgeline.
    - Not visible from most public views or scenic corridor.
    - No parking along the access road
    - Minimum width necessary
    - No streetlights
    - Utilities installed underground
    - Substantially follows the natural contours of the site
    - No sidewalks proposed

Key Issues:

- MOSO Guidelines
- Development must be within cells of 10,000 sqft or less
- Each cell must have an average predevelopment slope of less than 20%
- Three of the four cells are between 20% and 25%
- Section III.B excepts certain development from slope restrictions, including fire trails.
- MOFD classifies the access road as a fire trail.



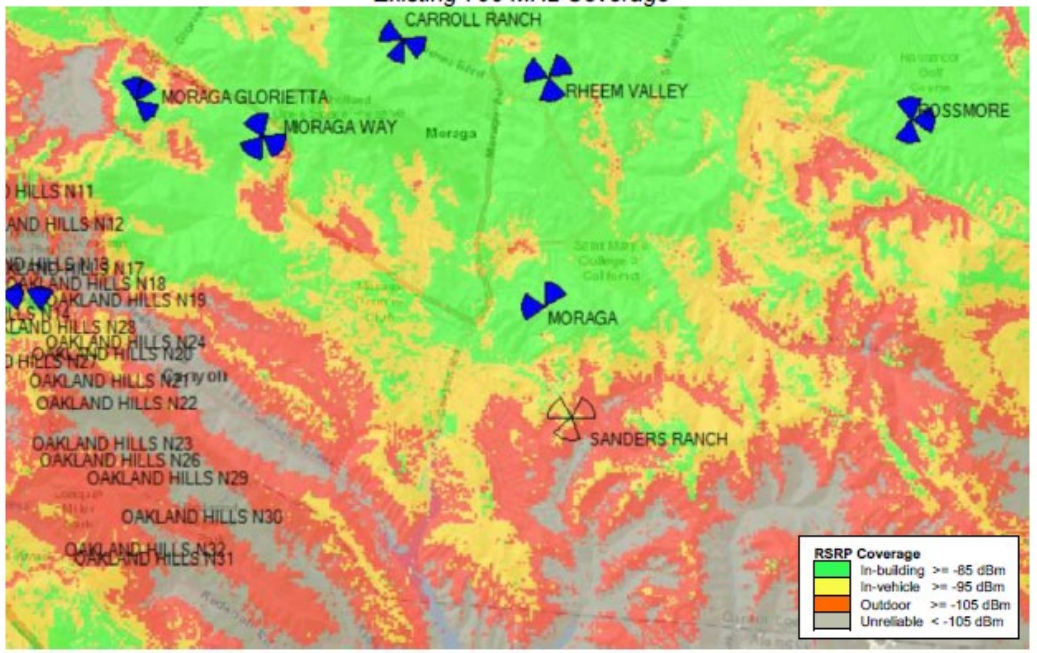
Key Issues:

- MOSO Wireless Communication Standards
  - Development restrictions:
    - Along the crest of any MOSO ridgeline with an elevation of 800 feet or greater, and the silhouette of antennas not be visible above the ridge of a minor MOSO ridgeline when viewed from lower elevation perspectives generally available to the public.
    - Slopes of 20% or greater
  - Facilities shall comply with these standards unless the applicant establishes, and it is determined by the Planning Commission that there is no other optimal location to provide adequate coverage.
  - The burden is on the applicant to provide this information.
  - The applicant has submitted an alternative sites analysis in support of this location.

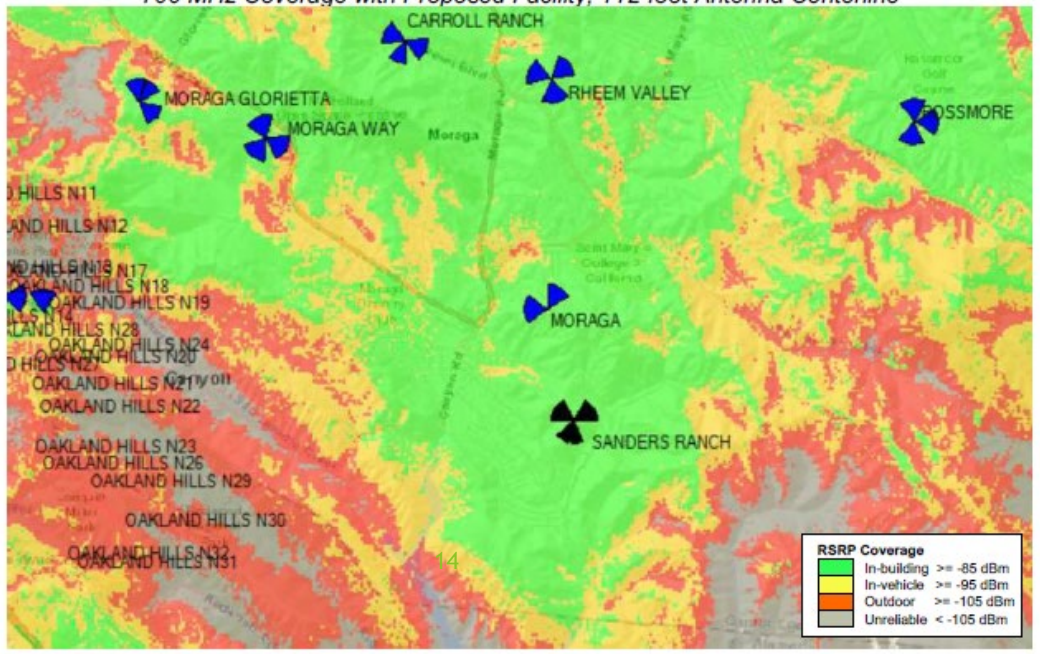
Key Issues:

- Alternative Sites Analysis
- The purpose of this facility is to fill a Significant Gap in wireless service in the southern Moraga area.
- Lack of reliable in-building coverage in residential areas west and east of Canyon Road, south of the Sanders Drive intersection, areas farther south along Larch Avenue and Camino Pablo, and the Sanders Ranch neighborhood.
- In-vehicle service is lacking along local roadways, including significant stretches of Larch Avenue and Camino Pablo as well as the entire length of Sanders Ranch Road. In the southern portion of the gap, there is no reliable coverage whatsoever.

Existing 700 MHz Coverage



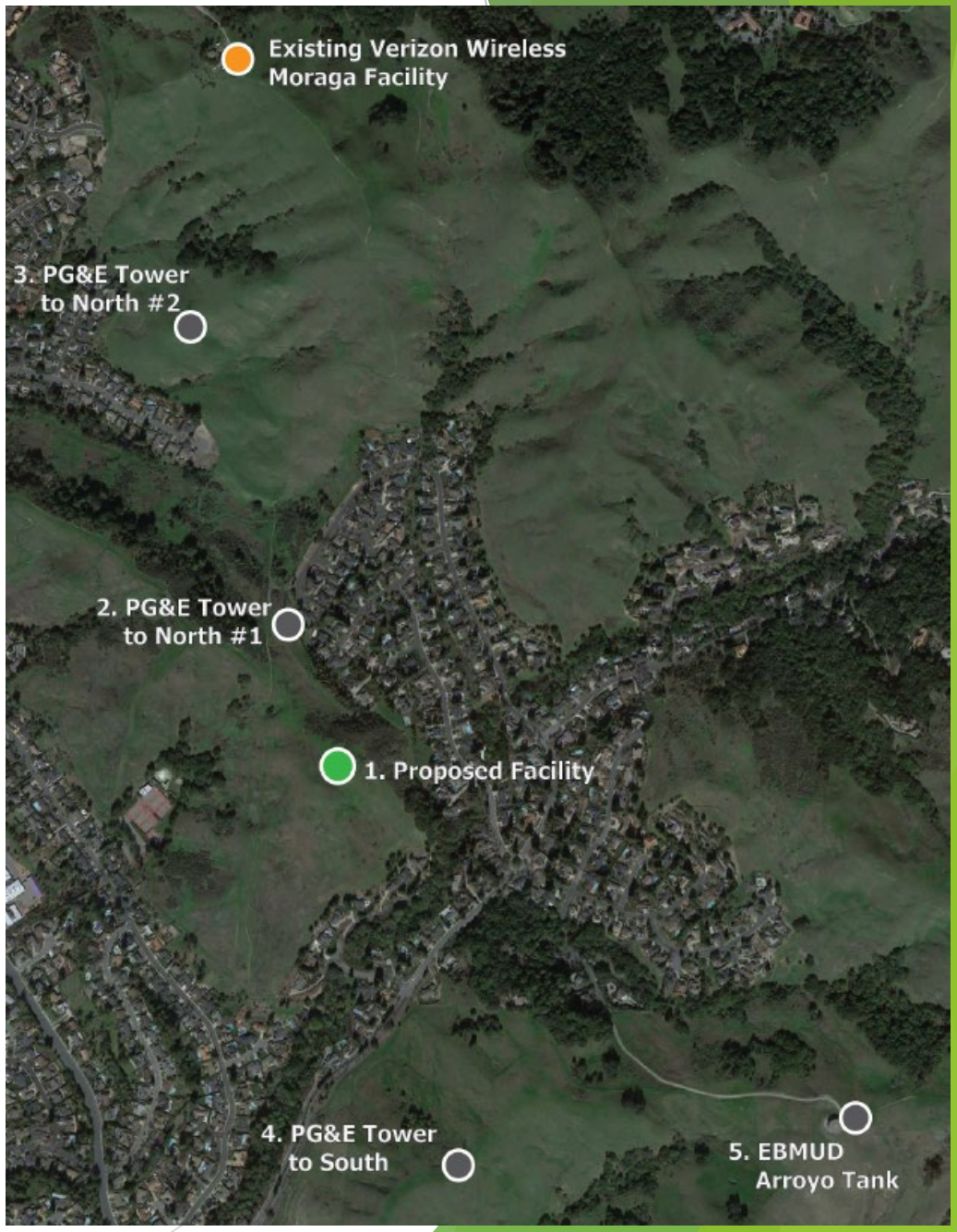
700 MHz Coverage with Proposed Facility, 112-foot Antenna Centerline



Key Issues:

- 5 potential sites evaluated. The factors considered include:
  - Available height.
  - Equipment space.
  - Radio frequency propagation.
  - Proximity to end user
  - Local topography
  - Environmental impacts

Based on submitted materials, staff concurs this site is the optimal location to provide adequate coverage.



Key Issues:

- Road Grading
  - Grading will generally follow the topography, consistent with Design Guideline ID10.6 and will be done in accordance with a site-specific geotechnical analysis consistent with Design Guideline 10.3 and Mitigation Measures GEO-1 and GEO-2 identified in the IS/MND.

Key Issues:

- RF-EME Report
  - Ground level, Maximum calculated RF emissions would be 38.594% of the FCC General Population limits
  - Adjacent buildings, Maximum calculated RF emissions would be 1.386% of the FCC General Population limits.
  - Will not expose the General Public to hazardous levels of RF energy at ground level or in adjacent buildings per FCC General Population limits.
  - The nearest residential building is approximately 378 feet from the facility and the nearest residential property line is approximately 193 feet from the facility in compliance with the Municipal Code (MMC §8.144.030.B.I)

Key Issues:

- Noise Study
  - Considered a heat exchanger for an air conditioning unit and emergency generator as the primary noise sources of concern.
  - The Municipal Code (MMC §8.144.070) limits the maximum allowable exterior noise level of sixty (60) db at the property line.
  - The study estimates that the total cumulative decibel level of the heat exchanger and generator would be 35.7 dBa at the nearest property line, which would be compliance with the Town's zoning standards for wireless facilities.
  - Noise is subject to standard conditions of approval for wireless facilities by the Municipal Code (MMC §8.144.070 D).

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

- An Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) per requirements of CEQA was prepared and made available for public review and comment for 32 days from August 31, 2023, through October 2, 2023.
  - No CEQA public comment was received.
- Mitigation measures were identified that would reduce any potentially significant impacts to less-than-significant levels. These included:
  - Air quality
  - Biological resources
  - Unknown/unmapped cultural/tribal resources during construction
  - Geology and soils
  - Land use and planning
- These mitigation measures are included in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program found in Attachment A of the staff report.

Recommendation:

- The Planning Commission approve:
  - A Resolution Adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration Prepared for the Project in Accordance with CEQA.

    and,

  - A Resolution Approving

    Conditional use permit (UP 06-22),

    Design Review (DR-03-22),

    Grading Permit (GR 02-22)

    Hillside Development Permit (HDP 02-22)

    For the construction and operation of a new wireless communication facility on an existing PG&E transmission tower located on an open space parcel within the Sanders Ranch Subdivision that would be accessed by a new 15 foot wide 1,330-foot-long access road connecting to Sanders Ranch Road.