

ATTACHMENT A – Appeal Form



County of San Diego, Planning & Development Services
APPEAL APPLICATION
ZONING DIVISION

APPEAL TO:

- ☒ **Board of Supervisors**
☐ **Planning Commission**
☐ **Administrative Appeal**
(Requires Deposit & PDS-346)

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Thomas Guide Map	Code _____ Fee _____	Record ID PDS2025-AA-25-001
Community Plan Area SPRING VALLEY		
General Plan Designation _____		Zone _____

APPELLANT FILL IN BELOW THIS LINE, THIS SIDE ONLY – PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Site Address				Assessor's Parcel Number			
8555	Paradise Valley Rd	Spring Valley	91977	586-170-150-00			
Appellant's Name	Last	First	Middle	Owner's Name	Last	First	Middle
Winterton	Maggie	L		MD7, LLC OBO	AT&T	Wireless	
8535	Paradise Valley Rd	Unit 56		10590	W Ocean Air Dr	Suite 250	
Mailing Address	Number	Street	City	Mailing Address	Number	Street	City
Spring Valley	91977			San Diego	92130		
(224) 616-4026				(858) 799-7850			
Telephone				Telephone			

REQUEST: Clearly define all items requested in the appeal. Submit plans if necessary, to illustrate request.
Reconsider MUP and CEQA exemptions

JUSTIFICATION: Attach additional sheets if necessary. see attached sheets


Signature of Appellant

If Company Officer – indicate Company Name and function
(Please print)

RECEIVED
MAR 10 2025

Planning and
Development Services

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Letter of Appeal Against the AT&T Faux Eucalyptus Wireless Project – Spring Valley

To: San Diego County Board of Supervisors

From: Maggie Winterton & Concerned Residents of Sweetwater Hills Townhomes

Date: 3/10/2025

Dear Honorable Members of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors,

My name is Maggie Winterton, and I am writing on behalf of the residents of Sweetwater Hills Townhomes and the greater Spring Valley community in strong opposition to the AT&T faux eucalyptus wireless project at 8555 Paradise Valley Road.

This project, now just 60 feet from our homes at 8535 Paradise Valley Road and also in close proximity to Little Starz Daycare, raises serious concerns regarding public safety, fire hazards, environmental impact, water contamination, unfair treatment of unincorporated communities, and failure to comply with CEQA regulations. Given these substantial issues, we urge the Board to reconsider the Major Use Permit and CEQA exemption for this project.

1. CEQA Exemption Was Improperly Granted – This Project Requires Further Review

This project was approved under a Categorical Exemption from CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act), but this decision is legally flawed.

Under CEQA Guidelines §15300.2(c), a project cannot be exempt from CEQA review if “unusual circumstances” create a reasonable possibility of significant environmental impacts. This project does not meet that exception due to:

- **Proximity to Little Starz Daycare:** The proposed cell tower is within 300 feet of Little Starz Daycare, yet the County did not consider this in their approval. San Diego County policy requires a 300-foot setback for small cell towers near daycares—why is a full-scale macro tower held to a lower standard?
- **High Fire Risk from Equipment:** The proposed installation includes a 20-kilowatt (kW) diesel generator and associated electrical equipment. This equipment poses significant fire hazards due to potential fuel leaks, overheating, and electrical malfunctions. Notably, telecom-related equipment fires have been linked to major wildfires in California, resulting in extensive property damage and environmental degradation. The proximity of this equipment to structures – our homes – is a public safety issue that should not be ignored.
- **Water Contamination Risks:** In the event of a fire, the use of fire suppression chemicals (e.g., PFAS, known as “forever chemicals”) could lead to contamination of the Sweetwater Aqueduct and Reservoir, critical drinking water sources for thousands of residents. Los

Angeles County has already faced similar contamination issues stemming from telecom fire suppression efforts in 2025. It is imperative to prevent such risks in Spring Valley. Our proximity to the Sweetwater Aqueduct is an important consideration for any construction in this area.

The Board should require a comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or, at minimum, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) before allowing this project to proceed.

2. Coverage Justification is Misleading – Require a Real-World Drive Test

AT&T justifies this project based on coverage maps, but these maps are notoriously unreliable because they are theoretical models, not based on real-world field testing, and public data from independent sources (FCC, OpenSignal, CellMapper) show full LTE and 5G coverage in Spring Valley. The County should require AT&T to conduct an independent drive test (RF signal analysis) to substantiate any claimed coverage gaps before approving this tower. I raised this issue before the Planning Commission and it was ignored.

3. San Diego County Setback Policies Are Inconsistent

San Diego County applies stricter rules for small cell towers than for large macro towers like this one:

- **Small Cell Towers:** Must be 300 feet from schools, childcare centers, hospitals, religious facilities, fire stations, and sheriff stations.
- **Large Macro Towers:** Have no defined setback from homes, despite being far more visually intrusive and environmentally impactful.

Paradise Valley Road is home to Little Starz Daycare as well –indeed, right across from 8555, the proposed site. The County ignored that this macro tower is near a daycare, which would have automatically triggered additional review for a small cell tower. The County's failure to acknowledge this is a major oversight that should require re-evaluation of the permit, and perhaps set a standard that protects the safety of San Diegans.

- In August 2019, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors engaged in a heated debate over setback requirements for small cell wireless facilities.
- Initially, a 1,000-foot setback from schools, childcare centers, hospitals, and other civic sites was proposed. However, after industry pushback, this was reduced to 300 feet, and no setback was established for residential properties.
- This decision was met with significant public outcry, as residents expressed concerns over health, safety, and property devaluation. The lack of setbacks for residential areas

highlights a disparity in protections that should be addressed to ensure community safety and well-being.

This Board has a chance to re-examine this difficult policy issue and set a clear rule that still respects the FCC guidelines. Your hands are not tied.

Case Study: La Jolla Successfully Blocked a Telecom Project

- In 2019, La Jolla residents successfully opposed a similar wireless project, forcing the withdrawal of a cell tower proposed along the La Jolla Bike Path. The City of San Diego listened to resident concerns, resulting in the project's cancellation.

Case Study: Encinitas Enforces Stronger Wireless Setbacks

- The City of Encinitas requires a 500-foot setback between cell towers and residences, schools, and daycares. Spring Valley, on the other hand, is being asked to accept a 35-foot macro tower just 60 feet from homes and within 300 feet of Little Starz Daycare.

The Board of Supervisors must ensure equitable treatment across all communities..

We residents support technological progress and understand the importance of reliable service, but this project is unnecessary and inappropriate for this specific location. Our voices matter—please listen to us and reject this project. Please, protect us.

I have included the letters of a few of our residents for you to read and consider as well. We united to raise the funds for this appeal, as it means a great deal to us. Thank you for your consideration.

Maggie Winterton

Lacrecia Randell
8535 Paradise Valley, Road Unit 9
Spring Valley, CA 91977
March 7, 2025

Board Of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 310
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Board of Supervisors:

My name is Lacrecia Randell, and I live at 8535 Paradise Valley Road Unit 9 Spring Valley, CA 91977. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed cell tower located at 8555 Paradise Valley Road Spring Valley, CA 91977. AT&T wants to install a cell tower in our residential neighborhood. Personally, I don't feel that AT&T cares about the health and safety of our community. Their end game is to make money regardless of the potential negative impacts on property values, exposure to electromagnetic radiation, aesthetic concerns, as well as the exclusion clauses in some insurances policies. Therefore, I strongly urge the Board to please carefully reconsider the proposed cell tower location and explore alternative sites that minimize the impact on our residential community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lacrecia Randell".

Lacrecia Randell

Esteemed Board of Supervisors,

Please reconsider the approval for this project. Please understand that this is our home, our community, our literal backyards and it is a residential area, not a commercial one. Please look at the measurements and the proximity to us. Please look at photos and videos to see just how close it is. Please come and visit the proposed site which has homes, a daycare, and church within close proximity. We as a community strongly object to the commercialization and industrialization of our neighborhood. If you would not vote to have this placed in your own backyards where your respective families gather, please do not approve it to be placed in ours.

Thank you,

Tanesha Adams