



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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DATE: August 26, 2025

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

GENERAL SERVICES – APPROVE LICENSE AMENDMENT FOR THE SHERIFF’S OFFICE BLACK MOUNTAIN REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM SITE AND NOTICE OF EXEMPTION (DISTRICT: 3)

OVERVIEW

The San Diego County-Imperial County Regional Communications System (RCS), managed and operated by the San Diego County Sheriff’s Office (Sheriff) Wireless Services Division, provides numerous public safety agencies with 24-hour public safety 9-1-1 services and emergency responder communication. A high degree of coverage throughout both Counties is provided through the RCS network of communications sites.

One such Sheriff’s Office RCS communications site, Black Mountain, located in the City of San Diego, has been operated by the County of San Diego (County) since December 9, 1996. The current license agreement expires on October 31, 2027. An amendment to the current license agreement for this site is needed to allow the County to construct a Next Generation Regional Communications System radio tower (“Radio Tower”) on the licensed site and to extend the term of the license agreement. The Radio Tower will be built pursuant to an option to County Contract No. 553982 with Motorola Solutions, Inc., which the Board authorized County to exercise on November 17, 2020 (04).

Staff from the Department of General Services have negotiated a third amendment to the license agreement for the Black Mountain site. The proposed amendment with AT&T grants the County the right to build the Radio Tower, extends the term of the license for an additional 10 years, and includes two automatic 10-year options to further extend the term. Today’s request is for the County Board of Supervisors to approve the license amendment to construct a Radio Tower on the Black Mountain site and extend the license agreement for another 10 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Find the proposed license amendment for the Black Mountain Regional Communications System site is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 and 15303.

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2. Approve and authorize the Director, Department of General Services, to execute the proposed third amendment to a license agreement with AT&T for a Regional Communications Site located at Black Mountain, San Diego, California.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Sheriff’s Office Wireless Services Division operates and maintains all public safety wireless communications systems used by the County of San Diego, including mobile and portable radios. The division also manages the San Diego County-Imperial County Regional Communications System (RCS) radio network that serves most law enforcement, fire, and public service, including transportation and school users in this region. It is anticipated that the proposed amendment for the RCS site will have a positive impact on the community by ensuring equitable access to public safety services across the region.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Implementing effective sustainability objectives is crucial to ensuring safe and healthy communities and contributing to the overall success of the region. The approval of this amendment supports the County’s Strategic Initiative of Sustainability to ensure the capability to respond to the immediate needs for individuals, families, and the region.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are partially included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan for the Sheriff’s Office. If approved, this request will result in current fiscal year annual rent costs of approximately \$51,092. Fiscal Year 2026-27 rent costs are estimated at \$52,625 and include an annual 3% increase to rent for a radio tower and equipment storage at the Black Mountain site. Funds for the remaining license term and each option year, if exercised, will be included in future years’ operational plans for the Sheriff’s Office. The funding source is revenue from Network Operating Cost fees collected from public safety agencies participating in the Regional Communications System. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The San Diego County – Imperial County Regional Communications System (RCS), managed and operated by the San Diego County Sheriff’s Office (Sheriff) Wireless Services Division, provides public safety voice and data communications to over 116 local, State, and federal agencies in San Diego and Imperial Counties. A high degree of coverage throughout both Counties is provided through the RCS network of communications sites. Black Mountain is one such communications site that requires a license amendment to continue operations.

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The Black Mountain site was originally licensed for construction of an equipment shelter with the option to construct a tower. The option to construct the tower lapsed and the County of San Diego (County) relied on a lease with the City of San Diego (City) on an adjacent property for space on their tower. The City’s tower is structurally overloaded with radio equipment and has been identified as in need of replacement. To provide continued communications connectivity to existing RCS sites, the Sheriff needs to construct the Next Generation Regional Communications System radio tower (“Radio Tower”) on the Black Mountain site, as originally contemplated. A County managed tower and facility, which includes an equipment shelter, easements, and underground utilities will ensure the long-term operational viability and security of the RCS.

Staff from the Department of General Services have negotiated a third amendment to the license agreement for the Black Mountain site. The proposed license amendment with AT&T will grant County permission to construct the Radio Tower on the Black Mountain site, extend the term for 10 years, and provide for two automatic 10-year renewals to further extend the term. The Radio Tower will be built pursuant to an option to County Contract No. 553982 with Motorola Solutions, Inc., which the Board authorized County to exercise on November 17, 2020 (04).

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

The proposed license amendment and construction of communications tower are categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines as it involves licensing space to construct a communications tower and associated equipment, relocation of existing communication equipment within an existing regional communications systems facility that would have no permanent effects on the environment and involves negligible or no expansion or change of the existing use. The proposed license amendment and construction of communications tower are also categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines as it involves installation of a new small structure not involving significant use of hazardous substances that does not exceed 2,500 square feet. Further, no exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply to the project. See Attachment A for the Notice of Exemption.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today’s proposed action to approve the license amendment for the Black Mountain Regional Communications System site supports the Community Initiative in the County’s 2025-2030 Strategic Plan by providing services that support safe communities.

Respectfully submitted,



EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

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Attachment A: Notice of Exemption