



## Design Review Subcommittee (DRSC)

Meeting Date: June 24, 2015

**PLANNER:** Cliff Jones, Associate Planner *CJ*

**SUBJECT:** **PRE-APP 15-096, Verizon at Baha'is Church,** a request to review design, massing, height, and scale of a proposed church tower which would conceal cellular antennas. The site is located at 3316 Avenida Del Presidente within the Residential High (RH-CZ) zoning district.

### **BACKGROUND:**

#### *Project Description*

The applicant, Verizon Wireless, seeks preliminary input on a 45 foot church tower containing wireless antennas and related wireless equipment at the Baha'is Church property. The purpose of this pre-application review is to obtain feedback from the Design Review Subcommittee regarding the potential design, massing, height, and scale of the project.

#### *Why is DRSC Review Required?*

Design Review is not required for a Pre-Application review, but it is available if applicants desire it. The applicant requested DRSC review to help assess the feasibility of the project, the project's compatibility with City Design Guidelines and the neighborhood, and to determine whether to proceed with a formal application.

#### *Site Data*

The project site is a 26,890 square foot lot and is the Baha'is Church located at 3316 Avenida Del Presidente. The Baha'is Church buildings architectural design is a Mid Century style. The project site is located within the Residential High and the Coastal Zone Overlay (RH-CZ) and abuts residential uses to the north, east, and west, and Concordia Elementary to the south.

### **ANALYSIS:**

The applicant, Jacobs, representing Verizon Wireless, proposes to construct a 45 foot church tower that will house cellular antennas and equipment. No wiring, cabling trays or mounting hardware will be visible from public view, running internally within the tower walls from the antennas hidden near the top of the tower to the equipment cabinets located on the ground. The church tower is located at the rear of the property adjacent the Church buildings. The tower material will be painted to match the color and texture

of the materials of the church. The rendering below demonstrates the appearance of the tower as viewed from the parking lot of the site. Additional simulations are provided as Attachment 2.



*Development Standards*

Table 1 outlines the project’s compliance with the development standards of the Residential High zone.

**Table 1 –Compliance with RH Zone**

	<b>Allowed</b>	<b>Provided</b>
<b>Required Setbacks</b>		
Front	10'	> 195'
Side (left)	5'	> 100'
Side (right)	5'	59'-1"
Rear	5'	11'-10"
<b>Height (Maximum)</b>	45'	45'

*Height*

The proposed church tower meets the 45 foot height limitation as demonstrated in Table 1 above. It is generally recognized that Church buildings often have towers or other structures that project above surrounding buildings in a neighborhood. Church towers can be a desirable addition to the architecture of a neighborhood and to the street scene. Within the City, there are a few tall Church towers/structures that conceal wireless facilities. The most noteworthy ones are identified in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 – Church towers/structures that conceal wireless facilities**

Church / Location	Image of Tower/Structure
<p>San Clemente Presbyterian Church /</p> <p>119 Avenida de la Estrella</p> <p>(Antennas located within tower)</p>	
<p>St. Andrew's By The Sea /</p> <p>2001 Calle Frontera</p> <p>(Antennas located within cross)</p>	
<p>Palisades United Methodist Church /</p> <p>27002 Camino De Estrella</p> <p>(Antennas located within tower)</p>	

Given that the zoning designation for the property allows for structures that are 45 feet tall and prior precedence approved taller Church towers, the project may warrant the

proposed height. However, the height of the tower appears out of scale with the on-site buildings as discussed in greater detail below.

*Design Guidelines / General Plan Consistency*

Staff evaluation of the project’s consistency with the Design Guidelines and General Plan, is provided in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 – Project consistency with mass and scale as prescribed in Design Guidelines and Centennial General Plan**

<b>Design Guideline or Centennial General Plan Policy</b>	<b>Project Consistency</b>
<i>Design Guidelines II.B.3.</i> Building scale, mass, and form compatible w/ adjacent development.	<p>Not Consistent. The tower is unlikely to have any massing impacts upon the residential properties as the closest residential property is 59’ away. The tower is setback close to the rear property line at 11’-10” but does meet the rear setback of ten feet. There are no school structures at the rear of the property that the project could have massing impacts upon as the school playfields are behind the property.</p> <p>The tower appears out of scale with the abutting Church building. Staff recommendations to improve the projects consistency with this Design Guideline is provided within the recommendation section below.</p>
<i>Design Guidelines II.C.3.c.</i> Theme towers may be permitted, where appropriate, as an architectural element.	Consistent. Church towers can be a desirable addition to the architecture of a building, neighborhood, and to the street scene.
<i>Land Use Policy 3.04. Upper Floors.</i> Where buildings over two stories are allowed, we require building facades above the second floor to be set back from lower, street-facing facades to minimize building height and bulk, pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, Design Guidelines, and applicable Specific Plans.	Consistent. The tower is set behind the church buildings to minimize the height and bulk of the structure as viewed from the street. Visual simulations are necessary to analyze the visibility of the project from various vantage points.

Design Guideline or Centennial General Plan Policy	Project Consistency
<p><i>Urban Design Policy 5.10. Scale and Massing.</i> We require that the scale and massing of development be compatible with its surroundings and with the General Plan, applicable specific plan and or area plan.</p>	<p>Somewhat Consistent. Refer to massing and scale discussion above and recommendations for improvement below.</p>

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The following are staff's initial comments on the building height, scale, massing and design and do not include the detailed design recommendations typical of discretionary application review.

1. Staff recommends the tower be moved west so that it is adjacent to the taller Church sanctuary building. The applicant should also explore ways to improve the scale between the tower and sanctuary building, including looking at reducing the height of the tower feature.
2. Additional visual analysis tools from different perspectives are requested with future discretionary application review so staff and the DRSC can further evaluate the project design, height, scale, and mass.
3. If an application is filed, applicant should inform the neighboring properties about the project design.

Staff seeks DRSC comments and any additional recommendations.

***Attachments:***

1. Location Map
2. Visual Simulations
3. Plans



# LOCATION MAP

PRE-APP 15-096, Verizon at Baha'is Church  
3316 Avenida Del Presidente



No scale





