

City Council-Regular Meeting

Date: 08/17/2025

Initiated By: Ramon Chavez, Assistant City Manager

Initiated By: Vexus Fiber, LLC, Owner; and Sara Overbaugh, EVP & CO, Representative

Staff Source: Vanessa Guerra, MPA, AICP, Planning Director

SUBJECT

Public Hearing and Introductory Ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance (Map) of the City of Laredo by authorizing the issuance of a conditional use permit for a Phone Exchange/Switching Station on Lot 5, Block 179, Western Division, located at 1016 San Francisco Avenue.

The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended **approval** of the proposed conditional use permit, and staff **supports** the application.

ZC-062-2025

District VIII

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

None.

BACKGROUND

Council District: VIII - Cm. Alyssa Cigarroa

Proposed use: The proposed use is a Phone Exchange/Switching Station.

- Description: A phone exchange / switching station is a facility in a telecommunications network that connects telephone calls by routing them from one phone line to another.

Minimum Zoning District Required for Proposed Use: B-4 (Highway Commercial District) zoning district.

Current Zoning District: The site is currently zoned as a B-1 (Limited Business District) zoning district.

Site: The site is currently occupied by a phone exchange/switching station.

Citations, Warnings, and/or Complaints:

1. On 4/29/2025 a warning was issued for operating a switching station in a zoning district where such use is not permitted.

Surrounding land uses: To the north of the site is Washington Street, phone exchange/switching station, Snack Laredo, Sinai Presbyterian Church, single family residential uses, International sales Inc (Shipping supplies), and a gas station. To the east of the site is San Francisco Avenue, single family residential uses, a vacant commercial building, and a single family home with a warehouse. To the south of the site is Victoria Street, multi-family residential uses, single family residential uses, casa de cambio (currency exchange service), and vacant developed land. To the west of the site is San Eduardo Avenue, multi-family residential uses, single family residential uses, Stepping Stones Child Care &

Learning Center, LLC, Ashley Bail Bonds, vacant developed land, a vacant commercial building, Kike's Bail Bonds, Laredo Merchandize (home goods store), Vielma Law Firm, and Fusion Carniceria.

Comprehensive Plan: The Future Land Use Map recognizes this area as Neighborhood Mixed Use.

<https://www.cityoflaredo.com/LaredoPlanning/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/viva-laredo-city-of-laredo-comprehensive-plan.pdf#page=39>

Transportation Plan: The Long Range Thoroughfare Plan identifies San Francisco Avenue as a Local Street.

www.laredompo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-Future-Thoroughfare-Plan_2021.02.11.pdf

Letters sent to surrounding property owners: 38

Inside 200' Radius: In Favor: 0 Opposed: 0

Outside 200' Radius: In Favor: 0 Opposed: 0

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Zoning Commission in a 5 to 1 vote recommended **approval** of the conditional use permit.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

A Conditional Use Permit is intended to provide for those land uses where additional regulation is necessary to protect the property and surrounding area. It is primarily intended for property located in older section of the city and is intended to promote development and/or redevelopment of such property, which is consistent with the land use patterns of surrounding property. The property is zoned a B-1 (Limited Business District) zoning district.

Staff **supports** the proposed conditional use permit for the following reasons:

1. The proposed use is not anticipated to have a negative impact since the phone exchange/switching station does not generate noise or vibrations.
2. In addition, the proposed use is not anticipated to have excessive traffic or large vehicles transiting the areas since it will be an unmanned equipment building as per the description in the narrative.
3. The proposed use is compatible with the surrounding area and/or neighborhood, as the proposed site abuts an existing switching station to the north. Additional Comments:

Notice to the owner/applicant:

1. The approval of the conditional use permit does not guarantee the issuance of the building permit and requires full compliance with all applicable municipal codes and regulations.

If approved, Staff suggests the following conditions

1. Lighting of property shall be screened to avoid adverse impact on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
2. Landscaping shall be provided and maintained for the entire duration of the proposed use in accordance with the City of Laredo Land Development Code.
3. The owner shall provide an opaque fence or wall of not less than 7 (seven) feet in

height along any side or rear property lines which abut or adjoin property containing a residential use or residential zoning district. Apartment complexes, residential condominiums or residential townhomes shall be similarly screened irrespective of which zoning district they occur in.

4. The establishment must make provisions to keep litter to a minimum, and to keep it from blowing onto adjacent streets and properties.
5. Signage shall be consistent with the City's Sign Ordinance.
6. On-site parking shall be provided in accordance with the City of Laredo Land Development Code.
7. The property owner must comply with all City Noise Ordinances provisions of the City of Laredo Code of Ordinances.
8. The proposed use shall not exceed the "Occupant Load" as set forth in the Certificate of Occupancy with Occupant Load issued to the CUP business holder.
9. The proposed use shall, during all hours of operation, maintain, free from obstruction or impediment to full instant use in the case of fire or other emergency, all exit accesses, exits or exit discharges.
10. The proposed use shall undergo an annual Fire Inspection.
11. All permits, licenses, certifications and inspections required by the codes and ordinances of the City of Laredo shall be kept up to date and current including but not limited to: a. Food Manager License (annual), b. Food Handler's Permit (annual), c. Certificate of Occupancy with Occupant Load. Occupant Load being the approved capacity of a building or portion thereof.
12. Owner shall comply with Building, Health, Safety, Fire, Environmental, and all applicable codes and regulations as required.
13. The operating characteristics of the use shall not create a nuisance and the impacts of the use on surrounding properties shall be minimized with respect to noise, odors, vibrations, glare, and any other similar conditions.
14. No commercial vehicle that exceeds one (1) ton in manufacturer's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) or that has more than two (2) axels, nor any commercial or utility trailer, shall be parked or stored in any manner on the property.

Is this change contrary to the established land use pattern?

No, there is a Phone Exchange/Switching Station abutting the site.

Would this change create an isolated zoning district unrelated to surrounding districts?

No, the zone will not change.

Will change adversely influence living conditions in the neighborhood?

No, it is not anticipated to have a negative impact in the surrounding area or neighborhood.

Are there substantial reasons why the property cannot be used in accordance with existing zoning?

Yes. The existing B-1 does not allow for a Phone Exchange/Switching Station as intended by the applicant.

Attachments

Comprehensive Alignment
Maps
Narrative
Zone Change Signage
Draft Ordinance
