



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Number: 3008300
Applicant Name: Todd Walton for Clearwire
Address of Proposal: 2820 62nd Avenue S.W.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to expand a minor communication utility (Clearwire LLC) consisting of three (3) panel antennas and two microwave dishes on the rooftop of an existing multi-family structure (apartment building). Equipment cabinet will also be located on the rooftop. The existing minor communication utility (Sprint) is to remain.

The following approvals are required:

Administrative Conditional Use Review - to allow a minor communication utility in a Multi-Family Residential Lowrise 3 (L-3) zone to exceed the height limit, pursuant to Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 23.57.011.B.

SEPA - Environmental Determination pursuant to SMC 25.05.

SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS
 DNS with conditions
 DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site Location and Description

The subject site, which is developed with a four story apartment building and partially below grade parking garage, is located on the corner of 62nd Avenue S.W. and S.W. Stevens St. in the Alki neighborhood of West Seattle. The proposal site is only a block from Alki Avenue S.W. The site and existing building are within a Lowrise-three Multi-family (L3) zone. The building is 35 feet tall to the top of the flat roof and is 38 feet tall as measured from existing grade to the roof parapet.

Around the corner from the subject site is the Alki Homestead Restaurant which is an Historic Landmark.

Surrounding Zoning and Uses

The project site is located in a Multi-Family Lowrise (L3) zone. L3 zoning is also located to the east. Single-family zoning is located less than a block to the south and less intensive L1 zoning is located to the southeast. LDT, Lowrise-duplex-triplex, is located to the southwest not far from the subject site. All along Alki Avenue S.W. in the area of the subject site the zoning is designated to be Neighborhood Commercial with a height limit of 30 feet (NC1/30'). Surrounding development consists of older one to two-story single family and multi-family development.

Proposal Description

The proposed project consists of the installation of a minor communication facility for Clearwire LLC. The facility will consist of three (3) antenna arrays with one (1) antenna mounted on each array, two (2) microwave dish antennas, and one mechanical equipment cabinet. The antennas are each 36.6" tall x 6.1" wide x 2.7" deep. The two antenna arrays with the microwave dishes will be mounted directly on tripods and screened by shrouds to look like chimneys. The third antenna array will be screened by the same structure that incases the equipment cabinet and has the appearance of an elevator penthouse. The proposed mechanical equipment cabinet will be screened by RF transparent panels, colored to match the existing elevator penthouse.

Public Comments

One written comment letter was received during the comment period that ended on January 1st, 2008.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 23.57.011B provides that a minor communication utility, as regulated pursuant to SMC 23.57.002, may be permitted in a Lowrise zone as an Administrative Conditional Use when it meets the development standards of SMC 23.57.011C and the following criteria, as applicable.

- 1. The project shall not be substantially detrimental to the residential character of nearby residentially zoned areas, and the facility and the location proposed shall be the least intrusive facility at the least intrusive location consistent with effectively providing service. In considering detrimental impacts and the degree of intrusiveness, the impacts considered shall include but not be limited to visual, noise, compatibility with uses allowed in the zone, traffic, and the displacement of residential dwelling units.*

The proposed minor communication utility will be installed on the roof of an existing four (4) story apartment building in an L-3 zone. The subject property is the site of an existing telecommunications facility. The applicant has submitted coverage area maps demonstrating service with and without the proposed facility.

The proposed design, size, and heights of the antenna screening, in conjunction with their visibility from the surrounding properties and structures, will render the proposed communications facility visually un-obtrusive. Screening structures will fully screen the proposed antennas, match the building's existing exterior, and be painted to match the

building's exterior. These structures, because of their size and materials, will appear to be a part of the existing penthouse structure and therefore will be compatible with the allowed uses in the zone.

There will be no noise impacts from the proposed antennas. There may be minimal noise impacts from the associated electrical equipment. The equipment will be located on the rooftop inside equipment cabinets, which will be screened by panels.

There will be no traffic impacts or displacement of residential units.

2. *The visual impacts that are addressed in section 23.57.016 shall be mitigated to the greatest extent practicable.*

According to the plans submitted, the proposed antennas will be fully screened from view and be inconspicuous due to the proposed screening structures while remaining functionally effective for service coverage. Therefore, the proposal complies with this criterion.

3. *Within a Major Institution Overlay District, a Major Institution may locate a minor communication utility or an accessory communication device, either of which may be larger than permitted by the underlying zone, when:*

- a.) *the antenna is at least one hundred feet (100') from a MIO boundary, and*
- b.) *the antenna is substantially screened from the surrounding neighborhood's view.*

The proposed site is not located within a Major Institution Overlay District. Therefore, this criterion does not apply to the subject proposal.

4. *If the minor communication utility is proposed to exceed the zone height limit, the applicant shall demonstrate that the requested height is the minimum necessary for the effective functioning of the minor communication utility.*

The existing building rooftop is 35 feet above grade, which is nonconforming for this zone. The top of the existing parapet is 38 feet above grade. The proposed plans indicate that the proposed antennas and microwave dishes would extend 5' 10" above the roof parapet. The top of the screen shroud is 45' above grade level. The applicant has submitted coverage area maps demonstrating service with and without the proposed facility, with the antennas mounted at the height shown on the submitted plans. The documentation within the MUP file provided by the applicant and discussed in *Proposal Description* above, demonstrates the requested antenna heights and required screening heights are the minimum necessary for the effective functioning of the minor communication utility. This proposal, therefore, complies with this criterion.

5. *If the proposed minor communication utility is proposed to be a new freestanding transmission tower, the applicant shall demonstrate that it is not technically feasible for the proposed facility to be on another existing transmission tower or on an existing building in a manner that meets the applicable development standards. The location of a facility on a building on an alternative site or sites, including construction of a network that consists of a greater number of smaller less obtrusive utilities, shall be considered.*

The proposed minor communication utility will not be a new freestanding transmission tower. Therefore, this criterion does not apply to the subject proposal.

SUMMARY

The proposed project is consistent with the Administrative Conditional Use criteria of the City of Seattle Municipal Code as it applies to wireless communication utilities in Lowrise zones. The facility is minor in nature and will not be detrimental to the surrounding area while providing adequate service to the area.

The proposed project will not require the expansion of public facilities and services for its construction, operation and maintenance. Once installation of the facility has been completed, approximately one visit per month would occur for routine maintenance. No other traffic would be associated with the project.

DECISION - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

The Conditional Use application is **CONDITIONALLY APPROVED** as noted below.

SEPA ANALYSIS

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant and dated December 4, 2007. The information in the checklist, public comment, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects forms the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665 D) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans, and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority. The Overview Policy states, in part: "Where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation," subject to some limitations. Under such limitations/circumstances (SMC 225.05.665 D1-7) mitigation can be considered.

Environmental review resulting in a Threshold Determination is required pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), WAC 197-11, and the Seattle SEPA Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.05).

Short-term Impacts

Construction and Noise Impacts

Construction activities including construction worker comments, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other green house gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant.

Codes and development regulations applicable to this proposal will provide sufficient mitigation for most impacts. The initial installation of the antennas and the equipment may include loud equipment and activities. This construction activity may have an adverse impact on nearby residences. Due to the close proximity of nearby residences, the Department finds that the limitations of the Noise Ordinance are inadequate to appropriately mitigate the adverse noise impacts associated with the proposal. The SEPA Construction Impacts policies, (SMC 25.05.675.B) allow the Director to limit the hours of construction to mitigate adverse noise and other construction-related impacts. Therefore, the proposal is conditioned to limit construction activity to non-holiday weekday hours between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Long-term Impacts

Environmental Health

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has pre-empted state and local governments from regulating personal wireless service facilities on the basis of environmental effects of radio frequency emissions. As such, no mitigation measures are warranted pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

The applicant has submitted a “Statement of Federal Communication Commission Compliance for Personal Wireless Service Facility” and an accompanying “Affidavit of Qualification and Certification” for this proposed facility giving the calculations of radiofrequency power density at roof and ground levels expected from this proposal and attesting to the qualifications of the Professional Engineer who made this assessment. This complies with the Seattle Municipal Code Section 25.10.300 that contains Electromagnetic Radiation standards with which the proposal must conform. The City’s experience with review of this type of installation is that the EMR emissions constitute a small fraction of that permitted under both Federal standards and the standards of SMC 25.10.300 and therefore pose no threat to public health.

Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the projects’ energy consumption, are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which may adversely impact air quality and may contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts maybe adverse, they are not expected to be significant. No mitigation is warranted.

DECISION

This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department and by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined not to have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21.030(2)(C).
- Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE CONDITIONS

For the Life of the Project

1. All screening shall extend down to the roof surface. Any material changes shall be approved by the project planner.
2. Screening shall be integrated with the architectural design, materials, shapes and colors that are consistent with the current exterior of the building. The screens for two antenna arrays shall be designed to mimic the look of brick chimneys.
3. Screening for the third antenna array and the equipment cabinet shall have the architectural design, shapes and colors that are consistent with the existing elevator penthouse structure.

SEPA CONDITIONS

During Construction

The following condition to be enforced during construction shall be posted at the site in a location on the property line that is visible and accessible to the public and to construction personnel from the each street right-of-way and the alley. The conditions will be affixed to placards prepared by DPD. The placards will be issued along with the building permit set of plans. The placards shall be laminated with clear plastic or other waterproofing material and shall remain posted on-site for the duration of the construction.

4. In order to further mitigate the noise impacts during construction, the hours of construction activity shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. This condition may be modified by DPD to allow work of an emergency nature or allow low noise interior work. This condition may also be modified to permit low noise exterior work after approval from the Land Use Planner.

Signature: (signature on file)
Joan Carson, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

Date: April 24, 2008

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