



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SEATTLE CITY LIGHT**

Application Number: 3010424
Applicant Name: Tiffany McClurg for Clearwire
Address of Proposal: 11045 8th Avenue NE

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a minor communication utility consisting of three new panel antennas and three microwave dishes on the rooftop of an existing building all enclosed within FRP (Fiber Reinforced Plastic) shroud (Clearwire). Project includes one new equipment cabinet, shelf-mounted onto existing stairway penthouse.

The following approvals are required:

Administrative Conditional Use – Chapter 23.57

SEPA - Environmental Determination – Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code (SMC)

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Site and Vicinity Description

The subject site is located near the middle of the large block north of Northgate Way NE between 5th and 8th Avenues NE. The site is split-zoned MR and L3. It is developed with North have Apartments Building which was built in 1972 and has 198 residential units. It is largely surrounded by the same zones, and NC3-65 prevails to the south. The entire area is within the Northgate Overlay.

Proposal Description

The proposal includes 3 panel antennas of approximately 3' (horizontal) by 8' (vertical) shrouded dimensions. All three would be located at building edges (S,E,W). The three microwave equipment installations-cum-RRUs would be located within the panel assemblies. The equipment cabinet associated with all these facilities will be located adjacent to an existing rooftop stair penthouse.

Public Comments

None.

ANALYSIS AND CRITERIA - 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.***

According to the plans, the antennas will conform to codified development standards, visual impacts and design standards of SMC 23.57.011 and 23.57.016. The installations will be concealed within shrouds that exacerbate their bulk, as required by code. Nonetheless, the building is large, and photo-simulations document that the installations are unlikely attract minimal attention. Given code requirements, the facilities are probably the least intrusive design for this residentially zoned neighborhood.

The proposed minor communication utility is not likely to be substantially detrimental to the residential character of the residentially zoned area, and the location of the panel antennas are the least visually intrusive locations consistent with effectively providing service and minimizing impacts to the existing neighborhood. Neighbors and tenants of the host building will not likely know the facility exists, in terms of its land use, once the antennas are placed, and cell phone coverage in the area will be improved, which will be beneficial to users in the neighborhood.

Traffic will not be affected by the presence of the constructed facility. The antennas will not emit noise, the one site support cabinet will be located at the west wall of the building and will be surrounded by a wood fence that will shield any noise associated with the equipment, and no residential dwelling units would be displaced.

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

For reasons set forth above, 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.*

Not applicable.

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 proposed height of the minor communication utility would top out at 96 feet above existing grade. Documentation within the Master Use Permit file, provided by the applicant, demonstrates the requested height is the minimum necessary for the effective functioning of the minor communication utility; therefore, the proposal 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.*

Not applicable.

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. The facility is minor in nature and will not be detrimental to the surrounding area while providing needed and beneficial wireless communications 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 PERMIT

The application for an administrative conditional use is **GRANTED.**

ANALYSIS – SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant. The information in the checklist and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.554D) 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 25.05.665 D1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

Short-term Impacts

The following temporary construction-related impacts are expected: 1) decreased air quality due to the increase dust and other suspended particulates from building activities; 2) increased noise and vibration from construction operations and equipment; 3) increased traffic and parking demand from construction personnel; 4) blockage of streets by construction vehicles/activities; 5) conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site; and 6) consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources. Although not significant, the impacts are adverse and certain mitigation measures are appropriate as specified below.

City codes and/or ordinances apply to the proposal and will provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically, these are: 1) Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to suppress dust, obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way during construction, construction along the street right-of-way, and sidewalk repair); and 2) Building Code (construction measures in general). Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will be adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation and further mitigation by imposing specific conditions is not necessary for these impacts. The other short-term impacts not noted here as mitigated by codes, ordinances or conditions (e.g., increased traffic during construction, additional parking demand generated by construction personnel and equipment, increased use of energy and natural resources) are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation or discussion.

Greenhouse Gas

De minimus. 79 MTCO₂e over lifespan.

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated, as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased traffic in the area and increased demand for parking due to maintenance of the facility; and increased demand for public services and utilities. These impacts are minor in scope and do not warrant additional conditioning pursuant to SEPA policies.

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).

