



City of Seattle

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: 3013384
Applicant Name: Sunny Ausink for AT&T
Address of Proposal: 6609 SW Admiral Way

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to expand a minor communication utility (AT&T) by replacing two panel antennas with two new panel antennas on the rooftop of an existing building. Review includes an additional equipment cabinet at grade.

The following approvals are required:

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

Administrative Conditional Use - To allow expansion of an existing minor communication utility in a Single Family Zone (Chapter 23.57, Seattle Municipal Code)

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 Description

The subject property is located on the east side of the bluff at Alki Point, towards the top of the hill, near the end of SW Admiral Way. The subject property is zoned SF-5000, single family, and is currently developed with the Soundcrest Apartments, a one hundred and eighty-eight foot long, forty-seven foot wide, twenty-eight foot high apartment building. Soundcrest Apartments is an established, non-conforming use within the single family residential district. A large public playfield is situated adjacent and to the east of the proposed project site, downslope from the apartment building. To the west of the subject site, the slope rises. Several single family dwellings are located westerly of the subject properties, with views towards the west. Single family residences are located across the street to the north; with predominate views of the Puget Sound to the north.

AT&T to modify the existing roof-mounted panel antennas, by removing/replacing (2) existing antennas with (2) new panel antennas along with removing the existing canister for a new 3 foot wide canister, on the southeast end of the roof of the Soundcrest Apartment Building. Also proposed is the replacement on an existing ground level cabinet with a ground level compact LTE backpack mounted cabinet located on the easterly side of the apartment building approximately six feet from the east property line.

Proposal Description

The purpose of the proposed installation is to provide wireless communication services in an area that is extremely difficult to serve due to topography. The applicant proposes to install two, two sector, panel antennas approximately 15 feet north of the south wall and 22 feet west of the east wall of the structure on the rooftop of an existing apartment building. The antennas will extend 12 feet above the rooftop of the structure. One on grade equipment cabinet will be installed to the south on the east façade of the apartment building. The submitted drawings indicate that screening of the antennas will be accomplished with the use of a Radom, which is a cylindrical sleeve that will encase the antennas and be on the rooftop of the structure. When installed, the proposed design will resemble a vent pipe, a typical rooftop feature. The previous approved permit called for a double, 6 ft. high cedar wood fence with foam insulation between the fences is proposed on grade to screen the proposed equipment panels for noise mitigation.

Public Comment

The public comment period for this project ended on June 27, 2012¹. Three comments were received from project neighbors. The Land Use Application information is available at the Public Resource Center located at 700 Fifth Ave, Suite 2000².

Third Party Review

Third Party Review was conducted by Andre Consulting Inc. (Andre's) and included the following documentation:

- Existing AT&T LTE coverage in the area south of this location is non-existent;
- Site survey and coverage maps indicate good future coverage;
- Technical evaluation of exposure of the existing transmitters on this site is clear and complete, showing significant margin between the expected fields and the FCC guidelines;
- The site is partially hidden from view;
- The site uses an existing low profile tower.

According to Andre's review of the applicant's information and coverage maps for the area there is an indication that cellular coverage for this area is not adequate for LTE technology and the E911 mandates. It is also noted that coverage is limited to about four blocks in any direction.

It is Andre's **recommendation that the application be granted** — based the location is an existing site, and will only be upgraded to accommodate 4G LTE technology. Coverage includes the population of Alki Point and locations south and east of that point. The RF exposure analysis and documentation is complete and accurate.

¹ The application was placed on hold while it was under review by a Third Party.

² <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/PRC/LocationHours/default.asp>

Additionally, Andre's review noted in their **Result** section of their report; *"The location of the site is excellent for coverage for the housing in the area. The location in on a high point in this neighborhood. The coverage fills the existing gap of coverage in the area without providing excessive coverage. Placement of antennas on [the] existing approved location is an excellent use of location and equipment."*

SEPA DETERMINATION

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).

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated May 30, 2012. The information in the checklist, public comment, and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The Department of Design, Construction and Land Use has analyzed and annotated the environmental checklist submitted by the project applicant; reviewed the project plans and all additional information in the files. Any comments which may have been received regarding this proposed action have been considered. No significant impacts to the environment are expected.

Short - Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction related-impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulate from building activities and hydrocarbon emission from construction vehicles and equipment; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel, increased noise, consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources. Excepting construction and noise impacts, all other short-term impacts are considered temporary in nature and limited in scope, they are not considered significant pursuant to SMC 25.05.794 and no mitigation is warranted. Construction and noise impacts are discussed below.

Construction Noise

As construction proceeds, noise associated with demolition/construction activities at the site could adversely affect the surrounding residential/commercial uses. However, the limitations of the Noise Ordinance are found to be adequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts. Pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675 B), no mitigation other than compliance with the Construction Noise Ordinance is warranted.

Long - Term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal, namely increases in demand for energy and increased generation of electromagnetic radiation emission. These long term impacts are not considered significant or of sufficient adversity to warrant mitigation. However, due to the widespread public concerns expressed about electromagnetic radiation, this impact is further discussed below.

The Federal communications commission (FCC) has been given exclusive jurisdiction to regulate wireless facilities based on the effects of electromagnetic radiation emissions. The FCC, the City and County have adopted standards addressing maximum permissible exposure (MPE) limits for these facilities to ensure the health and safety of the general public. The Seattle-King County Department of Public Health has reviewed hundreds of these sites and found that the exposures fall well below all the maximum permissible exposure (MPE) limits. The Department of Public Health does not believe these utilities to be a threat to public health.

The City is not aware of interference complaints from the operation of other installations from persons operating electronic equipment, including sensitive medical devices (e.g. - pacemakers). The Land Use Code (SMC 23.57.010 E 4) requires that warning signs be posted at every point of access to the antennas noting the presence of electromagnetic radiation. In the event that any interference was to result from this proposal in nearby homes and businesses or in clinical medical applications, the FCC has authority to require the facility to cease operation until the issue is resolved.

The information discussed above, review of literature regarding these facilities, and the experience of the Department of Planning and Development and Public Health with the review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision. The Department concludes that no mitigation for electromagnetic radiation emission impacts pursuant to SEPA policies is warranted.

Other long term impacts such as, traffic, and air quality are minor and adequately mitigated by the City's existing codes and ordinances. Height, bulk and scale and noise impacts are adequately mitigated by conditions associated with the Administrative Conditional Use decision that follows in this report. Provided that the proposal is constructed according to approved plans, no further mitigation pursuant to SEPA is warranted.

DECISION

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination. 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.

[X] 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).

CONDITIONS

None.

ANALYSIS - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

Section 23.57.010.D of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) provides that an expansion of an existing minor communication utility may be permitted as an administrative conditional use subject to the requirements and conditioning considerations of the Section. Those portions of the Section with relevance here will be discussed below.

1. *The minor communication utility shall not result in a commercial intrusion which would be substantially detrimental to the residential character of the surrounding residentially zoned area.*
2. *If the proposed minor communication utility is proposed to exceed the permitted height of the zone, or is a transmission tower, the applicant shall demonstrate the following*
 - i. *The need for the proposed communication utility to be in a single family zone and an justification of the proposed height;*
 - ii. *That the materials, shape and color of the proposed utility or device will minimize negative visual impacts on adjacent or nearby residential areas to the greatest extent possible;*
 - iii. *That the proposed communication utility will not be substantially detrimental to the residential character of the area, for example through demolition of residential units within a residential zone.*

Impacts normally associated with commercial activity are not expected to result from this expansion in that there should be no perceptible increase in daily traffic or activities, or substantial alterations to the existing residential structure. Furthermore, no employees will be on site; although the site will have periodic servicing. To mitigate noise associated with the at grade backpack mounted equipment cabinets, a double, 6 ft. high cedar board on board fence with foam insulation between the fences will be required to surround the cabinets. The proposed installation of two panel antennas and equipment cabinets as conditioned will not substantially change the nature of the land use of the subject property or surrounding properties. In light of that, no commercial intrusion is expected from this expansion to a minor communication utility.

The proposed antennas are expected to exceed the base height limit of the single family zone, which is 30 feet, by approximately 9 feet 7 inches. The existing apartment building is approximately 28 feet high and the proposed 3 foot diameter Radom antenna atop a tripod mount will reach a height of approximately 39 feet 7 inches. The applicant has provided information related to the topography of the Alki Beach neighborhood, which verifies that there are no commercial or industrial zoned sites which can be used to provide wireless communication coverage to the area. The applicants have provided information indicating that the antennas are to extend 12 feet above the rooftop, the minimum height necessary to meet the coverage requirements and allow for adjustments to the antennas.

The proposed utility will minimize negative visual impacts on adjacent or nearby residential areas to the greatest extent possible by screening and painting the equipment, and by its location on the rooftop. The submitted drawings indicate that the antennas will be encased in a cylinder sleeve and mounted on a tripod and be painted to blend with the building. The tripod mounting method is less obtrusive versus a large obtuse sled type method. Painting the antennas in an effort to blend with the building will mitigate visual impacts. To screen the equipment cabinets, a double, 6-ft. high cedar board on board fence with foam insulation between the fences is proposed to enclose the area.

As conditioned and proposed, the communication utility will not be substantially detrimental to the residential character of the area. No residential units will be demolished as part of this proposal.

DECISION - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

The proposed action is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**.

CONDITIONS - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

Prior to Final Inspection

1. The owner and/or responsible parties shall install a double, 6 ft. high cedar board on board fence with foam insulation between the fences as shown on the previous approved plans.
2. The owner and/or responsible parties shall mount the antennas within a Radom or device of similar proportion.
3. The owner and/or responsible parties shall paint the Radom encasing the antennas and the tripod mount to complement the building.
4. The owner and/or responsible parties shall locate the Radom as shown on the approved plans dated May 24, 2012.

Signature: _____ (signature on file)
Colin R. Vasquez, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

Date: November 8, 2012