



City of Seattle

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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**

**Application Number:** 3014489

**Applicant Name:** Sunny Ausink ( Pacific Telecom) for PSE

**Address of Proposal:** 6000 16<sup>th</sup> Ave SW

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to establish a minor communication utility (PSE). Project includes installation of one omni-antenna on an existing minor communications tower and the addition of one equipment shelter at grade within an enclosed fenced area. Existing minor communication utilities to remain.

The following approvals are required:

**Administrative Conditional Use** – to expand a minor communication utility in an LR-1 zone (SMC 23.57.011B).

**SEPA - Environmental Determination** - Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 25.05.

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

**BACKGROUND DATA**

Site and Vicinity Description

The site, located near the southwest corner of the South Seattle Community College (SSCC) campus, contains an existing 80 foot transmission tower. The subject property in the area of the tower, is zoned Lowrise One (LR1) with a Major Institution Overlay with a 50 foot height limit (MIO 50’).

Development in the area consists of a variety of one and two story academic buildings and a residential neighborhood directly to the west of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest.

### Public Comments

No comments were received.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE - ANALYSIS**

*The establishment or expansion of a minor communication utility regulated pursuant to Section [23.57.002](#) may be permitted as an Administrative Conditional Use when they meet the development standards of subsection 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 single proposed omni-antenna, originally proposed to extend approximately 15 feet above the existing 80 foot tower, is proposed to be side-mounted with a bracket to one leg of the lattice tower less than 50 feet above the ground. The antenna itself is extremely slender at 3.2 inches or less in diameter and is less than 10 feet tall. The antenna is proposed to have a stand-off from the tower leg of four feet. The visible impact of the additional antenna is expected to be so minor as to be barely perceptible to neighboring properties or passersby. Operational noise should mostly be limited to low level sound from equipment cooling fans that will not be located near residential properties. Since there should be negligible perception of the additional PSE facility on the existing site, nothing about the proposal should be incompatible with uses allowed in the zone. No residential dwelling units will be displaced by the proposal. Therefore, the proposal should not be perceptibly more intrusive than the existing condition. The application included analysis of alternative locations for the PSE facility, concluding that no other single tower could provide the needed coverage. The impacts of the construction of multiple new facilities would likely be far more intrusive than the proposed project. This proposal is the least intrusive facility in the least intrusive location.

- 2. The visual impacts that are addressed in Section [23.57.016](#) (Visual Impacts and Design Standards) shall be mitigated to the greatest extent practicable.*

The Visual Impacts and Design Standards require projects to minimize the visual appearance of minor communication utility antennas by requiring that they be screened or otherwise be visually integrated with the facility on which they are mounted. In the case of antenna mounted onto existing towers, the standards require techniques to minimize the appearance of bulk such as by limiting horizontal extensions outward from the tower. The antenna is proposed to be mounted with a four foot standoff from a tower leg. Due to the slender design of the antenna, this should not be very obtrusive although ideally the antenna should be mounted close to the tower leg. The project will be conditioned to mount the antenna as close to the leg of the tower as practicable while still allowing for effective functioning of the facility. Supportive equipment will be

installed at the ground level near similar existing equipment, all inside a fenced enclosure that is well within the boundaries of the SSCC campus. Therefore, the visual impacts of the proposal will be mitigated to the greatest extent practicable.

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 (100) feet from a MIO boundary, and b. The antenna is substantially screened from the surrounding neighborhood's view.*
  - a) The proposal is within the Major Institution Overlay District for South Seattle Community College (MIO 50) near, but more than 100 feet from, the south boundary.
  - b) The slender size of the proposed omni antenna, the location of the antenna several hundred feet horizontally away from neighboring properties, and the existing canopy of mature trees on campus between the tower and much of the residential neighborhood, will render the antenna to be substantially screened from view.
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 antenna, originally proposed to be mounted such that it would exceed the height of the existing tower, is now proposed to be mounted so that it is less than 50 feet above the ground in order to expedite approval with the need for Airport Height Exception. As now proposed, the Sr. Telecommunications Engineer has documented that the height of the antenna is now "...BELOW the minimum height necessary for desired radio operation service requirements." The applicant expects to request future approval of a higher location for the antenna.

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.*

This criterion is not applicable as the proposal does not include a new freestanding transmission tower.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE - DECISION**

The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed facility is the least intrusive facility in the least intrusive location. Screening requirements and other development standards are met provided the antenna is documented to not exceed the minimum standoff necessary for effective functioning of the utility. Therefore, the Administrative Conditional Use Permit is

**CONDITIONALLY GRANTED.**

## **ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE - CONDITIONS**

### *Prior to MUP Issuance*

- 1) Document that the amount of horizontal standoff proposed is the minimum necessary standoff for the effective functioning of the facility.

## **SEPA ANALYSIS**

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 minor construction activities; 2) increased noise and vibration from construction operations and equipment; 3) increased traffic and parking demand from construction personnel; 4) potential brief blockage of portions of streets by construction vehicles/activities; 5) increased greenhouse gas emissions due to construction-related activities; and 6) consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Although not significant, the impacts are adverse. 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 if needed); 2) Building Code (construction measures in general); 3) Grading code (Best Management Practices); and 4) Noise Ordinance. 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. 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, increased greenhouse gas emissions) are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation.

### Greenhouse Gas

Construction activities including construction worker commutes, 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 greenhouse 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 due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project.

### 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 applicant has submitted a statement of Federal Communication Commission Compliance for Personal Wireless Service Facility and an accompanying RF (radio frequency) Emissions Compliance Report for this proposed facility giving the calculations of radiofrequency power density 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. Furthermore, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has pre-empted state and local governments from regulating personal wireless service facilities of this size 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).

### Height, Bulk and Scale

The single proposed omni-antenna is extremely slender at 3.2 inches or less in diameter. The visible impact of the additional antenna is expected to be so minor as to be barely perceptible to neighboring properties or passersby. As such, there will be virtually no perceptible change to the bulk and scale of the existing tower. No mitigation is warranted.

### Greenhouse Gas

Ongoing operation of the expanded minor communication utility may result in a slight increase in electrical energy consumption which may be generated, in part, by processes which directly or indirectly result in increased greenhouse gas emissions somewhere. While these emissions appear to be adverse, they are extremely minimal to the point of being de minimis. No mitigation is warranted.

### Noise

The proposal includes an equipment shelter which is expected to emit some low-level noise when it is in operation. Since the project proposes to attenuate the sound by locating the equipment inside the structure and no sensitive receptors are nearby, no mitigation for noise impacts is warranted.

**DECISION - SEPA**

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 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 to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.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).

**CONDITIONS - SEPA**

None.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file) Date: April 11, 2013

Jerry Suder, Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

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