



**City of Seattle**  
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

---

**Department of Planning and Development**  
D. M. Sugimura, Director

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

**Application Number:** 3020296  
**Applicant Name:** Elizabeth Goodnow –Verizon  
**Address of Proposal:** 1596 P Queen Anne Avenue N

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to locate a minor communication utility (Verizon) on an existing Seattle City Light utility pole #1404292 within the right-of-way. The project includes attaching two antennas to the existing pole. Final decision on placement of antennas will be made by Seattle City Light.

The following Master Use Permit components are required:

**Administrative Conditional Use – Class II Attachment Siting, Review and Recommendation to Superintendent of Seattle City Light – SMC 15.32.300C4b**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Site and Vicinity Description

The proposal site is a Seattle City Light utility pole located on the southeast corner of Queen Anne Avenue N right-of-way and Garfield Street intersection between the curb and sidewalk. Both Queen Anne Avenue N and Garfield Street is improved street with curbs, sidewalks and gutters.

The zone is Neighborhood Commercial Pedestrian with 40 height limit (NC2P/40'). The height of existing wood pole to be replaced is 32.85'. The proposed height of the replacement wood utility pole is 45', exceeding zone height. Surrounding properties and blocks are also zoned SF 5000. Development in the area consists of a variety of one and two-story single-family houses of varying age and architectural style on a variety of lot sizes, consistent with the zoning designation.

Proposal Description

Verizon Wireless proposes to install a minor communication utility facility consisting of 2 small cells approximately 24.1" x16" in size at 44' height and flush-mounted. The facility will be painted to match the color of the replacement pole. The associated equipment enclosure will be

located on the pole. All equipment will be mounted to the new replacement Seattle City Light utility poles and streetlights located in the public right of way.

### Public Comments

One comment letter was received during the comment period which ended May 13, 2015.

### **ANALYSIS - SITING RECOMMENDATION TO SUPERINTENDENT OF SEATTLE CITY LIGHT**

The Street and Sidewalk Use Chapter of the Seattle Municipal Code allows Class II Special Attachments (minor communication utilities) to be placed on utility poles owned by Seattle City Light that are located on public rights of way. Class II Special Attachments are specifically regulated by SMC Section 15.32.300. This Section allows for minor communication utilities, or other Class II Special Attachments, to extend above the electrical facilities (wires) on top of an existing pole, or the replacement of an existing pole to achieve adequate height for the applicant's purposes. Section 15.32.300 further requires that all costs of such replacements be borne by the communications provider, and that the visual impacts of minor communication utilities and other Class II Special Attachments shall be reduced to a degree acceptable to the Superintendent of City Light.

Where a request for Class II attachment is made, and the proposed location is on an arterial street located within a Single Family Zone, the applicant shall apply to DPD and pay for an attachment siting review and recommendation consistent with the application, fee, notice, timeline and criteria for an Administrative Conditional Use (ACU) permit. The DPD recommendation shall be advisory to the Superintendent of City Light. The specific ACU criteria can be found in SMC Section 23.57.010, subsection C2. The criteria, which must be satisfied in order for the proposal to receive a positive recommendation from DPD, are as follows:

- a. *The proposal shall not be significantly detrimental to the residential character of the surrounding residentially zoned area, 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.*

As previously mentioned in the proposal description section, the entire proposal also includes a replacement wood utility pole to be located in the Queen Anne Avenue N right-of-way in this Neighborhood Commercial-2 Pedestrian 40' (NC2P-40') height limit zone. The height of the replacement utility pole will be 45'; the antennas are flushed mounted at 44' height. The antennas would be painted to match the color of the proposed wood pole. All conduits (cables) network will consist of cellular antennas and radios connected via fiber optic cable and are mounted to the new replacement Seattle City Light utility poles and streetlights located in the public right of way.

The new replacement pole would not be detrimental to the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood because it is proposed on the same location of the existing in a Neighborhood Commercial-2P zone with 40' height limit. Also the proposed 45' replacement wood utility pole and the antennas would not be detrimental to the visual character of the surrounding neighborhood commercial -2P/40' zone.

1. Although the proposed replacement wood utility pole with the antenna 45' than the existing 32.85' utility pole.

2. The proposed utility pole design has both a shape and overall bulk that is not larger than that of a typical round wood utility pole.
3. The proposed antennas and the antenna shroud are atypical of other equipment, including transformers, located in single family zoned public rights-of-way. Specifically, the size and location of the shielded antennas would make them highly visible. This is largely due to the fact that the proposed antenna would be located above the existing utility lines 3 ft.6 inches taller than the existing utility pole. However, no portions of the antenna shield are proposed to project beyond the shape of the pole.

As proposed, the minor communications utility will not constitute a visual intrusion that conflicts with the existing commercial character of the surrounding neighborhood because the antenna flushed mounted on top of the new utility pole. The accessory cabinet looks like a typical city light transformer. Painting the antennas exterior to conceal the conduits is adequate to minimize the visual impacts for this proposal. Therefore, the proposed minor communication utility would not be visually obtrusive and would, therefore, will not be detrimental to the residential streetscape and character of this neighborhood.

In addition, the applicant has provided a strong case that the proposed design and this particular location is the least intrusive location consistent with effectively providing service, whether in the public right of way or on private property. The applicant states that Verizon RF engineers have determined a need for additional coverage in this area. A “before” plot coverage map submitted by the applicant, indicates that the existing coverage at this location and the surrounding area is poor. They have prepared a preliminary design analysis that takes into account a series of variables such as terrain data, antenna height, population density, available radio frequencies and wireless equipment characteristics. The engineers have noted the need for the utility to be at the proposed height if sited in this location. Although, the entire search ring appears to be zoned single family and the carrier feels that locating antennas atop of a Seattle City utility pole is a better alternative than constructing a new monopole.

Based on the Geocortex research conducted by the Land Use Planner, there were no commercial structures nearby on Queen Anne Avenue N or W Garfield Street blocks of the chosen site. That would have been recommended as an alternative site.

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

The only provision contained with SMC Section 23.57.016 that applies to the proposal is subsection J. However, even that subsection applies to freestanding transmission towers. Technically, utility poles are not freestanding transmission towers. However, the similarities of the two warrant consideration of subsection J, which reads as follows:

*Freestanding transmission towers shall minimize external projections from the support structure to reduce visual impacts and to the extent feasible shall integrate antennas in a screening structure with the same dimensions as external dimensions of the support structure, or shall mount antennas with as little projection from the structure as feasible. External conduits, climbing structures, fittings, and other projections from the external face of the support structure shall be minimized to the extent feasible.*

The applicant has attempted to demonstrate compliance with Section 23.57.016 by proposing the installation of a wood pole. The wood pole is designed to conceal electrical cable conduits to run

through it. The applicant has also proposed to paint the antennas to match the color of utility pole. This design does integrate the antenna with the pole; therefore the proposed design accomplishes this to the fullest extent feasible.

- c. *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:*
- i. *the antenna is at least one hundred feet (100') from a MIO boundary; and*
  - ii. *the antenna is substantially screened from the surrounding neighborhood's view.*

The proposed site is not located within a Major Institution Overlay; therefore, this provision is not applicable.

- d. *If the minor communication utility is proposed to exceed the permitted height of the zone, the applicant shall demonstrate the following: (i) The requested height is the minimum necessary for the effective functioning of the minor communication utility, and (ii) Construction of a network of minor communication utilities that consists of a greater number of smaller less obtrusive utilities is not technically feasible.*

The proposed antennas will be on replacement wood utility pole that is proposed height of 45' exceeding the 40' height limit of the NC-2P/40'. The height of the existing SCL pole is 32.85'.

According to the applicant, the specific location (or position) of the proposed site has been selected to maximize capacity and coverage/penetration while minimizing the antenna height requirement. Significant deviation from this location will result in reduced effectiveness and possible invalidation of the proposed site altogether. In regards to the antenna height, the specified centerline is the minimum acceptable to provide the needed coverage with respect to that from neighboring cell sites. Lowering the antenna height would result in reduced effectiveness. In the applicant's opinion, strict application of the standards would preclude the applicant from providing wireless services for the intended coverage area.

Due to SCL clearance and separation requirements, it does appear that the applicant is attempting to request a height that is the minimum necessary for the effective functioning of the minor utility for this particular location. But, the applicant does not provide evidence as to why a greater number of smaller less obtrusive facilities on commercial properties in and near the designated search ring and nearby neighborhood commercial and lowrise zones are not technically feasible meet Verizon service objectives.

- e. *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.*

Although, the proposed SCL utility pole with antennas is not by definition a new freestanding transmission tower, the applicant has demonstrated that it is not technically feasible for the proposed facility to be sited on another utility pole since the location is a commercial zoned

corridor along Queen Anne Avenue N in a manner that meets the applicable development standards.

**SITING RECOMMENDATION TO SUPERINTENDENT OF SEATTLE CITY LIGHT**

Based on the above analysis the Director of the Department of Development and Planning recommends to the Superintendent of Seattle City Light to **approve** the application to install a minor communication utility on Seattle City Light pole in the public right-of-way in a residential zone.

Condition

For the Life of the Permit

Paint to match the color of the pole.

Signature: retagonzales-cunneutabby for \_\_\_\_\_ Date: June 29, 2015  
Onum Esonu, Supervising Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

OAE:rgc  
K:\Decisions-Signed\3020296.docx

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ISSUANCE OF YOUR MASTER USE PERMIT**

Master Use Permit Expiration and Issuance

The appealable land use decision on your Master Use Permit (MUP) application has now been published. At the conclusion of the appeal period, your permit will be considered “approved for issuance”. (If your decision is appealed, your permit will be considered “approved for issuance” on the fourth day following the City Hearing Examiner’s decision.) Projects requiring a Council land use action shall be considered “approved for issuance” following the Council’s decision.

The “approved for issuance” date marks the beginning of the **three year life** of the MUP approval, whether or not there are outstanding corrections to be made or pre-issuance conditions to be met. The permit must be issued by DPD within that three years or it will expire and be cancelled (SMC 23-76-028). (Projects with a shoreline component have a **two year life**. Additional information regarding the effective date of shoreline permits may be found at 23.60.074.)

All outstanding corrections must be made, any pre-issuance conditions met and all outstanding fees paid before the permit is issued. You will be notified when your permit has issued.

Questions regarding the issuance and expiration of your permit may be addressed to the Public Resource Center at [prc@seattle.gov](mailto:prc@seattle.gov) or to our message line at 206-684-8467.