



City of Seattle  
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Department of Construction and Inspections  
Nathan Torgelson, Director

## **RECOMMENDATION REGARDING INSTALLATION OF COMMUNICATION UTILITIES ON SEATTLE CITY LIGHT UTILITY POLES**

**Applicant Number:** 3023912  
**Applicant Name:** Carly Nations for Verizon  
**Address of Proposal:** 821 P South Dearborn Street

### **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Application to locate a minor communication utility (Verizon) on a Seattle City Light utility pole #1308481 in the right-of-way. The project includes attaching one antenna and one equipment enclosure to the pole. Final decision on placement of antennas will be made by Seattle City Light.

The following is required:

**Class II Attachment Siting, Review and Recommendation to General Manager of Seattle City Light – SMC 15.32.300C4b**

### **BACKGROUND DATA**

#### Site and Vicinity Description

The proposal site is a Seattle City Light utility pole. The utility pole is located on south side of South Dearborn Street right-of-way situated between the curb and sidewalk. South Dearborn Street is an improved street with curbs, sidewalks and gutters.

The area is zoned International District Mixed (IDM) with 150/85-150' height limit and Airport Overlay District. Surrounding properties and blocks are also zoned Industrial commercial with 85-160' height limit. Development in the area consists of a variety of one and two-story commercial buildings of varying age and architectural style on a variety of lot sizes, consistent with the zoning designation.

#### Proposal Description

Verizon Wireless proposes to replace an existing Seattle City Light pole and to install a minor communication utility facility consisting of one small panel antenna on top. The associated conduits connected to a small cell enclosure will be attached to the new utility pole. The proposed new 38.6' utility pole will replace the existing 33' high pole in the same location in South Dearborn Street right of way per SCL specifications.

The associated equipment enclosure and a power meter are attached to the replacement pole. The conduits will be used for housing cables and electrical lines running from the antennas to the

equipment and from the power meter to the equipment enclosure per plan. All antennas would be painted to match the new Seattle City Light utility pole.

Public Comments

No public comment letter was received during the comment period which ended on April 27, 2016.

**ANALYSIS - SITING RECOMMENDATION TO GENERAL MANAGER 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.

Whereas request for Class II attachment is made, and the proposed location is on an arterial street located within an International Review District (IDM) with 150/85-150' height limit and Airport Overlay District. However, the proposed 38.6' high pole is lower than the limit of the zone. The applicant shall apply to Seattle DCI 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 Seattle DCI recommendation shall be advisory to the General Manager of City Light.

The specific ACU criteria for this site and application can be found in SMC Section 23.57.014, subsection B. The criteria, which must be satisfied in order for the proposal to receive a positive recommendation from Seattle DCI, are as follows:

*B. Approval shall be pursuant to the following criteria, as applicable:*

- 1. Location on rooftops is preferred, set back toward the center of the roof as far as possible. If a rooftop location is not feasible, communication utilities and accessory communication devices may be mounted on secondary building facades. Siting on primary building facades may be permitted only if the applicant shows it is impossible to site the devices on the roof or secondary facade. Determination of primary and secondary building facades will be made by the appropriate board or commission.*

The proposed location of the minor communication utility is not on the roof or façade of an existing building. However, the proposed minor communication utility is flushed on top of a new Seattle Light utility pole. The height of the existing pole to be replaced is 33' and the new is 38.6' high utility pole in the same location. There are other utility poles along the streets in this area. The base of the pole would not be significantly larger than the existing pole, as shown on the photo simulations submitted by the applicant. The material of the replacement utility pole would be similar in appearance to the existing wood utility poles along this street right of way. The antenna would be mounted at 38.6' in an enclosure above sidewalk level. The replacement pole and proposed antennas would not impact the pedestrian ability to walk by the pole at street

level, and would not significantly impact the pedestrian character. The antenna would be painted to match the new Seattle City Light utility pole.

Furthermore, the International Special Review District has reviewed the proposed and issued a certificate of Approval on April 26, 2016. The proposed development would not result in a significant change to the character of international district environment or retail character of the commercial area.

2. *Communication utilities and accessory communication devices shall be installed in a manner that does not hide, damage or obscure architectural elements of the building or structure.*

*Per plan the antennas will not be mounted on an existing rooftop. Verizon proposes to install 1 panel antenna and 1 small cell enclosure on a 38'-6" SCL replacement wood utility pole. The proposed facility is compliance with the standards in 23.57.016, and set forth in 23.57.014. Furthermore, the proposed facility which includes antenna, enclosure, and conduits will be painted to match the utility pole. This will ensure that the facility blends with the surroundings and does not impact the character of any building or the community.*

The applicant has provided coverage maps indicating that the proposed minor communication utility would provide coverage where there is currently a lack of in-building coverage. The applicant has also provided a letter from an RF Engineer that states the proposed height at 38.6' is the minimum necessary for the effective functioning of the minor communication utility.

3. *Visibility shall be further minimized by planting, screening, or other appropriate means, whichever is less obtrusive. Creation of false architectural features to obscure the device is discouraged.*

The applicant has designed the size, shape and materials of the proposed utility to minimize negative visual impacts on adjacent or nearby residential areas. The antennas will be painted to match the color of the utility pole. As proposed, the visual impacts related to the minor communications utility have been mitigated to the greatest extent practicable.

The minor communications utility will not constitute a visual intrusion that conflicts with the existing international/historic, pedestrian and commercial character of the surrounding of this international district zone. Therefore, the proposed minor communication utility would not be visually obtrusive and would, therefore, not be detrimental to the historic, commercial 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 International Special Review District, Commercial, and residential zones, the carrier feels that locating antenna atop of a Seattle City utility pole is a better alternative than constructing a new monopole.

According to the applicant, the specific location 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 residential zones are not technically feasible meet Verizon Wireless service objectives.

Painting the antennas exterior brown and accessories is adequate to minimize the visual impacts for this proposal.

### **SITING RECOMMENDATION TO GENERAL MANAGER OF SEATTLE CITY LIGHT**

Based on the above analysis the Director of the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections recommends to the General Manager of Seattle City Light to **Approve** the application to install a minor communication utility on a new Seattle City Light pole in the public right-of-way in a neighborhood commercial zone.

#### **Condition**

##### **For the Life of the Permit**

Paint to match the color of the pole.

Onum Esonu, Land Use Planner,  
Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections

Date: June 2, 2016

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### **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 Seattle DCI 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.