

DRAFT

**Petition No. 1629
Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless
Small Wireless Facility
330 Roberts Street
East Hartford, Connecticut**

**Staff Report
June 14, 2024**

Notice

On April 18, 2024, the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) received a petition from Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless (Cellco) for a declaratory ruling, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) §4-176 and §16-50k, for the proposed installation of a small wireless telecommunications facility to be located at 330 Roberts Street, East Hartford, Connecticut (Petition or Project).

The small wireless facility would be installed on pipe masts attached to the existing screen wall on the roof of a four story office building owned by SMK Roberts Street LLC. It would replace Cellco's existing wireless facility on the roof of the former Ramada Inn hotel building located approximately 512 feet to the south at 363 Roberts Street.

Pursuant to Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA) §16-50j-40, on or about April 17, 2024, Cellco provided notice to abutting property owners and the Town of East Hartford (Town). Cellco received questions from the Town regarding the proposed facility and Council jurisdiction.

On April 19, 2024, the Council sent correspondence to the Town stating that the Council has received the Petition and invited the Town to contact the Council with any questions or comments by May 18, 2024. No comments were received.

The Council issued interrogatories to Cellco on May 20, 2024. Cellco provided responses to the Council's interrogatories on June 3, 2024.

Pursuant to CGS §4-176(e) of the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act, an administrative agency is required to take an action on a petition for a declaratory ruling within 60 days of receipt. During a regular meeting held on June 6, 2024, pursuant to CGS §4-176(e), the Council voted to set the date by which to render a decision on the Petition as no later than July 17, 2024, which is within the 180-day statutory deadline for a final decision under CGS §4-176(i) and is the 90-day decision deadline for a small wireless facility on a new structure under Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations.

Jurisdiction

Pursuant to CGS §16-50i(a)(6), the Council has exclusive jurisdiction over telecommunications towers, including associated equipment, owned or operated by the state, a public service company or a certified telecommunications provider or used in a cellular system.

Under RCSA §16-50j-2a (30), "Tower" means a structure, whether free standing or attached to a building or another structure, that has a height greater than its diameter and that is high relative to its surroundings, or that is used to support antennas for sending or receiving radio frequency signals, or for sending or receiving signals to or from satellites, or any of these, which is or is to be:

- a) **used principally to support one or more antennas** for receiving or sending radio frequency signals, or for sending or receiving signals to or from satellites, or any of these, and
- b) owned or operated by the state, a public service company as defined in Section 16-1 of the Connecticut General Statutes, or a **certified telecommunications provider**, or used in a cellular system, as defined in Section 16-50i(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes. (Emphasis added).

The proposed wireless facility would include the installation of nine antennas on the roof of the four story office building. They would be owned and operated by Cellco, a certified telecommunications provider. Thus, the Council has jurisdiction over the proposed small wireless facility.

The FCC specifically defined “small wireless facility” in its 2018 Report and Order as facilities that meet any of the following conditions:

1. Mounted on structures 50 feet or less in height including their antennas; or
2. Mounted on structures no more than 10 percent taller than other adjacent structures; or
3. Do not extend existing structures on which they are located to a height of more than 50 feet or by more than 10 percent, whichever is greater.

The proposed antennas mounted on pipe masts would not extend the existing structure on which they are located more than 10 percent. The Project is a “small wireless facility” under the FCC definition.

Existing Rooftop Non-Tower Antenna Array

Cellco currently maintains a non-tower antenna array (NTAA) on the roof of the Ramada Inn Hotel located at 363 Roberts Street that was approved by the Town on February 11, 2015. Cellco’s antennas are located at 53 feet above ground level (agl). The existing facility consists of nine antennas attached to the façade of an equipment screen wall on the roof of the building. Associated equipment is located on the ground adjacent to the building.

The NTAA provides 700/850/1900/2100/3700 MHz service to portions of Interstate 84 (I-84) and the surrounding area. The NTAA would remain in service until the proposed facility is operational and would then be decommissioned.

Project Development

The proposed replacement facility would maintain Cellco’s existing coverage providing service to portions of I-84 and the surrounding commercial and residential areas. The proposed facility would provide wireless service in Cellco’s 700/850/1900/2100/3600/3700 MHz frequency ranges and be capable of providing 5G services.

The estimated cost of the Project is \$350,000. The decommissioning of the Ramada Inn facility would cost an additional \$50,000.

Neither the Project, nor any portion thereof, is proposed to be undertaken by state departments, institutions or agencies, or funded in whole or in part, by the state through any contract or grant. Cellco is a private entity.

Proposed Small Wireless Facility

The four story office building is located on a 1.44 acre parcel owned by SMK Roberts Street LLC. The host parcel is zoned Business (B-1) and abuts other similarly zoned parcels to the north, west and east and south, transmission lines to north, Hillside Street to the east and Roberts Street to the south. Further south is I-84 and residential properties. An existing vent stack which would be rerouted around Cellco’s proposed

equipment platform and would extend to a height of 63.1 feet agl. The nearest property boundary is 45 feet to the northwest and the nearest residential structure is located approximately 1,130 feet to the southeast at 40-200 Nutmeg Lane.

The top of the office building is approximately 50.9 feet agl and currently supports three T-Mobile antennas and associated equipment within a screened equipment area.

Cellco proposes to install nine 700/850/1900/2100/3600/3700 MHz panel antennas and nine remote radio units mounted on pipe masts and attached to the existing 10 foot tall screen wall on the roof of the office building. Six antennas would be installed at a centerline height of 66.9 feet agl and three antennas would be installed at a centerline height of 65.1 feet agl. Cellco's antennas would extend at least 7 feet above the screen wall to a height of 68.1 feet agl. Cellco would also install a 14 foot by 24 foot steel frame equipment platform to the north of the existing screened enclosure to support two equipment cabinets and other associated equipment.

Electric and telephone service would be routed within conduits extending from Cellco's proposed utility riser to the southwestern corner of the building and down the exterior wall of the building to existing fiber and telco connections located in the basement of the building.

Cellco would install a battery cabinet on its equipment platform that could provide up to eight hours of backup power to the proposed facility in the event of a power outage.

Commercial Mobile Radio Service (CMRS) providers are licensed by and are under the jurisdiction and authority of the FCC. At present, no standards for backup power for CMRS providers have been promulgated by the FCC.

Normal work hours would be Monday through Saturday from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Installation of the facility would take approximately 16 weeks.

Public Health and Safety

The Project would be constructed in accordance with the current Connecticut State Building Code, Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) 222-H Structural Standards for Steel Antenna Towers and Antenna Supporting Structures using a maximum wind speed of 150 miles per hour, the National Electrical Code, the Connecticut State Fire Safety Code, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

Cellco's proposed equipment installation would be capable of supporting text-to-911 service, comply with federal E911 requirements and the Warning, Alert and Response Network Act of 2006.

The installation would not be a hazard to air navigation and no registration to the Federal Aviation Administration is required.

A Professional Engineer duly licensed in the State of Connecticut has certified that the building rooftop and proposed antenna mount are structurally adequate to support the proposed loading.

The location of the proposed small wireless facility is on the roof of the office building and is not accessible to the public. The door leading to the roof of the building would be always locked and access would be limited to the wireless carriers and building maintenance personnel. Cellco's equipment would also be alarmed.

The calculated cumulative worst-case power density of Cellco's installation would be 19.5% of the applicable exposure limit established by the FCC at ground level using a far field approximation.

Environmental Effects and Mitigation Measures

No tree removal or grading is proposed. No ground disturbance is proposed. Project construction will occur on the roof of the building and basement of the building.

The visual impact of the proposed small cell wireless facility would be limited primarily to locations where the existing structure can be seen. The seven-foot extension above the existing screen wall is not expected to substantially increase the structure's visibility. Cellco's equipment platform is not screened and would be visible from immediate areas north of the building. Year round and seasonal visibility would occur over approximately 113 acres of a 503-acre study area.

Conclusion

If approved, staff recommends the following conditions:

1. Approval of any project changes be delegated to Council staff;
2. RF access restriction and caution signage shall be installed at the site in compliance with FCC guidance; and
3. Deployment of any 5G services must comply with FCC and FAA guidance relative to air navigation, as applicable.

Site Location



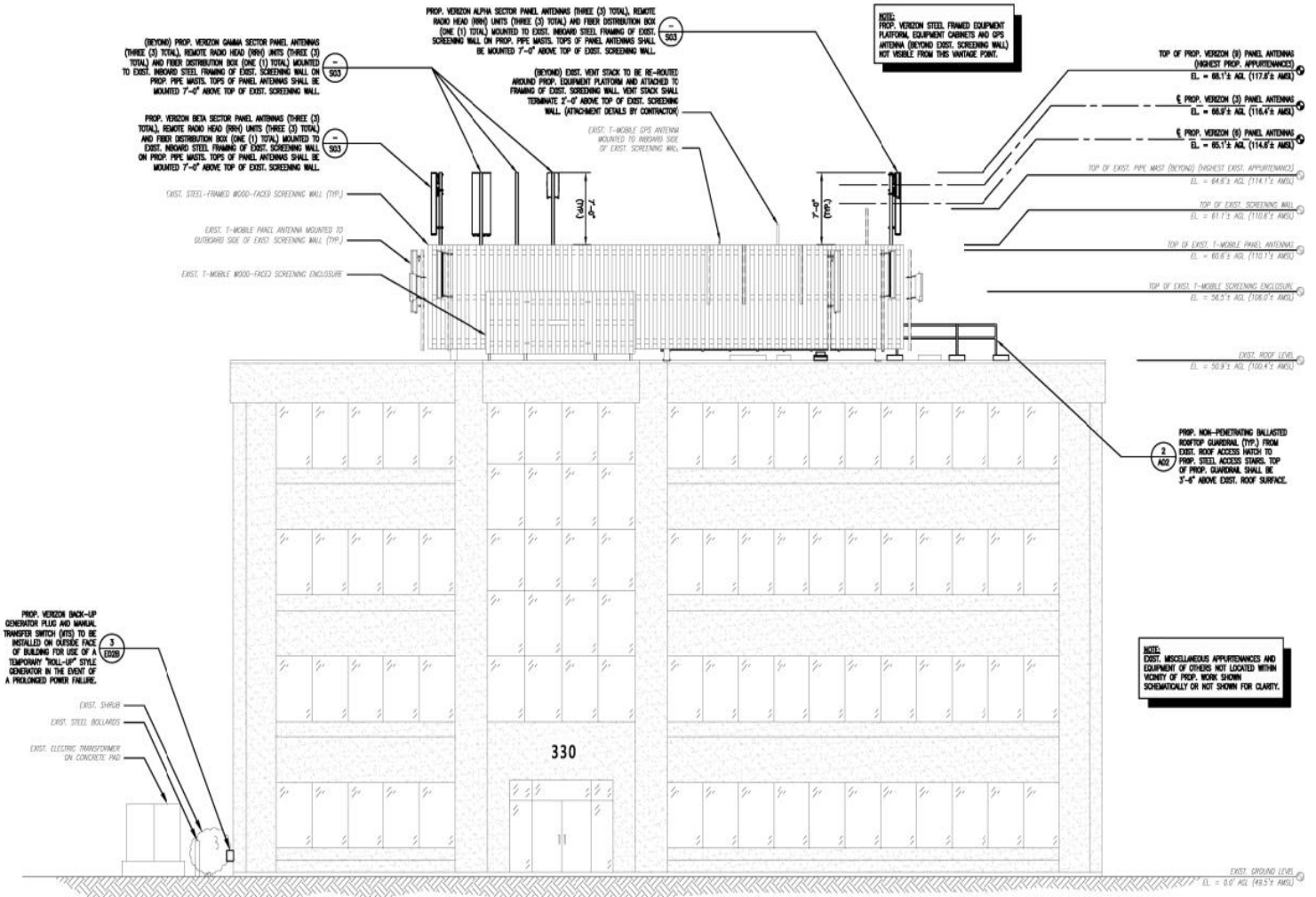
Proposed Small Wireless Facility Site Plan



- Legend**
- Proposed Verizon Wireless Equipment
 - Proposed Verizon Wireless Lease Area
 - Existing Screening Wall (By Others)
 - Existing Electrical Closets Below (By Others)
 - Proposed Verizon Wireless Conduit
 - Approximate Water Main (By Others)
 - Subject Property
 - Approximate Parcel Boundary

Site Schematic
 Proposed Wireless
 Telecommunications Facility
 East Hartford 8 CT RELO
 330 Roberts Street
 East Hartford, Connecticut

Facility Elevation Site Plan



SOUTHEAST (FRONT) BUILDING ELEVATION (ALONG ROBERTS STREET) 1
SCALE: 3/16" = 1'-0"
0 5'-0" 10'-0" 15'-0"

LEGEND	
AGL	ABOVE GROUND LEVEL
BGL	BELOW GROUND LEVEL
MGL	ABOVE MEAN SEA LEVEL