

DOCKET NO. 113 - An application of  
Metro Mobile CTS of Fairfield  
County, Inc., for a Certificate of  
Environmental Compatibility and Public  
Need for cellular telephone antennas  
and associated equipment in the Town  
of Ridgefield, Connecticut.

:Connecticut  
: Siting  
: Council  
:September 8, 1989

#### OPINION

On April 26, 1989, Metro Mobile CTS of Fairfield County, Inc., (Metro Mobile) applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) to construct, operate, and maintain a cellular telephone tower site within the Town of Ridgefield, Connecticut.

The public need for cellular telephone facilities has been pre-empted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The Council must therefore balance the need to develop the proposed site as a cellular telephone facility with the need to protect the environment and minimize damage to the State's scenic, historic, and recreational values.

In finding a proposed tower site, an applicant must find a site offering the desired coverage; adequately distant from homes, wetlands, and public recreation areas; and available for lease or sale by a property owner. These requirements narrow the field of potential tower sites considerably.

The Council is of the opinion that there are no feasible or prudent alternatives to the proposed site, that this site is necessary to provide coverage to the Ridgefield area, and that it will help meet the FCC mandate to provide adequate cellular telephone service within the Bridgeport NECMA.

The site is presently used and accepted as an existing radio tower site by the Town of Ridgefield Police Department. The Council does not believe that the increase of height from the existing 80-foot tower to that of the proposed 130-foot tower will have a substantial effect on the environment or on

adjacent land uses. To deny the upgrading of the existing tower might result in the construction of a new facility elsewhere which might have greater impacts on the environment and adjacent land uses. The Council encourages tower sharing whenever possible, and notes that the Town of Ridgefield would use the tower for communications by Town fire, police, and emergency services. No equipment building would be required, as Metro Mobile would lease space for its electronic equipment in the basement of the Ridgefield Police Department building, which is immediately adjacent to the proposed tower site. The existing tower at the site would be dismantled and removed.

Except for the Ridgefield Police Department building, there would be no buildings within the fall zone of the new tower. Utilities would be brought into the site from the Police Department building. Access would be via existing driveways. No trees would be removed during the construction of the tower.

While the Council acknowledges that tower visibility is an issue of significant concern to those living in the vicinity of a proposed cellular tower, the closest home is 200 feet from the proposed site. The visibility of the tower would be mitigated by the existing police building and trees which would remain in place. Only the upper portions of the tower would be generally visible in the vicinity as a result.

Electromagnetic radio frequency power densities are a concern to residents living in the vicinity of any broadcast facility. In this case, however, the power density levels at the base of the tower would be well below the American National Standards Institute safety standards for the proposed frequencies.

There are no existing records of federally endangered or threatened species or Connecticut species of special concern occurring in the area of the proposed site. Construction of this tower would not have a significant effect on historic or archaeological resources listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

In rendering this decision, the Council considered the site, surrounding land uses, and the information provided by Town officials and local residents.

Based on its record in this proceeding, the Council finds that the effects associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of a cellular tower at the proposed site, including effects on the natural environment; ecological integrity and balance; public health and safety; scenic, historic, and recreational values; forests and parks; air and water purity; and fish and wildlife, are not significant either alone or cumulatively with other effects, are not in conflict with the policies of the State concerning such effects, and are not sufficient reason to deny the application.

Therefore, the Council will issue a Certificate for the construction of the proposed Ridgefield tower site.