

DOCKET NO. 120 - An Application of Metro Mobile CTS of Fairfield County, Inc., for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the Construction, Operation, and Maintenance of Cellular Telephone Antennas and Associated Equipment Located in the Town of Greenwich, Connecticut.

Connecticut
Siting
Council

February 26, 1990

OPINION

On September 25, 1989, Metro Mobile CTS of Fairfield County, Inc., applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) to construct, operate, and maintain a facility, consisting of antennas and associated equipment to provide cellular telephone service from an existing building in the Town of Greenwich, Connecticut.

The public need for cellular telephone facilities has been determined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which pre-empts a determination of public need by state regulatory agencies. Under Connecticut law, the Council must balance the need to develop the proposed site as a cellular telephone facility with the need to protect the environment, including public health and safety.

In locating a proposed facility site, an applicant must determine if a new site or an existing tower to share is capable of providing the necessary coverage, would not have a substantial effect on the environment, and would be adequately distant from wetlands, public recreation areas, and adjacent homes. Because Metro Mobile does not have the legal authority to obtain land through eminent domain, acquisition of a site requires consent of the property owners to lease or sell the property. These requirements restrict the number of potential facility sites within a defined search area.

The proposed site would operate as a secondary cellular facility located between two existing primary cellular facilities in Greenwich and Stamford, Connecticut. The future cellular service demand is expected to exceed the call-handling capabilities of these two facilities in 1990. The proposed Greenwich (East) facility would provide additional, simultaneous call handling capacity overlapping these existing cells by the continuous transfer of calls through the Greenwich and Stamford area, thereby improving signals, decreasing interference, and reducing dropped calls resulting from inadequate coverage.

The proposed equipment would be located in a room in an existing building at 1111 East Putnam Avenue, Greenwich. Six directional, 20-inch by 11-inch panel-type antennas and two omnidirectional, six and one-half feet tall by two inches in diameter, whip-type antennas would be attached to a steel facade surrounding the air-conditioning units on the roof of the building. The facade is recessed 13 feet from the outer edge of the roof. Access to the building would be over an existing driveway and parking lot.

The proposed antennas would be visible from some surrounding areas from which the air-conditioning units are now visible, particularly along portions of U.S. Route 1. Visibility would be minimal and further reduced by painting the antennas to match the color of the facade.

Electromagnetic radio frequency power density is a health and safety concern of the Council. However, the power density level from the proposed antennas measured at street level, a distance of 41 feet from the antenna, was calculated at 0.752 milliwatts per square centimeter (mW/cm^2), well below the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) safety standard of $2.92 \text{ mW}/\text{cm}^2$, as adopted by the State in Connecticut General Statute 22a-162. The power density would rapidly decrease as distance from the tower increased. The nearest residence is about 180 feet from the proposed antennas. The power density at that distance would be $0.039 \text{ mW}/\text{cm}^2$. Due to the mitigating effects of the building's structural composition, the power density level for occupants on the top floor of the building would be $0.002 \text{ mW}/\text{cm}^2$.

Metro Mobile considered five sites for the proposed facility, rejecting four for various reasons, including the need for a new tower, residential development and visibility, and unavailability of State of Connecticut property. Metro Mobile consulted with Town of Greenwich officials regarding potential facility sites. No alternate sites were proposed by these Town officials.

No wetlands or water courses exist at the proposed site.

The proposed site would have no significant impact on rare or endangered species or areas of unique historical significance.

The Council has identified no adverse visual, health, or environmental impacts that would result from the installation and operation of the antennas and the facility. The Council finds that the installation of the facility in and upon an existing building would have much less environmental and visual impact than the construction of a new tower at any other location. Based on its record in this proceeding, the Council opines that the effects associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of a cellular site and associated

equipment building at the proposed site, including the 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 this application. The Council will require Metro Mobile to submit a Development and Management (D&M) Plan for approval prior to the commencement of any construction at the proposed site. This D&M plan shall include detailed plans of the antenna installation on the rooftop facade.

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