

DOCKET NO. 129 - AN APPLICATION OF METRO MOBILE CTS OF HARTFORD, INC., FOR A CERTIFICATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC NEED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE OF A CELLULAR TELEPHONE TOWER AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT IN THE TOWN OF MANCHESTER, CONNECTICUT. : Connecticut Siting Council March 12, 1990

O P I N I O N

On September 29, 1989, Metro Mobile CTS of Hartford, Inc., (Metro Mobile) applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) to construct, maintain, and operate a cellular telecommunications tower, associated equipment, and building in the Town of Manchester, Connecticut.

A determination of public need for cellular telephone service has been pre-empted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Under Connecticut State 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 finding a proposed tower site, an applicant must locate a site or existing tower to share, offering the necessary coverage that would not have a substantial effect on the environment and be adequately distant from wetlands, public recreation areas, and adjacent homes. Because Metro Mobile does not have the authority to take 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 tower sites within defined search areas.

The proposed or alternate site would function as a secondary cellular facility, located near the intersection of three existing, primary cellular facilities in Hartford, Glastonbury, and Vernon, Connecticut. Cellular service demand is exceeding the call-handling capacity of Sector three in Hartford and is soon expected to exceed the call-handling capacity of the facilities in Glastonbury and Vernon. The proposed Manchester site would provide additional overlapping coverage between these three cells for the continuous transfer of calls in the Hartford-Glastonbury-Vernon region, in which there are presently weak signals and interference. The proposed and alternate sites would provide similar coverage and call-handling capability throughout the area.

The proposed site would be leased and developed in the rear of a privately owned 1.35 acre lot located at 266 Center Street. The proposed 128-foot, self-supporting monopole tower and antenna structure would be located approximately 12 feet west of Kenneth C. Burkamp's property and 140 feet east of the nearest residential building. The fall zone of the tower could encompass a metal storage shed on Kenneth C. Burkamp's property east of the site; a one-story brick manufacturing building on the lessor's property; and a portion of the adjacent property that the nearest residential building is located on, west of the site. Metro Mobile would raze an abandoned wood-frame building and construct a single story equipment building, measuring 20 feet by 40 feet, on the site. Vehicle access to the proposed site would be over an existing driveway on land of Kenneth C. Burkamp and land of the lessor permitted by a non-exclusive right of passage granted by Kenneth C. Burkamp to the lessor. Utilities from Center Street would be available to the facility. Minimal site leveling or backfilling would be required at the site.

The alternate site would be leased and located on the northern boundary of a 1.1 acre lot at 218 Hartford Road. The 153-foot, self-supporting monopole tower and antenna structure would be located 46 feet south of Hartford Road and 120 feet north of land owned by Millbridge Hollow Condominiums. The fall zone of the alternate tower could encompass Hartford Road, land owned by the Millbridge Hollow Condominiums, and a two-story brick manufacturing building on the lessor's lot. A single story equipment building, measuring 20 feet by 40 feet, would be constructed on the site. Vehicle access to the cell site would be over an existing driveway and parking lot on land of the lessor. Utilities from existing utility poles along Hartford Road would be routed to the facility. Removal of an on-site dirt pile would be required.

Electromagnetic radio frequency power density is a health and safety concern of the Council. However, the power density level measured at the base of the proposed tower would be 0.1124 milliwatts per square centimeter ( $\text{mW}/\text{cm}^2$ ), and at the base of the alternate tower it would be  $0.0737 \text{ mW}/\text{cm}^2$ . These power densities are 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 Statutes Section 22a-162. The power density would rapidly decrease as distance from the tower increases.

No wetlands or watercourses exist at either site. No water flow and/or quality changes would be expected to result from the construction and operation of either the proposed or the alternate facilities.

There are no existing records of federally endangered or threatened species or Connecticut species of special concern occurring in the area of the proposed or alternate sites, according to the latest available information from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Natural Resources Center.

The proposed facility is located near a historical zone. However, this historical zone is also a highly urbanized area that consists of industrial and commercial uses. There is no reason to believe that the proposed tower would have any significant effect on the zone. Furthermore, the State Historical Commission has stated that there would be no significant effect on the State's historic and architectural resources at the proposed site.

Moreover the Council believes that the industrial and urban nature of the proposed site lends itself to a commercial use such as the proposed cellular telecommunications tower. Visually, the tower will be acceptable with the site and surrounding land uses. Furthermore, the height of the tower is not so great that it will be visually obtrusive in the immediate area to adjacent residential units, or for any significant distance to the community in general.

The intrusion of the fall zone on adjacent structures and property should be avoided whenever possible to maintain a reasonable setback from other land uses. Nonetheless, the close proximity of tall urban structures on small urban sites make this goal impractical if not impossible. Although the Council will require the tower to be shifted the greatest distance possible from adjacent properties and structures to enhance the site, there is insufficient reason to deny the proposed site due to the location of the tower in relation to the adjacent land uses, properties, and structures.

In comparison, the alternate site tower would be 25 feet taller and located within the historic zone. Consequently it is the opinion of the Council that the proposed site is superior, and the alternate site should be denied.

Based on its record in this proceeding, the Council is of the opinion that the effects associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of a cellular tower 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 the application for the proposed site.

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 site preparation with the final tower height in relation to the site elevation, and placement of the tower as great a distance as possible from abutting properties.

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