

AN APPLICATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC NEED FOR THE PROPOSED REVISION TO THE TELECOMMUNICATION TOWERS LOCATED AT CONNECTICUT TRANSIT PROPERTIES IN HARTFORD AND NEW HAVEN. : POWER FACILITY : EVALUATION COUNCIL : May 20, 1981

O P I N I O N

I. GENERAL

The Department of Transportation has filed an application for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the construction of telecommunication towers located at Connecticut Transit properties on Vernon Street in Hartford and James Street in New Haven. The new towers are to replace existing towers seventy feet high. The new towers will be between seventy and one hundred feet high, and each tower will support one microwave dish antenna and one UHF antenna.

Public hearings on the application were held on April 15, 1981 at 6:30 P.M. at the Hall of Records Hearing Room, 200 Orange Street, New Haven and at 8:00 P.M. in the Department of Public Utility Control Hearing Room, No. 565A, State Office Building, Hartford. Prior to the hearings, Council members and staff inspected the proposed sites. Notices of the hearings were advertised and notice was mailed in accordance with law.

The applicant presented testimony to support the application. The applicant contends that the proposed tower construction will not have a substantial adverse environmental effect.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL

The Council concludes that the proposed facilities will not have a substantial adverse environmental effect.

The New Haven site is zoned for heavy industry; it is bounded by I-91 on the west, a railroad on the east, and other industrial facilities. The proposed tower will be placed on the roof of the Connecticut Transit building near the location of the existing tower. The proposed replacement tower is not inconsistent with the existing use of the site or surrounding area.

The existing seventy foot tower is not a prominent feature in the area. Views of the facility are obscured by electric utility towers and poles, trees, buildings, and highway and railroad bridges. Even if the replacement tower must be 100 feet high the change in visual impact will be negligible, and the view will not be foreign to the area.

The Hartford site is surrounded by property zoned for multi-family residences and residential-office uses. According to the applicant, Connecticut Transit was operating on the property before a zoning plan was developed for the area. The proposed tower will be placed on the roof of the Connecticut Transit building in the same location as the existing tower. The proposed replacement tower is not inconsistent with the present use of the site.

The existing seventy foot tower is not a prominent feature in the area, even though it can be seen between trees and among roofs and house television antennas as the Connecticut Transit property is approached along Washington Street and Vernon Street. A clear view of this tower is provided directly across from the Connecticut Transit building on Vernon Street. The view across the backyards of houses on Broad Street is partially blocked by trees and the Connecticut Transit building. Replacement of the existing tower with another seventy foot tower would provide no change in the visual impact. The addition of the microwave dish and the possibility that the replacement tower would be as high as 100 feet would increase the visibility of the new facility. However, the Council does not believe that the change in visual impact resulting from a 100 foot tower is significant enough to deny this application. Furthermore, the applicant has stated that the tower will be no higher than necessary to provide the service and will not exceed 100 feet. The Council urges the applicant to minimize the height of both the New Haven and Hartford replacement towers.

The Council continues to consider the possible health effects of electromagnetic radiation and finds that the addition of the proposed facilities will not present a health hazard to the

public. At both the Hartford and New Haven site the towers will be built on top of buildings which are 30 feet high, so the transmitting antennas will be approximately 100 feet above ground and possibly higher. This means that atground level the calculated power densities will be far below known and generally accepted standards. Since the actual power densities will be lower than the calculated power densities, all maximum power densities will be below known and generally accepted standards. The record does not suggest that the proposed facility will have any adverse health impacts. Furthermore, facilities located on the building roofs will not be accessible to unauthorized persons.

The Council is pleased with the potential for shared use of these facilities with the Department of Health Services, the Department of Environmental Protection, the State Police, the Office of Civil Preparedness, and the Capitol Region Council of Governments. Shared use may reduce costs for each agency and reduce the number of towers necessary to provide similar service.

None of the responding State agencies and no members of the public commented that the proposed facilities will have a substantial adverse environmental effect. No objections to the proposed facilities were filed with the Council, and no members of the public attended the hearing.

III. CONCLUSION

The Council concludes that the telecommunication towers described in this application at the proposed sites in Hartford and New Haven will not have environmental effects which would justify selection of an alternate site or the denial of this application. The record does not suggest that there would be any adverse effect on, or conflicts with, the policies of the state concerning ecological balance, scenic and recreational values, air and water purity, forests and parks, or fish and wildlife. Constructing the facility in accordance with accepted construction and safety standards would adequately safeguard public health and safety.

The Council has not reviewed the need for these particular facilities because under section 16-50i(a)(6) of the General Statutes of Connecticut, its initial determination is whether or not the facility has a substantial adverse environmental effect, and if it does not, a certificate should be granted without further inquiry.

Therefore, the Council concludes that a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need should be issued for the construction of the proposed telecommunication towers on the proposed sites.