



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item
Meeting of October 18, 2008**

DATE: October 9, 2008

SUBJECT: U-3202-08-2 USE PERMIT (CARRY-OVER): New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC, installation of wireless telecommunications facility, antennas, and ground equipment; 2305 S. Walter Reed Dr. (RPC #29-002-029)

Applicant:

New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC

By:

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Jackson & Campbell, P.C.
1120 20th St., NW
Washington, DC 20036

C. M. RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the subject use permit subject to the proposed conditions, and with a County Board review in one (1) year (October 2009).

ISSUES: This is a request for a use permit for a new telecommunications facility. Issues related to height and design have been resolved.

SUMMARY: The applicant, New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC, has requested a use permit for a new seventy-five foot (75') wireless telecommunications facility at the AAAA Storage site at 2305 S. Walter Reed Drive. Consideration of the use permit was deferred by the County Board in September 2008 to allow additional time for Columbia Telecommunications Corporation (CTC), a company contracted by the County, to review the proposed monopole and determine the applicant's proposed facility's compatibility with the County's Emergency Communications, and the need for a new pole. CTC concluded that the facility is necessary to meet the proposed coverage objective. The applicant has worked with staff to bring the monopole into compliance with Zoning Ordinance requirements and the County's telecommunications guidelines. Design of the facility has been updated to reflect a low-profile, slender pole design, which was determined by CTC and staff to be less obtrusive than the flagpole design initially proposed. The applicant has submitted information regarding Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

County Manager: _____

County Attorney: _____

Staff: Melanie Wellman, DCPHD, Planning Division

PLA-5089

compliance with radiation guidelines and confirms that there will be no interference with County Emergency Communications. In addition, the applicant has committed to improvements on the property in the way of additional landscaping between the existing parking lot and the Four Mile Run Trail. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the wireless telecommunications facility, subject to the proposed conditions, and with a County Board review in one (1) year (October 2009).

BACKGROUND: The telecommunications facility is proposed on the site of an existing storage facility, in operation since 1994 by Storage USA and AAAA Storage, respectively. A use permit for a comprehensive sign plan was approved for the storage facility in 1994.

The following provides additional information on the site:

Site: The subject site, near the corner of Walter Reed Drive and Four Mile Run Drive, is improved with a storage facility (AAAA Storage). A service station is immediately adjacent northwest. Across Four Mile Run Drive to the northeast is the Concord Mews Town House development. To the southeast, immediately adjacent to the site, are existing industrial uses. Behind the lot to the southwest is the Four Mile Run Trail and Arlington Mill Drive. The proposed monopole is to be located in the extreme southeast corner, at the rear of the site.

Zoning: The site is zoned “M-1,” Light Industrial Districts. The “M-1” regulations state that the height limit is the same as specified in the “C-3” General Commercial Districts, which is seventy-five (75) feet.

Land Use: The site is designated on the General Land Use Plan (GLUP) as “Service Industry.” Wholesale, storage, and light manufacturing uses, including those relating to building construction activity.

Neighborhood: The site is located within the Nauck Civic Association boundary. The applicant sent a letter to the Nauck Civic Association (Attachment 1) and staff has notified the Nauck Civic Association of the proposed use permit. Since the time the attached letter from the applicant was distributed to the Civic Association, the design was changed and the height was lowered. The civic association has not provided any comments to date. Staff also contacted the Concord Mews Homeowners Association, located to the east of the subject site, and has not received comments on the proposed monopole to date.

DISCUSSION: The *Interim Guidelines for Placement of Telecommunications Facilities on County-Owned Property* were used to evaluate the application. The *Telecommunication Guidelines* offer direction in the way of design of the monopole and equipment structure, landscaping, co-location, and compliance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations, among other things. The *Telecommunication Guidelines* can be applied to telecommunication facilities on privately-owned property as well as County-owned. Columbia Telecommunications Corporation (CTC) also reviewed and provided their expertise on the project, and the CTC reports are provided as Attachment 2.

U-3202-08-2 Use Permit
New Cingular telecommunications facility
PLA-5089

Location and Coverage:

The County's *Telecommunication Guidelines* encourage carriers to locate on existing structures before constructing new telecommunication facilities. The applicant states that alternative sites were explored for co-location before choosing to construct a new monopole on this site (Attachment 3). One of the sites considered for co-location was the light pole at Wakefield High School, which did not meet the applicant's coverage objectives, and the other site was a Dominion Power Transmission Pole, which did not have adequate ground room for the associated equipment shelter. The new monopole is proposed at a height of seventy-five feet (75'), with the applicant's antennas located at seventy-two feet (72'). The applicant has provided information on the site's coverage/service area and the identification of any gray areas at the proposed antenna height of seventy-two feet (72'), per the *Telecommunications Guidelines* (Attachment 4). Staff and CTC concur with these findings and it appears that a new monopole is needed in that location to fulfill the applicant's coverage objectives in this area of the County.

The *Telecommunication Guidelines* state that the monopole should ensure no possible interference with the County's Emergency Communications. The applicant has submitted a technical engineering analysis of frequencies produced by the proposed monopole, and it was shared with County Emergency Communications staff. Staff has concluded that the proposed antennae at seventy-two feet (72') will not interfere with County's Emergency Communications.

A statement has also been submitted by the applicant, per the *Telecommunication Guidelines*, that the proposed monopole "will comply with RF radiation guidelines adopted by the FCC and health and safety regulations adopted by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration" (Attachment 5).

Design:

The proposed monopole will be located at the rear of an existing storage facility site, at the edge of the parking lot near existing vegetation. The height of the proposed monopole at seventy-five (75) feet is in compliance with the seventy-five foot (75') height limitation for this zoning district. Originally the applicant proposed a stealth-designed flagpole. Upon reviewing the flagpole design at this location, staff and CTC concluded that a low profile, slender design may better blend with the environment of this area and would be less obtrusive, and the applicant has agreed to design the monopole as such (Attachment 6). An equipment shelter would be placed at the base of the monopole, surrounded by a seven-foot (7') stockade wood fence and landscaping. The applicant states that an additional wireless carrier can be accommodated at the sixty-two foot (62') level. The applicant will accommodate an additional carrier's equipment within the existing fenced area to the greatest extent possible (Condition # 6). However, any additional area needed for a second carrier's base equipment will be examined at the time of the use permit amendment.

Landscaping Improvements:

The Four Mile Run Trail is immediately adjacent to the parking lot and chain fence on the site. In order to offset visual impacts of the monopole the applicant has agreed to enhance the site with additional landscaping improvements between the monopole and the Four Mile Run trail (Attachment 7). Landscaping in this area would consist of a mix of evergreen trees (such as Scotch Pines, White Pines, Hemlocks or Leyland Cyprus). This landscaping will be in addition to perimeter landscaping provided around the stockade wood fence screening support equipment.

As an additional site improvement, the applicant has agreed to provide a two-foot wide grass strip with evergreen shrubs, ornamental grasses and/or perennials along the length of the chain-link fence bordering the gravel parking lot. This area is generally shown on the plan titled "Location of Proposed Landscaping Buffer" and dated October 2, 2008. This would screen the adjacent bike trail immediately adjacent to the existing parking lot. The entire landscaping condition is included as Condition # 4.

CONCLUSION: The applicant has worked with staff to bring the proposed monopole into compliance with Zoning Ordinance requirements and the *Interim Guidelines for Placement of Telecommunications Facilities*. Staff concludes that additional cell phone coverage in this area of the County is needed, and that the proposed design and location will minimally impact the community. Additionally, the increased landscaping proposed will help screen the base of the monopole and portions of the storage facility parking lot from the trail. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the use permit for a new telecommunications facility, subject to the proposed conditions, and with a County Board review in one (1) year (October 2009).

Proposed Conditions:

1. The applicant agrees that the monopole will be designed as a low-profile, slender monopole, as shown on plans dated October 3, 2008.
2. The applicant agrees to limit the height of the monopole to no greater than seventy-five (75) feet.
3. The pole and any support structure shall be enclosed with a seven-foot (7') stockade wood fence. The applicant agrees to maintain the monopole structure, fencing, and surrounding landscaping in good condition.
4. The applicant agrees to provide landscaping between the parking lot and the Four Mile Run Trail. The landscaping will consist of a two-foot wide grass strip with evergreen shrubs, ornamental grasses and/or perennials along the existing chain-link fence bordering the parking lot. The applicant agrees to provide landscaping along the entire length of the existing chain-link fence, from the monopole to the small paved parking area at the western end of the site, as generally shown on plan titled "Location of Proposed Landscaping Buffer" dated October 2, 2008. Additionally, the applicant agrees to enhance landscaping in the way of a minimum of twenty (20) evergreen trees (minimum of 7-8' feet in height) between the proposed stockade

- fence and Four Mile Run Trail, as generally shown on plan titled "Location of Proposed Landscaping Buffer" dated October 2, 2008. The applicant agrees to provide shrubs as a landscape buffer around the exterior of the proposed stockade fence. The applicant agrees to submit a final landscape plan to be approved by the County Manager or his designee, as fulfilling this condition, prior to issuance of any permits. The applicant agrees to maintain all landscaping, at the base of the tower, between the fence and the trail, and along the chain-link fence, in good condition.
5. The applicant agrees that all utilities will be underground and all coax cables from the equipment cabinets will be hidden as much as possible within the monopole or any support structure. No external or exposed wiring is allowed on the monopole except for that required to connect to the antennas.
 6. The applicant agrees that the monopole will be constructed to accommodate an additional wireless user. The applicant agrees that if additional equipment area is needed at the base of the shelter to accommodate an additional wireless user, the applicant will work to accommodate them to the greatest extent possible. Any future wireless user that intends to locate on the proposed monopole will require a use permit amendment.
 7. The applicant shall identify a community liaison who shall be available to address any concerns regarding the facility operation. The name and telephone number of the liaison shall be provided to the Nauck Civic Association, the Concord Mews Homeowners Association, and the Zoning Administrator.
 8. The applicant agrees that the monopole shall be removed with ninety (90) days after any cessation of use for wireless telecommunications purposes.

PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS:

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| April 9, 1994 | Deferred use permit request (U-2803-94-1) for approval of a comprehensive sign plan to permit neon tubing along the building roofline of Storage USA. |
| May 7, 1994 | Deferred use permit request (U-2803-94-1) for a comprehensive sign plan to permit neon tubing along the building roofline and tenant name signs. |
| June 4, 1994 | Approved use permit request (U-2803-94-1) for a comprehensive sign plan to permit neon tubing along the building roofline and tenant name signs, as revised, subject to the approved conditions, and a review in one (1) year. |
| June 10, 1995 | Renewal of a use permit for a comprehensive sign to permit neon tubing along the building roofline and tenant name signs, subject all previous conditions, and no further review. |