

An application of Metro
Mobile CTS of Hartford, Inc., for
a Certificate of Environmental
Compatibility and Public Need
for cellular telephone antennas and
associated equipment in the Town of
Bloomfield, Connecticut.

: Docket No. 107
Connecticut
Siting
Council
6 July 1989

OPINION

On January 9, 1989, Metro Mobile CTS of Hartford County, 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 telecommunication antennas, associated equipment, and building in the Town of Bloomfield, Connecticut.

A determination of public need for cellular telephone facilities 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 find a site or existing suitable tower to share, offering the desired coverage that would not have a substantial effect on the environment and adjacent landowners. Because Metro Mobile does not have the power to take land through eminent domain, acquisition of a site must be through property owners willing to lease or sell the property.

The proposed site would offer cellular coverage to areas presently not covered by the Metro Mobile system. Coverage of this area would help build an integrated statewide system that could transfer calls from one area to another, as planned on by the FCC.

The existing lattice tower is owned by the Talcott Mountain Science Center for Student Involvement Inc., and stands on its own property. Metro Mobile would attach antennas to this tower and would construct an equipment building near the base of the tower. Both the Science Center and Metro Mobile would benefit from the shared use of the tower and space inside the building.

The Siting Council strongly encourages the use of existing towers whenever possible. Such tower sharing reduces the unnecessary proliferation of towers, has minimal visual impact, and a minimal effect on the environment. There is no evidence that the existing tower poses significant visual impacts on the environment.

There are no wetlands on the proposed site or accessway. The proposed Bloomfield site has no existing records of federally endangered or threatened species or Connecticut species of special concern. The construction of the proposed facility would not have significant effect on historic or archaeological resources. However, relocation of the proposed building within the leased portion of the parcel would greatly reduce the removal of existing vegetation including several specimens of eastern red cedar.

Electromagnetic radio frequency power density is a public health and safety concern of the Council. However, at the base of the tower, the power density level would approximately be 20 times below the American National Standard Institute safety standard as adopted by the Department of Environmental Protection as the State standard, and it would quickly become much lower as distance from the tower increases.

Based on its record in this proceeding, the Council finds that the effects associated with the construction and operation of a cellular site and associated equipment building 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, and therefore, the Council will issue a Certificate for the construction of the proposed Bloomfield cellular telecommunication facility.

The Council will require Metro Mobile to submit a Development and Management (D&M) plan for approval prior to the commencement of any construction or clearing at the proposed site or accessway. This D&M plan shall include detailed plans for adjustment of the equipment building to minimize the removal of site vegetation, erosion and sediment control, and landscaping at the proposed site and along the accessway.