

DOCKET NO. 136 - An application of
SNET Cellular, 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 Plainfield, Connecticut.

Connecticut

Siting

Council

September 26, 1990

OPINION

On May 14, 1990, SNET Cellular, Inc., (SCI) applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) to construct, operate, and maintain a cellular telecommunications tower and associated equipment in the Town of Plainfield, Connecticut.

The public need for cellular telephone facilities has been determined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Under Connecticut State law, the Council must therefore balance the need to develop the proposed site as a cellular telecommunications facility with the need to protect the environment, including public health and safety.

The proposed Plainfield tower would meet the FCC's determination of need by offering cellular coverage to areas not presently covered by the SCI system and would be designed to overlap coverage with adjacent cell sites in Lisbon and Brooklyn. The proposed facility would provide coverage to Connecticut routes 12, 14, 14A, 49, 169, 205, and Interstate 395 within the Towns of Plainfield and Canterbury as well as portions of the Towns of Sterling and Brooklyn.

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 substantial effect on the environment and adjacent landowners. Because SCI does not have the power to take land through eminent domain, acquisition of a site requires consent of the property owners to either lease or sell the required land rights.

The proposed site is 335 feet north of Spaulding Hill Road and is within a low density residential zone. SCI would construct a 150-foot monopole tower, with four cellular antennas attached to the top adding 17 feet to the overall height for a total height of 167 feet above ground level. An equipment building would be built adjacent to the proposed tower to house SCI's electronic equipment. An access road would also be constructed to serve the site.

The proposed tower would rise above the existing treeline within a wooded area making a visual presence to adjacent neighbors. Although only a few residences would be affected by the tower's visibility, the visibility of the tower to existing homes could be reduced if the tower were moved further southwest within the leased parcel of land.

Electromagnetic radio frequency power densities are a concern to the Council and residents living in the vicinity of any telecommunications tower. In the present case, the power density level at the base of the proposed tower would be well below the American National Standards Institute safety standards for the proposed frequencies.

There are no known existing populations of Connecticut species of special concern or federal endangered or threatened species occurring at the proposed site. The construction of the proposed tower would have no effect on the State's historic, architectural, or archaeological resources listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. There are no wetlands on or adjacent to the proposed site. Furthermore, the development of the facility and its access road is not likely to have any lasting effects on the natural environment of the site including effects on the quality of the air, water, and ecology of the site.

Based on its record in this proceeding, the Council finds that the effects associated with the construction, operation, and maintenance of a cellular telecommunications tower and 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.

Therefore the Council will issue a Certificate for the construction of the proposed Plainfield tower site. The Council will require the Certificate holder to submit a Development and Management (D&M) Plan for approval to the Council prior to the commencement of any construction or clearing at the tower site. This D&M plan shall include detailed plans of the tower, tower foundation, tower pedestal, equipment building, access road, and security fence. In addition, the D&M plan shall include detailed plans for erosion and sedimentation control.