

AN APPLICATION OF METRO MOBILE CTS OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY, INC., FOR CERTIFICATES OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY AND PUBLIC NEED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE, AND OPERATION OF THREE FACILITIES CONSISTING OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWERS AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING DOMESTIC PUBLIC CELLULAR RADIO TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE IN THE TOWN OF GREENWICH AND IN THE CITIES OF NORWALK AND STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT. : CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL : April 1, 1987

O P I N I O N

Metro Mobile CTS of Fairfield County, Inc., (Metro Mobile), applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) on October 20, 1986, for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the construction, operation, and maintenance of telecommunication towers and associated equipment to provide cellular telephone coverage from tower sites in the towns of Greenwich (two), Newtown, and Fairfield, and the cities of Norwalk and Stamford. On January 12, 1987, Metro Mobile withdrew proposed tower sites in Fairfield, Newtown, and Greenwich (one) from Council consideration. Proposed rooftop sites in Greenwich and Stamford and one proposed tower site in Norwalk remained before the Council. These towns are within the Bridgeport New England County Metropolitan Area (Bridgeport NECMA)

In the case of cellular telephone antenna towers, under section 16-50p of the General Statutes of Connecticut, the Council must consider the need for antenna towers as proposed and the nature of their probable environmental impact, "including a specification of every significant adverse effect, whether alone or cumulatively with other effects, on, and conflict with the policies of the state concerning the natural environment, ecological balance, public health and safety, scenic, historic and recreational values, forests and parks, air and water

purity, and fish and wildlife. . ." The Council may not grant a certificate unless it finds that these adverse effects or conflicts with state policies are not sufficient to deny the application.

The proposed Greenwich antenna site is atop the penthouse of Greenwich Hospital. The proposed receive antennas would be mounted below the facade of this building. The two transmit antennas, 13 feet in height, would extend above the top of the facade of the hospital, the tallest building in Greenwich. A six-foot diameter dish on this rooftop would link this site with the proposed Stamford site via microwave. There are currently 20 antennas and one twelve foot diameter dish on the roof of Greenwich Hospital. The Greenwich site would provide cellular coverage to downtown Greenwich, nearby portions of the Merritt Parkway and Interstate 95, and Long Island Sound. Two alternative sites were considered in Greenwich.

Trees along streets in the vicinity of Greenwich Hospital would limit the visibility of the proposed antennas. The cellular antennas would extend no further above the penthouse than existing antennas, and therefore would be of comparable visibility. The proposed site is zoned residential/multi-family, and radio masts are permitted within this zone.

The proposed site of the 180-foot Norwalk tower is within an industrial zone. Adjacent properties include a propane storage facility, landfill, transmission line right-of-way and railroad tracks. A nearby church is expected to relocate in the future. The proposed lattice tower would be visible from several nearby roads, but the land use along most of these roads is commercial or industrial.

A mobile telephone switching office (MTSO) is proposed for the Norwalk site. Electronics equipment would be housed within the MTSO. A six-foot dish at the 155-foot level of the proposed tower would link the Stamford and Greenwich sites with the MTSO, removing the need for a land lines link with the MTSO. The proposed Norwalk tower would provide coverage to Norwalk, nearby portions of I-95 and the Merritt Parkway, and Long Island Sound.

The Norwalk Planning and Zoning Commission raised no objections to the proposed Norwalk tower. However, the Commission did recommend that Metro Mobile provide adequate landscaping around this tower site.

Metro Mobile examined and rejected twelve possible alternative sites in the Norwalk area. These sites were rejected by Metro Mobile for reasons which included potential signal interference, inadequate coverage, locations within residential zones, and inability to reach lease agreements.

The proposed Stamford site is on the rooftop of a building owned by Cablevision of Connecticut. This rooftop presently holds 12 Yagi antennas and one eight-foot dish. Metro Mobile proposes to mount its transmit and receive antennas on the building's penthouse roof. Additionally, Metro Mobile would mount two six-foot dishes on the walls of the penthouse. One dish would provide a pathway to the proposed Greenwich site, and the other would link this site to the Norwalk MTSO. None of the proposed antennas at this site would be visible from streets near the base of the building. The proposed Stamford site is zoned "Central City North," which permits the construction of radio antennas. The building itself is used for rental housing.

The proposed Stamford site would provide coverage to downtown Stamford, portions of I-95 and the Merritt Parkway, and Long Island Sound. The proposed site would facilitate telephone call "handoffs" between the adjacent proposed Greenwich and Norwalk cells.

Metro Mobile considered and rejected eight potential alternative sites in the Stamford area. These sites were rejected for reasons of inadequate coverage, failure to reach lease agreements, lack of space, potential high visibility, and possible signal interference.

None of the proposed sites would have significant impacts on rare or endangered species or areas of unique historical significance. The location of two of the antenna sites on urban rooftops significantly minimizes the visibility of these facilities. The location within a highly developed industrial zone of the only tower proposed in this application serves to decrease its impact on its immediate surroundings. The Council considered the visual impacts of these facilities and the minimal electromagnetic radiation levels they produce and has decided they are not sufficient to deny the application. The Council will therefore issue a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the proposed Greenwich, Norwalk, and Stamford cellular sites.