

DOCKET NO. 94 - AN APPLICATION OF METRO : Connecticut
MOBILE CTS OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY, INC., FOR A :
CERTIFICATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPATIBILITY : Siting
AND PUBLIC NEED FOR CELLULAR TELEPHONE : Council
ANTENNAS AND ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT IN THE :
TOWN OF WILTON, CONNECTICUT. May 3, 1988

OPINION

On February 5, 1988, Metro Mobile CTS of Fairfield County, Inc. (Metro Mobile) applied to the Connecticut Siting Council (Council) for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) to construct and operate a cellular telephone tower site in the Town of Wilton, Connecticut. In its application, Metro Mobile included three sites, one of which is preferred, and the other two, which are alternatives.

The preferred proposed site is a 50-foot by 70-foot parcel of land on a prominent ridge near Richdale Drive. This proposed site is on land used by the Knapp Tree Service. Metro Mobile would erect a 140-foot lattice tower, which would be a 153-foot structure with antennas.

There are 30 residences within a 2,000-foot radius of the proposed site. The nearest residence, owned by the lessor of the proposed site, is within 100 feet of the proposed site. The proposed Richdale Drive tower would not be visible from along Hunting Ridge Road, Catalpa Road, Warncke Road, or Turner Lane. The upper portion of the proposed tower would be visible along portions of High School Road and Route 7.

The alternative Quail Ridge Road site is a 75-foot by 100-foot parcel of land within a residential area. Metro Mobile would construct a 200-foot lattice tower at this alternative site, which would be a 213-foot structure including antennas. Due to the height of this alternative tower, it would be obstruction marked and lighted.

There are 20 residences within a 2,000-foot radius of the alternative Quail Ridge site. The upper portion of this tower would be visible along the entire length of Quail Ridge Road.

To reach the alternative Quail Ridge Road site, a new 600-foot access road would have to be constructed. This access road would have to cross designated inland wetlands. In the construction of the proposed site, approximately 13,000 square feet of the parcel would be cleared and leveled.

The alternative Mather Street site is a 60-foot by 60-foot parcel of land within the Town of Wilton landfill. This landfill has been closed since 1975. The Town of Wilton plans to continue using this property as a transfer station and recycling center.

Metro Mobile could construct a 180-foot lattice or monopole tower at the alternative Mather Street site, which would be a 193-foot structure including antennas. There are 10 residences within a 2,000 foot radius of this alternative site, the nearest of which is 1,000 feet to the southeast.

There would be little or no visibility of the alternative Mather Street tower from Upper Parish Drive, Quail Ridge Road, Honey Hill Road, or Mather Street. It would be visible from the ridge across Route 7, and intermittently along nearby portions of Route 7.

All three sites would provide coverage that meets the immediate coverage needs of the applicant.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has granted approval for Metro Mobile's proposed use of a portion of the Wilton Landfill as a tower site. In its approval, the DEP stated the use of the proposed site would have no impact on the landfill. Metro Mobile conducted a study of the proposed site using test borings, and, as a result of this study, moved the location of this alternative site 10 feet to the west, to a portion of the landfill which contains no refuse. The alternative site is on a small ridge covered with small trees, brush, and bedrock.

The construction and maintenance of the alternative Mather Street tower site would have no effect on local groundwater. Yet, because this site is unique, to further reduce the impact of the facility on the groundwater, the Council will reserve judgement on the tower design, pending receipt of additional foundation information with the D&M Plan, as the footings for the tower would be drilled to a depth of approximately 10 to 12 feet for a lattice tower and 12 to 20 feet for a monopole. Before any proposed construction could begin, Metro Mobile would conduct additional subsurface reconnaissance. Minimal clearing and leveling would be required.

The Town of Wilton proposes to use the alternative Mather Street tower to mount antennas for fire, police, and emergency communications services. This tower could be designed to hold Metro Mobile's antennas at the 180-foot level, the Town's antennas at the 160-foot level, and additional antennas at the 150-foot level of the tower.

There are no known existing records of rare or endangered species occurring at any of the sites included in this application. None of the proposed sites would have a significant effect on historic or archaeological resources listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Electromagnetic radio frequency power densities at these sites would be well below the current American National Standards Institute safety standards for the proposed frequencies.

The alternative Mather Street tower site is the most isolated of the three sites in this application. Construction of a tower at this site would result in a facility which is less visible than the other two sites. No wetlands would be impacted, and no new access road would be required.

The proposed Richdale Drive site would result in a tower visible over a wider area than the Mather Street site, and would cause a greater visual impact because of a greater number of homes in its vicinity. Its approval is therefore denied.

The alternative Quail Ridge Road site would be a lighted, highly visible tower whose construction would significantly affect inland wetlands. Its approval is therefore denied.

Based on its record in this proceeding, the Council finds that the effects associated with the construction and operation of a cellular monopole structure at the alternative Mather Street site, including effects on 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, 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 alternative Mather Street tower site in Wilton.