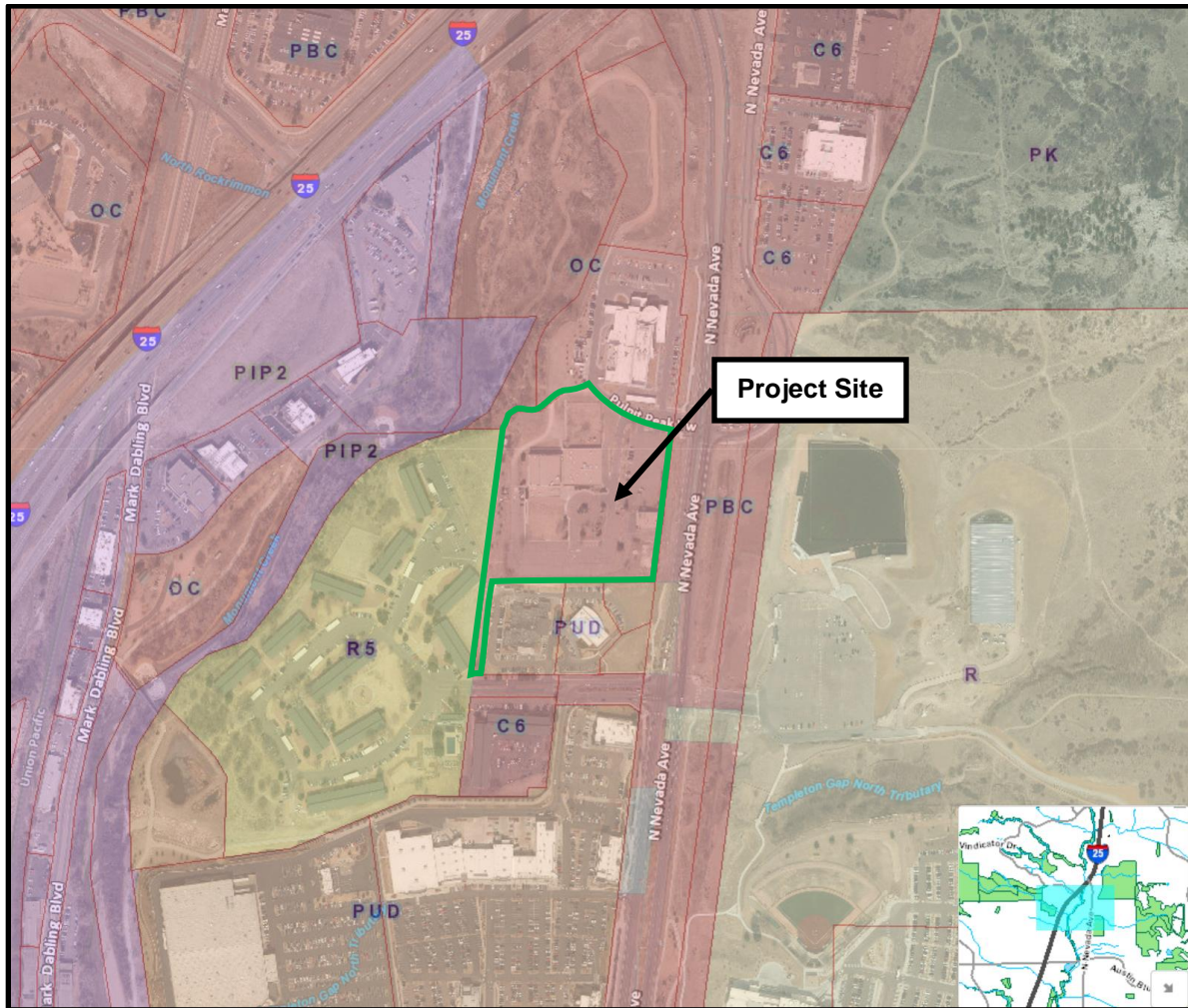


CITY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
FEBRUARY 18, 2021

STAFF: MATTHEW ALCURAN

FILE NO:
CPC CM1 20-00174 – QUASI-JUDICIAL

PROJECT: 5590 N NEVADA AVENUE WIRELESS COMMUNICATION FACILITY
OWNER: FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH OF COLORADO SPRINGS
DEVELOPER: CROWN CASTLE INTERNATIONAL
CONSULTANT: COMMSCAPES, LLC – TODD E DAOUST



PROJECT SUMMARY:

1. Project Description: The project application is for approval of a Wireless Communication Facility (WCF) Conditional Use Development Plan. If approved the proposed application will allow for the

installation of a new wireless communications facility (WCF) designed as an 80-foot high non-stealth monopole within a new 35'x64' ground-mounted equipment enclosure (**see “CM1 Conditional Use Development Plan” attachment**). Currently, the existing Crown Castle WCF is designed as a wall-mounted facility located on the existing Fellowship Bible Church, which is scheduled to be demolished and a new Lexus dealership constructed by the end of 2021. The proposed 80-foot high non- stealth monopole will be located within a new 35'x64' compound on the western edge of the property while allowing for future carrier equipment deployment (collocation). The associated ground equipment will be contained within a new 8-foot high CMU enclosure with landscaping on all four sides to screen from public view. The site is currently zoned C6/SS (General Business with Streamside Overlay) located at 5590 North Nevada Avenue consisting of approximately 8.55 acres.

2. Applicant’s Project Statement: (**see “Project Statement” attachment**)
3. Planning and Development Recommendation: City Planning staff recommends approval of the application as proposed.

BACKGROUND:

1. Site Address: 5590 North Nevada Avenue
2. Existing Zoning/Land Use: C6/SS (General Business with Streamside Overlay)/Existing religious institution (Fellowship Bible Church of Colorado Springs)
3. Surrounding Zoning/Land Use: (**see “Context Map” attachment**)
 - North: OC/SS (Office Complex with Streamside Overlay) and are developed commercially and residentially.
 - East: PBC (Planned Business Commercial) and is partially developed with the University of Colorado Colorado Springs.
 - South: C6/PUD (General Business and Planned Unit Development) and is developed with commercial and residential uses.
 - West: R5/SS (Multi-Family Residential with Streamside Overlay) and is developed residentially.
4. PlanCOS Vision: According to the PlanCOS Vision Map (**see “PlanCOS Vision Map” attachment**), the project site is identified as an Established Suburban Neighborhood, but is also adjacent to a Mature/Redeveloping activity center.
5. Annexation: The subject property was annexed into the City under Hart's Addition #1 annexation plat (November 1, 1965; ordinance unknown) and Golden Cycle Addition #1 annexation plat (April 27, 1966; ordinance unknown).
6. Master Plan/Designated Master Plan Land Use: No Master Plan
7. Subdivision: The property in question is platted as Lot 1 of The Overlook at Pulpit Rock Filing Number 1.
8. Zoning Enforcement Action: None
9. Physical Characteristics: The project site is currently developed with an existing religious institution and construction of the new Lexus dealership to be completed by 2021. The site’s topography gradually slopes to west Monument Creek, which briefly meanders along the northwestern property line. Due to its proximity to the creek, the site is partially impacted by the City’s Streamside Overlay Zone.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT:

The public process included posting the site and sending postcards to 17 property owners within a 1000-foot buffer. Staff did not receive any public comment in regards to the proposed project throughout the public notice period.

Staff input is outlined in the following section of this report. Staff sent plans to the standard internal and external review agencies for comments. Commenting agencies included Colorado Springs Utilities, City Engineering, City Traffic, City Fire, School District 11, Police, and E-911. Agreements between the City of Colorado Springs and the surrounding military installations establish a two-mile buffer for land use application review. Staff has determined that this application is outside the two-mile buffer for the United States Air Force Academy notification.

ANALYSIS OF REVIEW CRITERIA, COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & MASTER PLAN CONFORMANCE:

1. Review Criteria / Design & Development Issues:

a. Conditional Use Development Plan

The proposed Conditional Use (CU) Development Plan (DP) application will allow for the installation of a new wireless communications facility (WCF) designed as an 80-foot high non-stealth monopole within a new 35'x64' ground-mounted equipment enclosure (**see "CM1 Conditional Use Development Plan" attachment**). The existing Crown Castle WCF is designed as a wall-mounted facility located at a height of 25 feet on the existing Fellowship Bible Church. The church is scheduled to be demolished and a new Lexus dealership constructed by the end of 2021. The new Lexus dealership will have a maximum building height of 24 feet. The associated WCF equipment is located within an existing 20'x30' ground-mounted enclosure screened with 6-foot high wood fencing. The existing wood fenced equipment enclosure will be replaced with a new 8-foot high CMU enclosure setback 17 feet from the western property line and be painted to match the new on-site trash enclosures. Landscaping is planned on all four sides of the equipment enclosure to soften the visual aesthetics of the facility from the adjacent apartments and commercial uses. The monopole is setback a distance of 35 feet from the western property line where a minimum of 25 feet is required. In addition, the nearest single-family zoning designation or land use is approximately 3,500 feet to the west (R1-9 (Single-Family Residential)) and approximately 4,800 feet southeast (R1-6 (Single-Family Residential)).

The site is currently zoned C6/SS (General Business with Streamside Overlay), which per City Code Section 7.3.203, a non-stealth freestanding facility requires review and approval of a CU DP application by the City Planning Commission. In addition, within the C6 (General Business) zone district, the City Code Section 7.3.204 permits a maximum height of 50-feet. Per City Code Section 7.4.604, a freestanding facility, exceeding the maximum height of the zone district, requires review and approval of a WCF CU application by the City Planning Commission.

The pending ownership of the property has requested the new monopole be installed where the existing ground-mounted enclosure is located. The pending ownership cited placement of the facility on the walls or the roof-top of the new dealership would create security issues, site access, and liability issues. In addition, as stated above, the new Lexus dealership will only have a maximum building height of 24 feet. The existing location is within a landscape buffer area between groups of (future) proposed parking stalls, which will not impact parking or traffic flows and is consistent with the future anticipated use of the property. The existing wall-mounted facility is lower in height than the proposed relocation site, and therefore, provides less coverage than the proposed relocation site. The design will accommodate additional wireless carriers, eliminating the need for additional sites in the immediate area. Furthermore, the request for a non-stealth facility is based upon the need for greater coverage in lieu of the typical 36-inch diameter monopoles disguised as flag poles that are likely for standalone 5G facilities that utilize higher frequencies. This type of spectrum lends itself to shorter and smaller (diameter)

sites. On the other hand, the proposed facility will accommodate a wide range of spectrum/antennas from 600 MHz to 2100 MHz utilized by existing and anticipated tenants at the site. These frequencies require horizontal separation between antennas in each carrier array as well as a vertical separation between the carriers to eliminate any potential interference. These technological factors are driving the currently proposed design for the site. The proposed site is the least intrusive to the community, will improve existing coverage, and will avoid a gap in service if the facility were to be removed permanently.

The relocation and redesign of the existing site is a critical component of the Crown Castle network, providing continuity for the public interest, emergency 911-call services, and reliable long-term stability for wireless service in the Colorado Springs Community. Crown Castle invests heavily in the resources and necessary to ensure quality and reliable wireless service for the area. Crown Castle conducts annual safety inspections on all towers and employs a national operations center monitoring all critical systems 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. The 35'x64' equipment compound will allow additional carriers to locate in the compound and on the 80-foot tall monopole to improve the coverage and capacity of their networks. The City Code encourages the co-location of WCF equipment of various carriers on the same structure where feasible and where the visual impact of having one taller facility is determined to be more desirable than having additional tower facilities constructed in the same vicinity. The proposed 80-foot tall monopole will be painted a flat, non-metallic beige color per City Code Section 7.4.610. In addition, landscaping required to screen the proposed ground-based equipment compound will be integrated into the final landscape plan for the Lexus dealership. This landscaping will surround the site on the north, south, east, and west elevations and will be depicted on the final landscape plans.

In general, City zoning can only regulate the visual impact, the location, and the height and type of the cellular telecommunications facilities. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has the exclusive power to set the standards for radio frequency emission. The City is prohibited from denying Wireless Communication Facilities based on health concerns. The wireless providers operate within the strict frequencies and guidelines established by the FCC under the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 through the federal regulatory process.

Staff finds that the proposed WCF conditional use development plan meets the review criteria for granting a conditional use as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.704, and the Wireless Communication Facility location and design criteria as set forth in City Code Sections 7.4.607 and 7.4.608.

i. Traffic

The City's Traffic Engineering Division has stated that there are no traffic issues with the cellular tower relocation.

ii. Utilities (CSU)

Contact will be required with CSU Gas and Electric Field Engineering group on the relocation of the gas and electric service lines for the existing building. Landscaping shall be designed to provide the required clearances for utility facilities and to allow continuous access for utility equipment, and minimize conflicts with such facilities.

iii. Landscape

The pending Final Landscape and Irrigation Plan will be required to be submitted to City Planning for the current approved DP for the Lexus car dealership and will need to incorporate the proposed landscape improvements needed for the new Cell Tower.

2. Conformance with the City Comprehensive Plan:

Staff has evaluated the proposed application for conformance with the City's current comprehensive plan (herein referred to as "PlanCOS"). According to PlanCOS, the project site is identified under the Vibrant Neighborhood section (**see "PlanCOS Vision Map" attachment**) as an Established Suburban Neighborhood which is stable and expects some degree of infill and redevelopment. The Wireless Communication Facility Conditional Use Development Plan application appears to be consistent with the envisioned land use patterns for the subject parcel as it relates to two themes in PlanCOS. These two themes are especially pertinent to this project, Unique Places, and Vibrant Neighborhoods.

Vibrant Neighborhoods

The Vibrant Neighborhoods Chapter of PlanCOS identifies the associated area for development as Changing Neighborhoods within the Vision Map. The Plan's first goal of Vibrant Neighborhoods (VN-1), "Increase neighborhood identity, inclusion, and participation throughout the city for residents, employees, and visitors". This proposal does increase the neighborhood's identity given that the Wireless Communication Facility Conditional Use Development Plan cellular tower project is currently a developed commercial property. It is located within a diverse neighborhood comprising of university apartments, the UC Health Grandview Hospital, and a variety of other commercial land uses. PlanCOS also indicates reinvestment in order to create community, vibrancy, and address the community's specific vision and needs (Goal VN-3), which this proposal does satisfy.

Unique Places

PlanCOS lists ten common desired elements for Unique Places, such as "a uniquely identifiable character and design that reinforces a sense of identity, focus, and place". The goal is to take advantage of the capacity and potential of these corridors to create unified, vital, connected, and more transit-supportive urban places, each with its unique character, identity, and design. The Wireless Communication Facility Conditional Use Development Plan project will continue to connect with residential areas to support and balance commercial. The project also represents the mature/redevelopment corridor type as a significant infill and redevelopment opportunities. This Wireless Communication Facility proposal meets these recommendations as it supports the surrounding, existing, residential, and commercial land uses.

3. Conformance with the Area's Master Plan:

The project site is not located within an adopted area master plan. The neighborhoods surrounding the project are also not master-planned and developed with a mix of commercial and residential land uses. The applicant's commercial proposal is complementary and supportive of the current land use pattern. Through staff's review of the development plan application, and consideration of the review criteria for establishing a development plan, as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.502(E), the overall area impacts of the project were analyzed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

CPC CM1 20-00174 – WIRELESS COMMUNICATION FACILITY CONDITIONAL USE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Approve the conditional use for the Wireless Communications Facility Conditional Use Development Plan based upon the findings that the plan meets the review criteria for granting a Conditional Use as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.704 (A, B, and C), meets the review criteria for granting a Development Plan as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.502. (B), and the Wireless Communication Facility location and design criteria as set forth in City Code Sections 7.4.607 and 7.4.608.