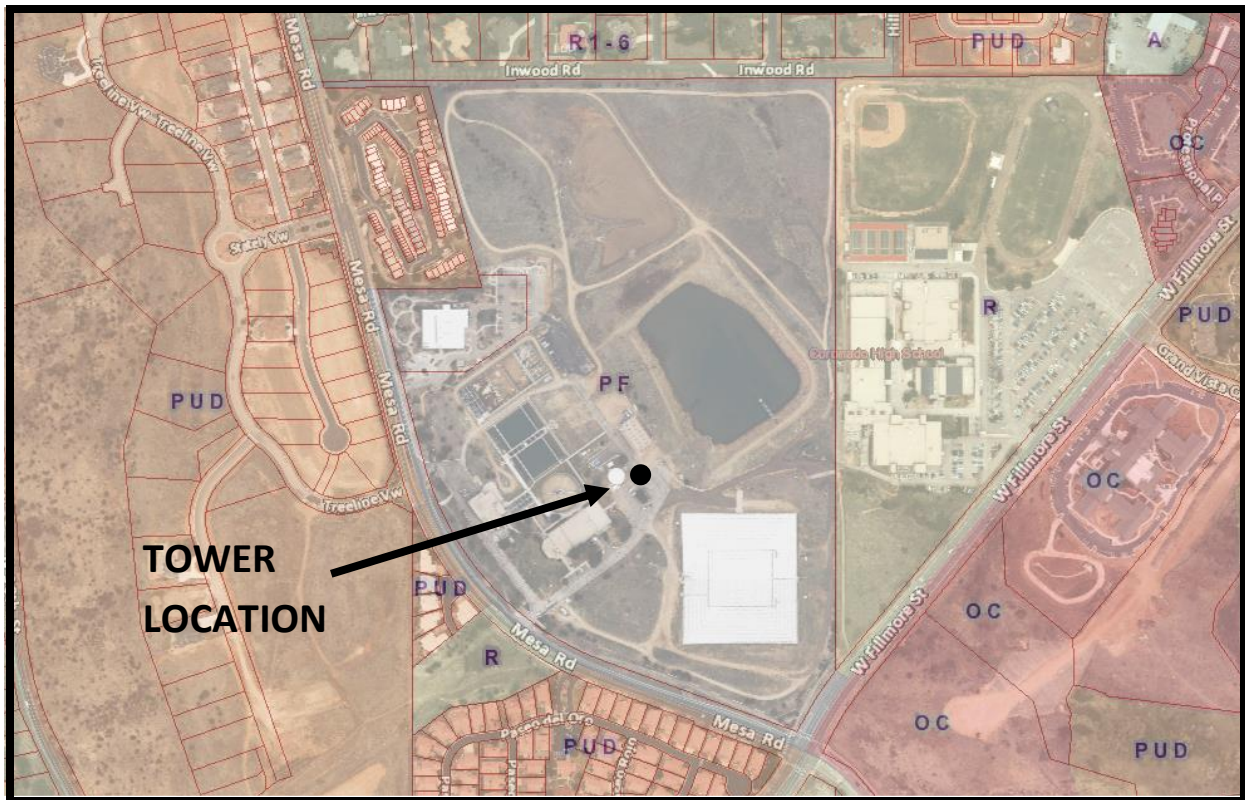


CITY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
January 17, 2019

STAFF: RACHEL TEIXEIRA

FILE NO:
CPC CM1 18-00105 – QUASI-JUDICIAL

PROJECT: STEALTH CMRS CELLULAR TOWER AT 2715 MESA ROAD
APPLICANT: BLACK & VEATCH
OWNER: CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS & COLORADO SPRINGS UTILITIES



PROJECT SUMMARY

1. Project Description: The application proposes a 100-foot monopine commercial mobile radio service (CMRS), or cellular tower, in the PF (Public Facility) zone district. The CMRS facility is designed as a monopine tower with ground equipment. The 56.98-acre site consists of a water treatment plant located at 2715 Mesa Road. (FIGURE 1)
2. Applicant's Project Statement: (Refer to FIGURE 2)
3. Planning and Development Team's Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the application.

BACKGROUND

1. Site Address: 2715 Mesa Road
2. Existing Zoning/Land Use: PF (Public Facility)/Colorado Springs Utilities Mesa Water Treatment Plant
3. Surrounding Zoning/Land Use:

North: R 1-6000/Single-Family Residential
West (of Mesa Road): PUD/Single-Family Residential
East: R (Single-Family Residential - Estate/Coronado High School campus
South (of Mesa Road): PUD/Single-Family Residential

4. Comprehensive Plan/Designated 2020 Land Use: Major Institutional
5. Annexation: Mesa Addition #2, July 1, 1971
6. Master Plan/Designated Master Plan Land Use: No Master Plan
7. Subdivision: Unplatted Property
8. Zoning Enforcement Action: None
9. Physical Characteristics: The 56.98 acre site is the Mesa Water Treatment Plat for Colorado Springs Utilities.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT

Staff noticed 418 property owners within a 1,000 foot buffer distance. Seven e-mails were received in response to the postcard mailing and the property posting. Four of the e-mails stated their opposition to the proposal. **(FIGURE 3)** Those comments/issues in opposition to the cellular tower included a better location as well as a better design of the proposed cellular tower.

The applicant conducted a neighborhood public outreach campaign prior to the submittal of the CMRS application. This neighborhood outreach is described in detail in the applicant's project statement. The outreach activities include newsletter-style, large-format postcards to 1,700 neighboring addresses within 3,000 feet of the Mesa Plant, a June 25, 2018 neighborhood meeting which included the members of the Camelback Village Condos, a passive display about the tower at CSU's Mesa Conservation Center from May 25, 2018 to June 22, 2018, e-mail notices to the 3,000 residents residing near the plant, and posted information on the CSU website page. **(PAGES 4, 5 AND 6 OF FIGURE 2)**

Revised site plans and project statements were provided to those neighbors who e-mailed comments. No one provided any written comments or a response on the submitted revisions to Planning and Development Department. **(FIGURE 4)**

The property will be posted and mailing notification sent prior to the January 17th City Planning Commission Hearing.

Staff sent the plans to the standard internal reviewing agencies for comments. Those commenting agencies included Colorado Springs Utilities, Traffic Engineering, City Engineering Development Review, and Water Resources Engineering. All agency comments have been addressed for this project.

ANALYSIS OF REVIEW CRITERIA/MAJOR ISSUES/COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & MASTER PLAN CONFORMANCE

1. Review Criteria/Design & Development Issues

The conditional use request is for the installation of a 100-foot monopine tower structure with ground equipment situated 50 feet away from the existing water tower located at 2715 Mesa Road. The existing transmission equipment is being relocated from the water tower to the proposed cellular tower. Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) requested that all cellular equipment be removed from the water tower. This will enable CSU to have better performance and maintenance on the water tower, and the new cell tower will allow the wireless carriers to perform maintenance without interfering with CSU operations.

A "monopine" or a cellular tower camouflaged to look like a confer tree, and is designed to blend into the surroundings. The request for the monopine does exceed the maximum height for the PF zone district, thus requiring conditional use approval from the City Planning Commission. This PF zoned property has a maximum building height of 65 feet and the project proposes a 100-foot monopine tower with ground equipment. The intent to locate the monopine near the water tower was based on the decision to keep the structure internal to the site.

As a reference, the adjoining water tower structure has 65 feet in height; therefore, the proposed cell tower has a compatible height and tends to “blend-in” within the site. The site was chosen to improve its service capacity due to customer demand in a technologically and geographically appropriate location. CSU’s property includes a various network of above ground buildings and structures, underground infrastructure, and planned new improvements. The location of the monopine allows for the most natural screening as this area contains the highest concentration of above-ground structures and trees, while also accommodating for CSU expansion plans. The exact location of the monopine was then predicated on below-ground utilities and required setbacks. The monopine tower is located to the east of the existing tower with a setback distance of 550 feet from Mesa Road and 872 feet from Fillmore Street.

Installation of the 100-foot monopine tower and ground equipment are to improve the existing service coverage in the northwest area of Colorado Springs, and to add capacity and service quality to existing service coverage for the Kissing Camel and Pleasant Valley neighborhoods. This project is to designed to include two additional carriers, with the potential to collocate additional carriers according to space and structural limitations. No lighting is to be added to the tower, as well as no noise to be emitted.

Staff finds that the proposed conditional use meets the conditional use findings as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.704.

2. Conformance with the City Comprehensive Plan

The City of Colorado Springs PlanCOS Vibrant Neighborhood Framework designates this area as changing neighborhood and the Comprehensive Plan’s 2020 Land Use Map designates this area as Major Institutional. The services provided by the proposed stealth tower and ground equipment facility support the existing Kissing Camels’ established suburban neighborhood and are critical to surrounding community.

Objective CCA 1: Maintain a Positive Relationship between the Built Environment and the Natural Setting

Colorado Springs is a uniquely identifiable community due to its spectacular natural setting at the base of Pikes Peak. One of the greatest challenges facing the community is to develop a city worthy of that setting. Thoughtful design and enhancement of the community’s civic buildings, public and private places, residential areas, gateways, and streets strengthen the community’s identity and convey a positive visual image. Colorado Springs will maintain a positive relationship between its built environment and its natural setting and scenic qualities.

Policy CCA 101: Preserve the Character of the Community’s Natural Setting

Preserve and enhance the character of the community through design that maintains views to the Front Range and other significant landmarks and integrates natural features into the land use pattern.

Strategy CCA 101b: Protect Significant Views

Protect views and view sheds of significant natural features, including stream corridors, prominent landforms and the foothills. Utilize a combination of incentives, acquisition where appropriate, and regulations such as height controls, site location criteria, and design standards.

Objective CCA 6: Fit New Development into the Character of the Surrounding Area

Often the overall character of a new development is not realized until the project is completed. This can lead to unintended impacts and incompatible development. Applicants for new developments need to clearly identify how their projects will fit into the character of the surrounding area and the community as a whole with respect to height, scale, bulk, massing, roof forms, signage, overall site design, pedestrian and vehicular access, and relation to the public right-of-way.

Policy CCA 601: New Development Will be Compatible with the Surrounding Area

New developments will be compatible with the surrounding land uses and will complement the character and appearance of adjacent land uses.

Strategy CCA 601a: Require New Developments to Provide a Description of Project Character

Development plans will include a description and visual depiction of the existing or planned physical context and character of the proposed development, including preliminary architectural design, natural features, transportation systems, and functional and visual impacts. In addition, development plans will demonstrate conformance with the intent of the applicable design standards and guidelines, as they are adapted to the specific site and context.

PlanCOS: Embrace Creative Infill, Adaptation, and Land Use Change

Goal UP-2: Embrace thoughtful, targeted, and forward-thinking changes in land use, infill, reinvestment, and redevelopment to respond to shifts in demographics, technology, and the market.

Policy UP-2.A: Support infill and land use investment throughout the mature and developed areas of the city.

Staff finds that the requested conditional use conforms to the City's PlanCOS Plan's goals and policies, and to the City's Comprehensive Plan 2020 Plan.

3. Conformance with the Area's Master Plan

There is no master plan for this site.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

CPC CM1 18-00105 – CMRS CONDITIONAL USE

Approve the conditional use for the CMRS at 2715 Mea Road Conditional Use Development Plan, based upon the findings that the CMRS 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 CMRS location and design criteria as set forth in City Code Sections 7.4.607 and 7.4.608.