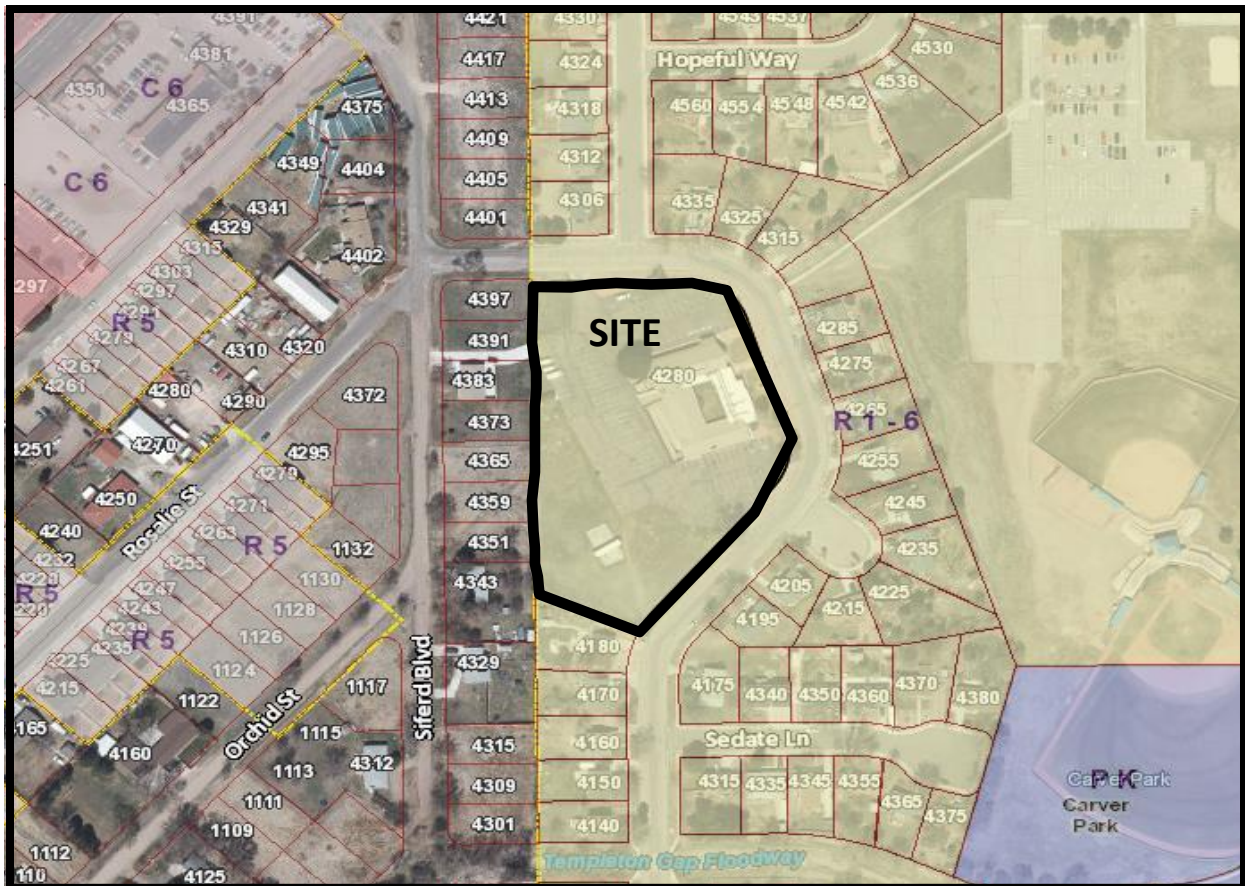


CITY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA

STAFF: RACHEL TEIXEIRA

FILE NO:  
CPC CM1 17-00021 – QUASI-JUDICIAL

**PROJECT:** STEALTH CMRS CELLULAR TOWER AT 4280 HOPEFUL DRIVE  
**APPLICANT:** ADVANTAGE ENGINEERS  
**OWNERS:** LIGHT HOUSE BAPTIST CHURCH



**PROJECT SUMMARY**

1. Project Description: The application proposes a 55-foot stealth bell tower commercial mobile radio service (CMRS), or cellular tower, in the R1-6000/AO/CU/UV (Single-Family Residential, Airport Overlay with Conditional Use and Use Variance) zone district. The CMRS facility is designed as a bell tower with ground equipment screened inside a brick walled compound. The 3.11-acre site consists of an existing religious building located at 4280 Hopeful Drive. (**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: 4280 Hopeful Drive
2. Existing Zoning/Land Use: R 1-6000/AO/CU/UV (Single-Family Residential, Airport Overlay with Conditional Use and Use Variance)/Religious Institution
3. Surrounding Zoning/Land Use:  
North: R1-6000/Single-Family Residential  
East (of Hopeful Drive): R1-6000/Single-Family Residential  
West: County Residential Property/Single-Family Residential  
South: R1-6000/Single-Family Residential
4. Comprehensive Plan/Designated 2020 Land Use: General Residential
5. Annexation: Larson Addition, February 1, 1970
6. Master Plan/Designated Master Plan Land Use: Village Seven Master Plan (Implemented)/Religious Institution
7. Subdivision: Northridge Filing No. 2
8. Zoning Enforcement Action: None
9. Physical Characteristics: The 3.11-acre site is improved with a 27,500 square foot religious institutional building (Lighthouse Baptist Church)

## **STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT**

Staff noticed 202 property owners within a 1,000 foot buffer distance, and twelve e-mails opposing the proposal were received in response to the postcard mailing and the property posting. **(FIGURE 3)** A neighborhood meeting was held on April 17, 2017, and over thirteen property owners and neighbors were in attendance. Concerns voiced by the neighbors included health implications, negative effects on property values, not to erect a cell tower in the neighborhood, and increase in traffic for the cell tower equipment and maintenance. **(FIGURE 4)**

Revised site plans and project statements were provided to those neighbors who either e-mailed comments and/or requested the documentation at the neighborhood meeting. No one provided any written comments on the submitted revisions to Planning and Community Development.

The property will be posted and mailing notification sent prior to the June 15<sup>th</sup> 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 55-foot stealth bell tower structure with ground based facilities situated 73 feet away from the existing church building located at 4280 Hopeful Drive.

A “stealth freestanding CMRS facility” or a cellular tower designed to blend into the surroundings, is permitted in all residential zone districts. However, when the request is that the CMRS stealth facility exceeds the height for the zone district a conditional use approval from the City Planning Commission is required. This R1-6000 zoned property has a maximum building height of 30 feet and the project proposes a 55-foot stealth bell tower with ground based facilities.

As a reference, the adjoining church building has a peak of 65 feet in height; therefore, the proposed watch 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.

CMRS conditional use applications allow for stealth and non-stealth freestanding facilities within residential zones on multi-family, institutional, or nonresidential sites including churches, schools,

museums, (etc.) per the City's Zoning Code Section 7.4.604. It does not permit CMRS freestanding facilities in conjunction with a single-family or two-family residential building.

This 55-foot stealth bell tower is to include twelve panel antennas, one microwave dish, and related equipment at a centerline height of 51 feet inside the bell tower. The stealth tower is located inside the ground equipment facility, a 40 foot (width) x 40 foot (length) x 8 foot (height) compound screened with a brick wall designed to match the exterior of the existing church structure.

The CMRS compound structure is located at the southwest area of the property with a setback distance of 73 feet from the church building, a front yard setback distance of 50 feet from Hopeful Drive, and 159 feet away from the southwest side property line. The structure was not adjacent to the existing building, based on two reasons; to not restrict sidewalk and handicap ramp access for the church, and to accommodate church plans to expand in the near future.

There were twelve letters in opposition from property owners pertaining to the stealth tower proposal. **(FIGURE 3)** Those concerns were noted and responded to by the applicant under 'Neighborhood Response' on Pages 18-20 of Figure 2. The CMRS stealth facility project consists of a compound designed to match the exterior of the existing structure and the tower has been designed as a bell structure to complement the existing building occupied as a religious institutional land use.

Installation of the 55-foot stealth tower and ground based facilities are to improve the existing service coverage in the northeast area of Colorado Springs, and to add capacity and service quality to existing service coverage for the Village Seven neighborhood. The project will also allow for other network carriers to co-locate and provide service to cell phone users in this area. No lighting is to be added to the cell tower, as well as no noise to be emitted. There is no power generator to be installed within and around the telecommunications facility compound. Landscaping has been added outside the 8 foot ground equipment facility to buffer the compound.

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 Comprehensive Plan's 2020 Land Use Map designates this area as General Residential. The services provided by the proposed stealth tower and ground equipment facility support the existing residential 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.

Staff finds that the requested conditional use conforms to the City's Comprehensive Plan 2020 Land Use Map and the Plan's objectives, policies, and strategies.

3. Conformance with the Area's Master Plan

This site is part of the Village Seven Master Plan. This master plan is implemented as a religious institutional site and does not have to be amended to reflect the proposed telecommunications cell tower facility. The stealth tower is accessory to the residential land use designations and allows for cellular coverage through the vicinity.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

CPC CM1 16-00132 – CMRS CONDITIONAL USE

Approve the conditional use for the CMRS at 4280 Hopeful Drive 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.