

BACKGROUND

1. Site Address: 5370 Cracker Barrel Circle
2. Existing Zoning/Land Use: R-1 6000/CU/AO (Single-Family with Conditional Use and Airport Overlay)/Elementary School
3. Surrounding Zoning/Land Use:
North: R-1 6000/Single Family & Neighborhood Trail
East: PUD/Undeveloped
West (of Cracker Barrel Circle): R-1 6000/Single Family
South: R-1 6000/Rudy Park
4. Comprehensive Plan/Designated 2020 Land Use: General Residential
5. Annexation: Sparks Addition, July 1971
6. Master Plan/Designated Master Plan Land Use: No Master Plan
7. Subdivision: The Homestead Subdivision Filing No. 10
8. Zoning Enforcement Action: None
9. Physical Characteristics: The 10.59-acre site is developed with an elementary school building, paved parking lot, school playground area, and school sports-field.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT

Staff noticed 325 property owners within a 1,000 foot buffer distance. City Planning Staff did not receive any written correspondence either in support or opposition to the project. The property will be posted and mailing notification sent prior to the February 15th City Planning Commission Hearing.

Staff sent the plans to the standard internal reviewing agencies for comments. Those commenting agencies included Airport, City Engineering Development Review, Water Resources Engineering, Traffic Engineering, and Colorado Springs Utilities. 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 65-foot stealth flag pole tower structure with ground based facilities situated approximately 290 feet away from the main street located at 5370 Cracker Barrel Circle.

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 R-1 6000 zoned property has a maximum building height of 30 feet and the project proposes a 65-foot stealth flag pole tower with ground based facilities.

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 65-foot stealth flag pole tower is to include three panel antennas and related equipment at a centerline height of 61 feet inside the stealth tower. The tower has room for two future carriers to co-locate inside the flag pole. The stealth tower is located inside the ground equipment facility, a 40 foot (width) x 38’-6” (length) x 8 foot (height) compound screened with a red stone façade fence.

The CMRS compound structure is located south of the elementary school building with a side setback distance of 50 feet from Rudy Park property line, and a front setback distance of 300’ from the main street. The tower is located close to the school building and away from the street front to help mitigate impacts from the residential neighborhood. The CMRS stealth facility consists of a compound designed to match the exterior of the existing building and the tower is designed as a flag pole to complement the existing building occupied as an elementary school for School District 11.

Installation of the 65-foot stealth tower and ground based facilities are needed to improve the existing service coverage in the central and eastern areas of Colorado Springs and to add capacity and service quality to existing service coverage within the Powers Boulevard corridor. The project will also allow for other network carriers to co-locate and provide service to cell phone users in this area.

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 CMRS telecommunications facilities on the basis of health concerns. The wireless providers operates with the strict frequencies and guidelines established by the FCC under the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

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 flag pole tower and ground equipment facility support the existing neighborhoods are critical to the 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

There is no master plan for this site.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

CPC CM1 17-00118 – CMRS CONDITIONAL USE

Approve the conditional use for the CMRS at 5370 Cracker Barrel Circle 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.