

Quick Facts

Applicant

Capital Telecom Holdings II LLC

Property Owner

Meadowbrook Development LLC

Developer

Diamond Communications

Address / Location

593 Airport Creek Point

TSN(s)

6424101008

Zoning and Overlays

Current: MX-M SS-O AP-O
(Mixed-Use Medium with
Streamside and Airport Overlay)

Site Area

2.13 acres

(Lease Area: 1,190 sq. ft.)

Proposed Land Use

Wireless Cellular Facility – Tower
Extension

Applicable Code

Unified Development Code

Council District #4

Project Summary

The applicant is proposing to increase the height of the existing wireless cellular tower from 50 feet to 80 feet to better accommodate wireless communications in the area.

File Number

WCFE-25-0016

Application Type

WCF Permit CM1 – Conditional Use

Decision Type

Quasi-Judicial

Background

Prior Land-Use History and Applicable Actions

<i>Action</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Date</i>
Annexation	Pikes Peak Addition #11	1971
Subdivision	Airport and Powers Filing No. 3	12/26/2006
Master Plan	Gateway Park	08/26/1980
Prior Enforcement Action	None	N/A

Site History

The subject lot was annexed into the City of Colorado Springs in 1971 under the Pikes Peak Addition #11 annexation agreement and designated for commercial use under the Gateway Park Master Plan in 1980. The lot was initially established as “Lot 2 of Airport and Powers Filing No. 1” on February 25th, 2000, then replatted as “Lot 3 of Airport and Powers Filing No. 2” on April 26th, 2002, and finally replatted to “Lot 3 of Airport and Powers Filing No. 3” on December 26th, 2006, at 2.13 acres in size (see Attachment #1_ Airport_and_Powers_Filing_No_3_Plat). The wireless cellular facility (WCF) was the first development to occur on lot 3 of this subdivision. The WCF was approved for development on the lot by the City Planning Commission on August 28, 2019, involving a leased area of 1,190 sq. ft. to support ground equipment and a 50-foot stealth design tower (see Attachment #2_CPC CM1 18-00100). The Airport Creek Point Apartments were approved on March 17, 2022, with a portion of it to be developed on the same lot directly north of the wireless facility (see Attachment #3_City File No. CPC CU 21-00097).

Applicable Code

The subject application was submitted after the implementation date (06/05/2023) of the ReTool project. The subject application is to be reviewed under the Unified Development Code. All subsequent references within this report that are made to “the Code” and related sections are references to the Unified Development Code.

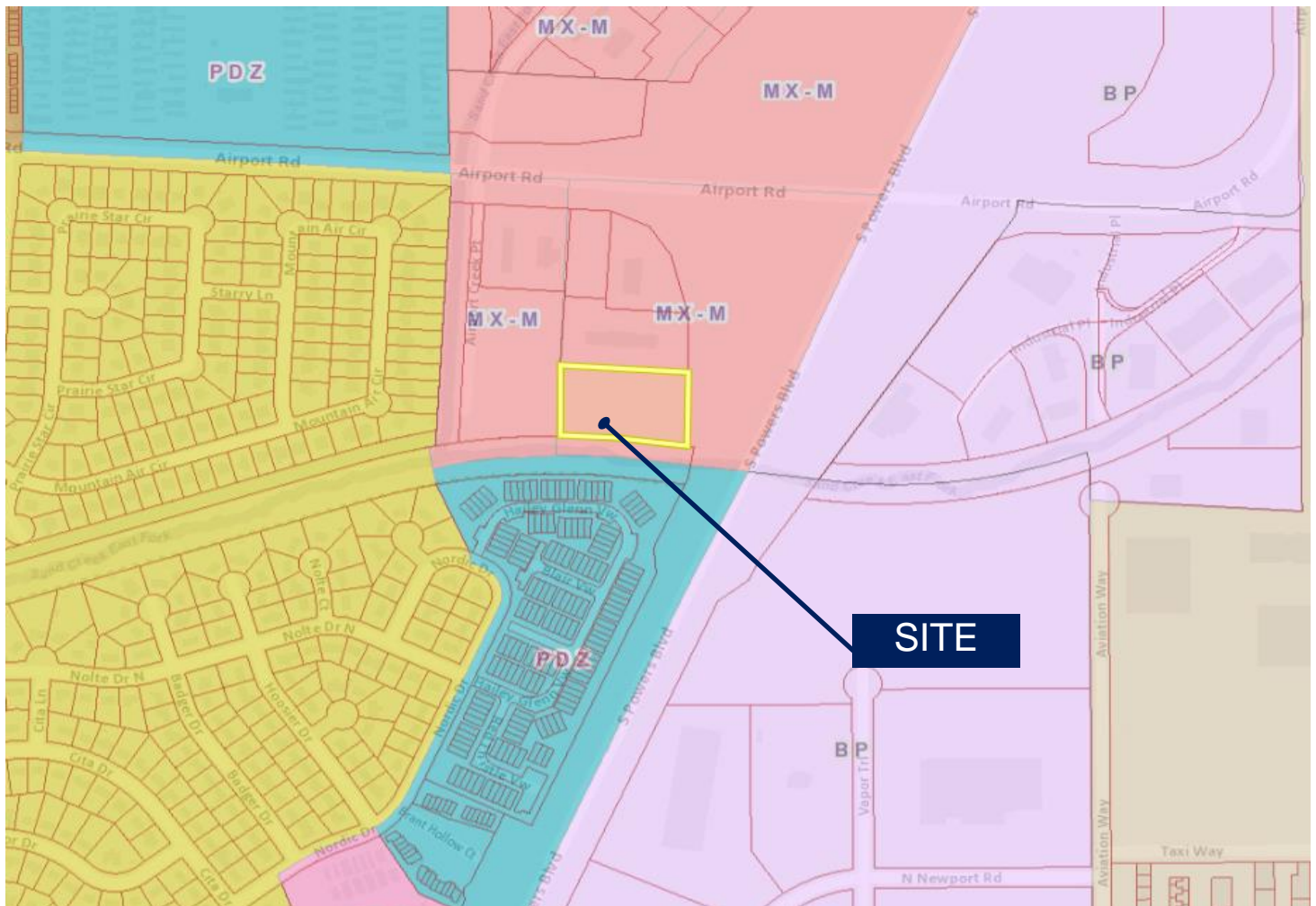
Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

Adjacent Property Existing Conditions

	<i>Zoning</i>	<i>Existing Use</i>	<i>Special Conditions</i>
North	MX-M (Mixed-Use Medium Scale)	Hotel	A multi-family use (Airport Creek Point Apartments) has been approved for development directly to the north of the WCF on the same lot (City File No. CPC CU 21-00097).
West	MX-M (Mixed-Use Medium Scale)	Vacant	A multi-family use (Airport Creek Point Apartments) has been approved for development to the northwest of the WCF (City File No. CPC CU 21-00097).

South	PDZ (Planned Development Zone)	Dwelling, Single-Family Attached	Sand Creek East Fork separates the subject lot and the single-family, attached development to the south by 125 feet.
East	MX-M (Mixed-Use Medium Scale)	Powers Blvd. Public Right-Of-Way	

Zoning Map



Stakeholder Involvement

Public Notice

Public Notice Occurrences
(Poster / Postcards)

Two – Initial Submittal / City Planning Commission

Postcard Mailing Radius

1,000 feet

Number of Postcards Mailed	242
----------------------------	-----

Number of Comments Received	Two
-----------------------------	-----

Public Engagement

Two comments were received during the review of this application. The comments included concerns over the erosion occurring on the south bank of the Sand Creek East Fork stream and the general processing of this application. City Planning addressed both concerns, however, neither concern was specific to the proposed design modifications for the existing WCF. No further correspondence was received from either party that had contacted City Planning in response to the received public notice.

Timeline of Review

Initial Submittal Date	May 6 th , 2025
------------------------	----------------------------

Number of Review Cycles	Three
-------------------------	-------

Item(s) Ready for Agenda	July 18, 2025
--------------------------	---------------

Agency Review

City Engineering

No comments received.

SWENT

No comments received.

Colorado Springs Airport

FAA Form 7460-1: Based on elevation data and distance to runway, the applicant will need to file Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Form 7460-1 "Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration" for any new vertical development at this site.

City Planning – Streamside Overlay

This facility and all other planned improvements on the subject property are under the maximum impervious surface area permitted in the outer buffer. Since there are no proposed expansions of impervious surface area, there are no applicable SS-O criteria to be met with this request. All other streamside criteria will be checked for compliance at the time of building permit and inspection.

WCF Permit CM1 – Conditional Use

Summary of Application

City staff received a request to increase the height of the existing cellular tower from 50 feet to 80 feet due to the Airport Creek Point Apartments development expected to occur directly to the north. According to the applicant's project statement (see Attachment #4_Project Statement), the proposed height of the apartments will effectively disrupt the tower's cellular network service. Per UDC Table 7.5.5-A, any tower greater than the zone district maximum height (50 feet) and not located in a utility substation or easement requires a CM1 application. Additionally, per 7.3.303.H.1.f(9), any tower that is unable to meet a separation of five times the height of the tower from adjacent residential zoning requires approval through conditional use application. Therefore, a CM1 application has been submitted and shall be subject to Planning Commission review as a conditional use in accordance with Section 7.5.601 (Conditional Use). The wireless

cellular facility use-specific criteria have also been considered throughout the review of the proposed modification per UDC 7.3.303.H. The tower has already been evaluated for its ground compound, associated accessory equipment, and design standards under the original approval, therefore, only review criteria relevant to the proposed height increase have been taken into consideration.

Application Review Criteria

UDC 7.5.601.C.2

The following criteria include an analysis of the applicable conditional use criteria as a CM1 application is required to be reviewed in accordance with a conditional use application:

A. *The application complies with any use-specific standards for the use in Part 7.3.3 (Use-Specific Standards):*

- a. City staff find that the following sections of the UDC regarding use specific standards shall apply to the proposed tower extension: 7.3.303.H.1.d: Operation Standards, 7.3.303.H.1.e: Site Selection Considerations, and 7.3.303.H.1.f: Design Standards.

i. **7.3.303.H.1.d: Operation Standards**

1. **Federal Requirements:** It shall be the legal responsibility of the tower owner to ensure compliance with all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations.
2. **Permission to Use Right-of-Way:** This site is not proposed in a public right-of-way and therefore, the regulations regarding “permission to use right-of-way” is not applicable.
3. **Operation and Maintenance / Abandonment and Removal:** Affidavits have been acknowledged and signed by the property owner and facility owner regarding the operations and maintenance regulations, and the abandonment and removal regulations as set forth in this section of the UDC.
4. **Hazardous Materials:** It is understood that no hazardous materials are to be utilized to operate or maintain this WCF.
5. **Collocation:** This section of the UDC requires that “no WCF owner or operator shall unreasonably exclude a telecommunications competitor from using the same facility or location. Upon request by the Manager, the owner or operator shall provide evidence explaining why collocation is not possible at a particular facility or site”. Per the applicant, the existing tower designed at 50 feet in height is unable to accommodate additional carriers (or collocations) and therefore, the proposed 30-foot height extension has been requested.

- a. City Planning staff finds the criteria for “operation standards” to be met.

ii. **7.3.303.H.1.e: Site Selection Considerations**

1. Considering that this site was approved in 2019, the site selection was accepted upon approval for the original 50-foot stealth design tower in 2019; however, city staff finds that the site selection criteria should be reevaluated given the proposed 30-foot (60%) tower height extension.
2. Site selection considerations should be made based on opportunities to place WCFs on existing structures. The tower structure is already existing and the request for an increase in height is to allow for the tower and the associated antennas the opportunity to continue providing adequate services. The expected apartments to the north will cause conflict with the existing tower’s ability to provide adequate services due to its current height.
3. Site selections shall be made based on locations where the existing topography, vegetation, buildings, or other structures provide the greatest screening potential to adjacent land uses. This proposed tower extension is disproportionately taller than the surrounding vegetation, whereas the intent of this monopine wireless cellular tower is to

blend with the surrounding vegetation and be of similar height. Therefore, the proposed increase in height potentially removes this monopine tower from being defined as “stealth”.

- a. City Planning staff finds the criteria for “*site selection considerations*” to be met.

iii. **7.3.303.H.1.f: Design Standards**

1. The primary purpose of this section of code is to require that the design and location of WCFs minimize impacts on surrounding neighborhoods and maintain the character and appearance of the city. While a majority of this facility was accepted and approved in 2019 (i.e., ground compound and existing tower), it should be understood that the UDC design standards for WCFs were only applied to the tower’s extension during the administrative review process. As such, only design standards that are specific to the tower structure’s height increase were applied below.
2. **Stealth Design Techniques and Concealment Elements**
 - a. Per the UDC, “stealth” is defined as “*the use of design and siting to camouflage or conceal a WCF with the intent to minimize or eliminate the visual impact of the WCF on surrounding uses. A WCF site uses Stealth Design Techniques when it: Uses a design which mimics and is consistent with the nearby natural or architectural features (such as an artificial tree placed near real trees of similar size); or is incorporated into (including, without limitation, being attached to the exterior of such facilities and painted to blend in) or replaces existing permitted facilities (including without limitation, stop signs or other traffic signs or freestanding light standards) so that the presence of the WCF is not readily apparent*”.
 - b. The proposed tower height increase will continue the stealth design technique utilized for the existing tower in that it is continuing the appearance of a monopine or pine tree with ground compound to shelter the associated equipment. The ground compound will continue to be surrounded by a six (6) foot wood slat fence and five (5) foot landscape buffer along the southern boundary.
 - c. The location of the existing tower is located in an area of high visibility and its visibility will become more prominent with the proposed extension. Considering the definition for “stealth” as defined in the UDC, the height extension of this tower is furthering the inability to blend in with surrounding topography and vegetation. The existing conditions surrounding the site include several trees ranging in an estimated size of 20 to 30 feet. Finally, the tower can be readily viewed from Powers Blvd. to the east (see Attachment #7_Photo Simulations), across East Fork Sand Creek to the south, and from the surrounding properties directly adjacent.
 - d. Per UDC Table 7.5.5-A, the application type is determined based on the type of wireless cellular facility. Per the referenced table, a stealth freestanding facility (i.e. wireless cellular tower) requires a CM2 – Development Plan application if it is no taller than the height of the zone district however, any tower with a height greater than the maximum height of the zone district then becomes subject to a CM1- Conditional Use application and is referenced in the table as a “nonstealth freestanding facility”.
 - e. It should be considered that the tower has made efforts to every extent feasible to maintain the stealth design techniques and concealment elements originally approved by City Planning Commission. Additionally, the proposed Airport Creek Point Apartments project has proposed landscaping surrounding the WCF facility with tree species types that range in mature heights of 25 – 80 feet suggesting

that the facility may in the future better blend in with the surrounding vegetation (see sheets 8 – 11 of Attachment #3_ CPC CU 21-00097).

- i. City Planning staff finds the criteria for “*stealth design techniques and concealment elements*” are not met.

3. Collocation

- a. Per 7.3.303.H.1.f(3), WCFs are required to provide at least two (2) collocations. With consideration to these requirements, utilizing the existing tower allows the applicant to meet the criteria for site selection and collocation. The proposed extension will accommodate collocations at heightened elevations to acquire adequate services from cellular networks and therefore, the applicant is utilizing the existing tower rather than establishing a new WCF. The original tower design achieved this requirement but due to the proposed apartments to the north, the collocations on this tower will not be able to acquire adequate network services and thus, the primary reason for the proposed tower extension is an effort to continue accommodating collocation of additional cellular facilities. According to the applicant, without the extension of the tower, the existing facility will essentially become impractical due to the inability to acquire adequate network services.
- b. According to the applicant, the sole purpose for this tower height extension is to effectively accommodate the collocation of three (3) additional wireless service providers. However, as suggested above, the tower height extension may materially compromise the stealth design intent of the WCF in that it is creating an inability for the alternatively designed monopine tower to continue to meet the definition for stealth design resulting in a direct violation of this section of code as WCF towers shall only be designed and constructed to accommodate collocation to the extent that it does not “materially compromise the design intent of the WCF, including stealth design”. While the stealth design intent of the WCF may be compromised by the effort to accommodate additional carriers, the opportunity for collocation is provided through this proposed increase in height.
 - i. City Planning staff finds the criteria for “*collocation*” are met.

4. Lighting

- a. The existing tower and proposed tower extension are not artificially lit.
 - i. City Planning staff finds the criteria for “*lighting*” are met.

5. Adjacent to Residential Uses

- a. The existing tower is not currently adjacent to residential use, however, the proposed Airport Creek Apartments that have been approved for development (see Attachment #3_ CPC CU 21-00097) just north of the facility will be located approximately 95-feet away from the existing tower. Additionally, the tower is located adjacent to a residential Planned Development Zone (PDZ) district involving single family, attached units, The existing facility is located approximately 110-feet from the adjacent PDZ zone and is separated by the East Fork Sand Creek.
- b. Per UDC 7.3.303.H.1.f(7), *when placed adjacent to property in a residential zone district, the WCF shall be placed adjacent to the common side yard property line between adjoining residential properties such that the WCF minimizes visual impacts equitably among adjacent properties. In the case of a corner lot, the WCF may be placed adjacent to the common side yard property line between adjoining residential properties, or on the corner formed by two (2) intersecting streets. All applicable setback requirements shall be met.*

- i. City Planning staff finds the criteria for “*adjacent to residential uses*” are met.

6. Specific Design Criteria

a. Alternative Tower Structures not in the Right-of-Way

- i. Alternative tower structures not in the right-of-way are subject to several design standards such as architectural compatibility, camouflage, concealment, and other visual impacts to the surrounding area.
- ii. The existing tower and its proposed expansion are designed to look like a pine tree. While this is not typically found in the area, the original tower was approved for this alternative structural design and therefore has set a precedent for the continuance of its appearance. Due to this, the tower owner’s most feasible option is to continue its design without completely replacing it to maintain any form of consistency with the design criteria set forth in this section of code. Per the applicant’s project statement, the proposed height of the tower (80 feet) has been requested in order for cellular services to operate effectively due to the approval of the 45-foot-high Airport Creek Point Apartments that are to be developed directly to the north. Aesthetically, the existing monopine tower is more architecturally compatible than a nonstealth tower and therefore, consideration to adjacent properties has been provided for aesthetic purposes. The existing topography in the area is fairly flat and therefore it would be difficult to find any proposed tower in the area (stealth or nonstealth) to be compatible with the surrounding topography. Therefore, greater evaluation has been given toward the architectural compatibility of the tower than compatibility with the topography. Due to the surrounding vegetation, foliage, and building structures the proposal for an 80-foot tower does not achieve camouflage or concealment properties, however, the visual impact is less intrusive than a nonstealth cellular tower.
 1. City Planning staff finds the criteria for “*alternative tower structures not in the right-of-way*” are not met.

b. Towers

- i. Due to the difficulty in evaluating the architectural compatibility with this area’s current and future development, the design criteria for a nonstealth tower have also been considered in the event that City Planning Commission finds that the alternative tower structure design criteria have not been met. The design criteria for nonstealth towers require that the tower be painted to reduce visual intrusiveness, use existing landforms, vegetation, and structures to blend in with the environment, and taper from the base to the tip of the structure. City Planning finds that the proposed tower extension partially meets these criteria with the exception that the structure does not blend in with the environment and existing landforms, however, the visual impact is less intrusive than a nonstealth cellular tower.
 1. City Planning staff finds the criteria for “*tower*” are met.

7. Setbacks and Separation

- a. Per the UDC, the tower shall be setback no less than five (5) times the Tower height, including antennas, if the Tower is in, or adjacent to, a residential zone district or school site, unless a conditional use (CM1) application is approved.

The existing tower was originally approved for 50 feet where a 250-foot separation from the residential PDZ zone district to the south would have been required. However, the City Planning Commission approved a 110-foot separation via City File No. CPC CM1 18-00100 (see Attachment #2_CPC CM1 18-00100) in 2018. No justification for this approval has been found on record to allow for such relief of the separation requirement. With the proposed 30-foot extension, the tower must now meet a separation of 400 feet and as stated, is currently separated from the residential PDZ zone by 110-feet.

1. City Planning staff finds the criteria for “*setbacks and separation*” are not met.

- B. *The size, scale, height, density, multimodal traffic impacts, and other impacts of the use are compatible with existing and planned uses in the surrounding area, and any potential adverse impacts are mitigated to the extent feasible:*
- a. City staff finds that the proposed tower extension is proposed at a height that may have a negative aesthetic impact on the surrounding property owners, however, the health, safety, and overall general welfare of the existing surrounding community is not understood to be adversely impacted. City staff also find that given the future development of the Airport Creek Point Apartments on the north and west sides of the tower; the applicant has mitigated any potential negative impacts to an extent feasible while also maintaining the effectiveness of the existing WCF. The only remaining concern is the fall radius of the tower in relation to the future Airport Creek Point Apartments that are approximately 95-feet away. It should be considered that the owner of the Airport Creek Point Apartments is aware of the proposed height extension, is signatory to the lease agreement associated with this WCF and has provided authorization for the height extension of this tower. An exhibit has been provided by city staff depicting an 80-foot diameter around the tower to better understand any immediate impacts if the tower were to fall (see Attachment #6_Estimated WCF Fall Radius).
- C. *The City’s existing infrastructure and public improvements, including but not limited to its street, trail, and sidewalk systems, have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development and any burdens on those systems have been mitigated to the maximum extent feasible:*
- a. City staff find that the existing infrastructure and public improvement have adequate capacity to serve the proposed height extension of the existing WCF.

Determining the facility as stealth or nonstealth was not the primary focus for this review, but rather the overall implications of the proposed height extension. Regardless of the facility meeting stealth or nonstealth design criteria with the proposed expansion, a conditional use application is required. Because the proposed tower extension increased the height of the tower beyond the maximum allowable height of the zone district, a CM1 (conditional use) application was required. However, throughout the review of this application, city staff’s concerns have primarily been focused on the proposed tower furthering its inability to meet separation requirements from adjacent residential zoning and the applicant’s ability to meet design standards that are compatible with the surrounding area due to proximity with residential zoning and uses.

After evaluation of the CM1 (conditional use), city staff finds that the applicant has made every effort to meet the design standards for alternative tower structures and stealth design as technologically feasible with regard to the proximity to adjacent residential zoning. While the standards for stealth design may not have been fully met, the design standards for a nonstealth tower have been met. City staff find that while the applicable design standards have been met, the tower extension furthers the inability to meet the separation requirements from adjacent residential zoning.

Compliance with Development Standards

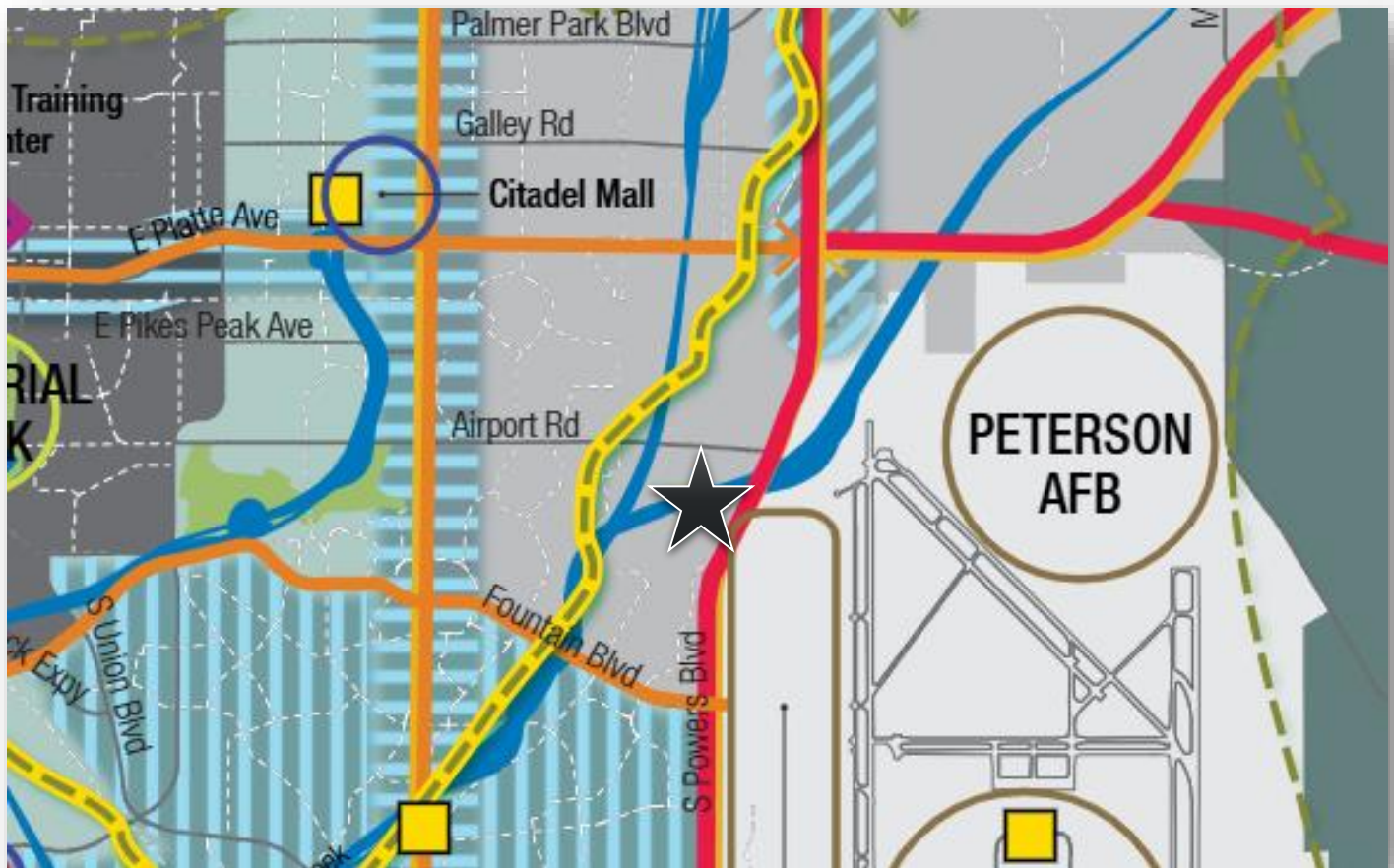
Development Standard	Required	Proposed
	400 feet	
Setbacks	Per 7.3.303.H.1.f(9): "Five (5) times the Tower height, including antennas, if the Tower is in, or adjacent to, a residential zone district or school site, unless a conditional use is approved."	+/- 110 feet

Compliance with Relevant Guiding Plans and Overlays

The applicable overlays include the Streamside Overlay (SS-O) and Airport Overlay (AP-O). The SS-O is not applicable to the proposed height extension since there are no proposed expansions of impervious surface area. The AP-O was considered throughout the administrative review of this application, and it has been required that a FAA Form 7460-1 be filed with the FAA to ensure compliance with horizontal flight patterns. This form has been submitted and is currently under review by City of Colorado Springs Airport staff.

Compliance with PlanCOS

PlanCOS Vision



The Airport Creek Wireless Cellular Facility is in a “Established Suburban Neighborhood” and adjacent to an “Intercity Corridor” as defined by PlanCOS. The goal of this neighborhood typology is to recognize, support, and enhance the existing character of these neighborhoods, while supporting their ongoing investment and improved adaptation. The proposed height extension for this facility is supportive to ongoing investment and improved adaptation of this established neighborhood. While the neighborhood is considered an established suburban neighborhood, there is ongoing development in the immediate area that may give cause for greater support of wireless network.

- Majestic Landscapes**
 - Parks & Open Space
 - Complete Streets
 - Primary Trail Network
 - Legacy Loop & Ring the Springs

- Thriving Economy**

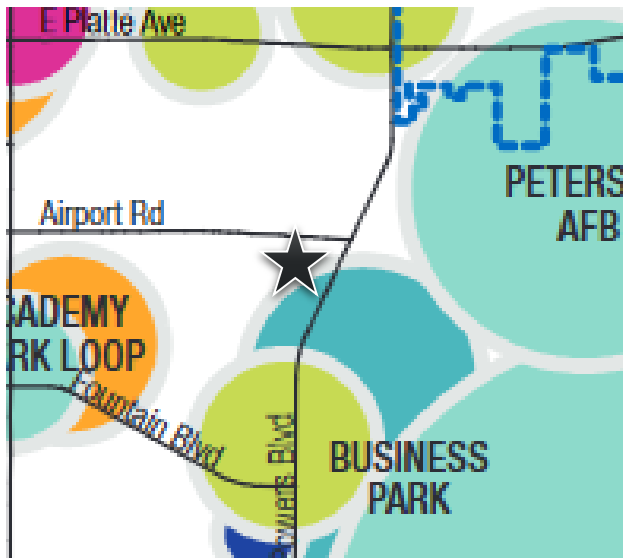
- Renowned Culture**

- Activity Centers**
 - Mature/Re-developing
 - Now/Developing
 - Reinvestment Area & Community Hub

- Strong Connections**
 - Intercity Corridors
 - City Priority Corridors
 - Smart Corridor
 - Bike Network
 - Park-N-Ride
 - Transit Hub

- Vibrant Neighborhoods**
 - Downtown
 - Established Historic Neighborhood
 - Established Traditional Neighborhood
 - Established Suburban Neighborhood
 - Changing Neighborhood
 - Newer Developing Neighborhood
 - Future Neighborhood
 - Airport

Note: This map depicts a unified city boundary, including enclaves of land that have not yet been annexed.



Predominant Typology

- Cornerstone Institutions
- Life and Style
- Spinoffs and Startups
- Industry Icons
- The Experience Economy
- Critical Support
- City Boundary
- ➔ Interstate 25
- Major Roads

Thriving Economy

The Airport Creek Wireless Cellular Facility, and its proposed height extension, complies with strategy TE-2.D-3 of the “Thriving Economy Framework” in that it is utilizing an existing facility to provide greater network capacity for this area of the city.

Strategy TE-2.D-3: Collaborate with providers to expand internet capacity and speed throughout the city, including targeted development-ready sites.

Statement of Compliance

City File No. WCFE-25-0016 – Airport Creek Wireless Cellular Facility

After evaluation of the CM1 (conditional use) City Planning staff find that the proposed modification to the existing wireless cellular tower does not meet all of the applicable wireless cellular tower and conditional use review criteria.