

**City of Rochester Hills
Department of Planning and Development**

**STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION
June 17, 2008**

T-Mobile American House Cell Tower Site Plan Approval Request	
APPLICANT	T-Mobile Central, LLC by Haley Law Firm, PLC 8065 Grand River Brighton, MI 48114
AGENT	Wally Haley/Denise Thompson
LOCATION	East of Adams, North of South Boulevard
PARCEL NO.	15-31-301-038
FILE NO.	99-007.5
ZONING	SP (Special Purpose)
STAFF	Ed Anzek, AICP, Director
REQUEST	Site Plan Approval

SUMMARY

The request involves a proposal to install three panel antennas on a 120-foot tall flagpole-style tower, and to install communications equipment on a 10 x 15-foot concrete pad, between two existing buildings on the southern-most American House parcel on Adams. The facility will be approximately 590 feet from Adams Road and the ground equipment will be fully enclosed by an 8-foot brick wall with a wooden gate.

Cell tower operators lease a small portion of land area and lease access rights to that site. The applicant's project summary states that T-Mobile needs expanded capacity to provide reliable coverage, because the current wireless network is not adequate to handle the amount of calls and data volume at home and elsewhere. Although collocating on existing facilities is preferred, their site search showed no feasible possibilities in the area, as outlined in their summary. A Cell Tower Users map is included, showing all provider locations in the City.

The property is zoned Special Purpose to the north and east. It is zoned R-4, Residential to the south and across Adams. The setbacks for the proposed facility, adjacent to residential, must be

at least equal to its height. The plan shows a side yard setback from the southern property line of 134 feet and, as mentioned, it is 590 feet back from Adams.

The Wireless Telecommunications Ordinance lists findings and conditions that must be met in order for Staff to recommend approval. Any conditions not met are listed on the motion for consideration. The applicant has provided responses to the findings and conditions in their summary.

The City's Fire, Building and Engineering Departments have reviewed the plans and recommended approval. The City Engineer's memo dated June 12, 2008 states that the location of the flagpole would not conflict with existing underground utilities. The location of the facility will cause the loss of an island and sidewalk, and Staff is recommending that the applicant provide some type of walkway to the westerly building. No landscaping is being provided, and buffering is not required for this applicant. There are two trees on the island that will have to be replaced on site, and that is listed as a condition.

In discussions with the applicant during concept submittals, the question of screening the equipment was raised. At the base of the pole was an equipment shelter and cabling from the shelter to the pole. For security purposes, the area was proposed to be fenced with chain link. The plan also called for a potential second co-locator and an additional equipment room. Staff suggested the use of some solid wall for screening purposes. Inasmuch that the equipment room is over 7 feet in height, the applicant agreed to an 8-foot brick wall with service access provided by a wooden gate.

Although the applicant met the request of staff for effective screening, the question now arises as to whether an 8-foot brick wall might be too dominant in the context of the area and its proximity to the entrance of the facility to the east. Staff would request any suggestions as to how the equipment area might be secured and screened effectively without being too oppressive.

Detention

There is detention provided on site; no additional pavement is being added.

Wetlands/Natural Features Setbacks/Slopes

The proposal does not impact a wetland or natural features setback and there are no slopes.

Specific action requested by the Planning Commission is Approval of a Site Plan for the T-Mobile American House cell tower project.

Based on the review comments included in this report or contained within the enclosed information, staff recommends approval of the following motions relative to City File No. 99-007.5 (T-Mobile American House Tower).

THANK YOU.

MOTION by _____, seconded by _____, in the matter of City File No. 99-007.5 (T-Mobile American House Cell Tower), the Planning Commission **approves** the **Site Plan**, based on plans dated received by the Planning Department on June 6, 2008, with the following findings and subject to the following conditions.

Findings:

1. The applicant has demonstrated that collocation on an existing structure is not reasonably feasible.
2. The facility support structure is a single, vertical monopole designed to accommodate at least two wireless telecommunication arrays of antennas.
3. At 120 feet, the facility does not exceed the maximum height requirement (165 feet), per Section 138-1075 of the Zoning Ordinance.
4. The telecommunications facility is not located in the front or side yard abutting a street.
5. The side yard setback measured to the edge of the facility and adjacent to residential zoning (134 feet), is greater than the height of the facility.
6. The proposed location of the flagpole tower does not conflict with any existing underground utilities of public water main, sanitary sewer or private storm sewer.
7. The Site Plan and supporting documents demonstrate that all applicable requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, as well as other City ordinances, standards, and requirements, can be met.
8. The proposed project, with appropriate screening, should have a satisfactory and harmonious relationship with the development on-site.

Conditions:

1. The facilities shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the City's Building Code.
2. No signs, signals, lights or other means of illumination shall be permitted on the facility unless required by State or Federal law.
3. The facility shall be a neutral color intended to blend with the surroundings, as approved by Staff.
4. All plans must be signed and sealed by a Registered Engineer, prior to Final Approval by Staff.
5. Provide pedestrian crosswalk markings to the westerly building, which will replace

existing sidewalk on island, prior to Final Approval by Staff.

6. Provide note on plan stating that the support structure shall be erected and available for collocation, and show proposed location of collocators' equipment shelters.
7. Correct Parcel Number on Sheets T-1 and SS-2, and on project summary to 15-31-301-038.
8. Submit an affidavit **signed** by a Registered Design/Structural Engineer stating that the support structure can support at least two wireless telecommunication arrays of antennas.
9. Replace two existing trees to be removed from the island elsewhere on site, to be approved by the City's Landscape Architect, prior to Final Approval by Staff.

Reference: Plans dated received by the Planning Department June 6, 2008 (Sheets T-1, C-1 and C-2, prepared by GPD Associates, and Sheets SS-1 and SS-2 prepared by EC&S Engineering, Inc.).

Attachments: Building Department memo dated 06/13/08; Fire Department memo dated 06/11/08; Public Services memo dated 06/12/08; Project Summary and accompanying documents dated received 06/13/08; Development Application dated 06/11/08; Site Lease; Wireless Telecommunications Ordinance; and All Cell Tower Users Map.

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