

STAFF REPORT

August 23, 2001

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**No. 01UR044 - Use On Review to allow a Cellular Communication Tower in the General Commercial Zoning District**      **ITEM 31**

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GENERAL INFORMATION:

PETITIONER	M & K Consulting for Western Wireless Corp.
REQUEST	<b>No. 01UR044 - Use On Review to allow a Cellular Communication Tower in the General Commercial Zoning District</b>
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Lot CR of Blocks 12-13, Providence Addition, Section 34, T2N, R7E, BHM, Rapid City, Pennington County, South Dakota
PARCEL ACREAGE	Approximately 1.18 acres
LOCATION	2449 West Chicago Street
EXISTING ZONING	General Commercial District
SURROUNDING ZONING	
North:	Light Industrial District
South:	General Commercial District
East:	General Commercial District
West:	General Commercial District
PUBLIC UTILITIES	City water and sewer
REPORT BY	Lisa Seaman

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Use On Review to allow a Cellular Communication Tower in the General Commercial Zoning District be approved with the following stipulations:

Engineering Division Recommendations:

1. Prior to issuance of a Building Permit, a detailed geotechnical study shall be submitted for review and approval;

Building Inspection Division Recommendations:

2. A Building Permit shall be obtained prior to any construction;
3. Prior to issuance of a Building Permit, three sets of Architectural/Engineer stamped plans shall be provided for review and approval;
4. A Certificate of Completion shall be obtained prior to any use of the tower;

Fire Department Recommendations:

5. That a minimum of 20 foot fire lane access shall be continually maintained behind the existing building;

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#### Urban Planning Division Recommendations:

6. The tower shall be designed to allow for the co-location of a minimum of two additional antennas (for a total of three antennae) except where the additional antennas would interfere or impact the applicant's proposed antenna(s);
7. The tower shall not be illuminated by artificial means and shall not display strobe lights unless such lighting is specifically required by the Federal Aviation Administration or other federal or state authority;
8. The tower shall remain unpainted allowing the galvanized steel color to show or the tower shall be painted white unless alternative colors are required by the Federal Aviation Administration or other federal or state authority;
9. The existing communications tower shall be removed within thirty days of the issuance of a Certificate of Completion for the new communications tower;
10. No commercial advertising signage shall be allowed on the tower;
11. All requirements of the Off-Street Parking Ordinance shall be continually met;
12. The Use on Review shall expire if the use is not undertaken and completed within two years of the date of approval by the City Council or if the use as approved has ceased for a period of two years.

GENERAL COMMENTS: The applicant is seeking Use on Review approval to allow construction of a 150 foot cellular tower behind the Western Wireless Service Office on West Chicago Street. The proposed 150 foot tower will replace an existing 40 foot tower. The site plan submitted indicates that the proposed pole will be located eight feet south of the existing building and surrounded by an eight foot chain link fence. According to information provided by the applicant, the 150 foot tower is required to accommodate a DS3 Link. The DS3 Link will increase the number of calls the carrier can switch from wireless transmission to land line transmission at a time. In addition, the applicant intends to utilize a microwave link between this tower and a tower located in Piedmont. A tower shorter than 150 feet will not provide the required line of sight between the microwave antennas on the two sites. The property is zoned General Commercial and cellular communications towers are permitted as a Use on Review in the General Commercial Zoning District.

STAFF REVIEW: The applicant submitted for review a detailed site plan as requested and staff review has found the plan to be in general compliance with the Rapid City Municipal Code.

A major issue associated with communications towers is the visual impact the structures will have on surrounding areas and the City in general. The subject property is located in the northwest part of Rapid City in close proximity to the intersection of West Chicago Street and Deadwood Avenue. Staff has concerns with locating a 150 foot communications tower on such a highly visible site. The applicant has met with staff and indicated that a 150 foot tower is necessary at this location because of the DSL switching equipment currently located within the building on the site. As mentioned previously, the applicant intends to utilize a microwave link between this tower and a tower located in Piedmont. A tower shorter than 150 feet will not provide the required line of sight between the microwave antennas on the two sites.

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**Aesthetic Issues:** Staff is making three recommendations that they believe will help to minimize the adverse impacts caused by this tower. First, Staff is recommending that the tower either be left unpainted or painted white. Based on past experience with other towers, Staff has found that these two color choices are the least noticed by the general public. Second, Staff is recommending that no lighting of the tower be allowed. Exceptions to the color and lighting limitations will be allowed if the Federal Aviation Administration or another federal or state authority requires something different. Thirdly, Staff is recommending that no commercial advertising be allowed on the tower.

**Co-location:** In order to reduce visual clutter and increase the efficiency of transmission towers, the City in recent years has consistently required that new towers be constructed with the ability to co-locate other future antennae. Staff has discussed this matter with Western Wireless representatives who have indicated that this tower will be constructed to accommodate additional antennae.

Staff has had discussions with the applicant, as well as other cellular communication providers, regarding tower locations, the number of towers required to provide adequate coverage in a community and sectorization plans. The information provided by the applicant does seem to substantiate the need for the tower at the location requested, however, due to staff's limited knowledge of the technical aspects of cellular communications staff cannot fully evaluate this information.

As of this writing, documentation of completion of the certified mailing has not been submitted by the petitioner. The required Use On Review sign has been posted on the property.