

Narrative Statement
Town of South Windsor
Emergency Services Telecommunications Tower
Special Exception / Site Plan Application
124 Sullivan Avenue, South Windsor, Connecticut
DPI Project No. 2977.E
July 7, 2023

The Town of South Windsor has submitted a special exception and site plan application for a new emergency services wireless telecommunications tower to the rear of the Tyler Regional Animal Control Shelter (TRACS) at 124 Sullivan Avenue in the Restricted Commercial (RC) zoning district. The site originally housed the Town's Fire Station Number 3, which was relocated to West Road. The parcel size is approximately two acres.

This application was prompted due to awful mobile radio communications reception for our police and fire first responders in the northwest corner of South Windsor. Police officers and firefighters, whether on foot or in a cruiser or fire apparatus, are experiencing poor reception, and in some areas, no reception at all within the subject area. Indeed, reception is even worse when our first responders enter buildings. This poor reception impacts the quality of radio communications for routine patrols/matters, and for emergency situations, such as automobile accidents with injuries, criminal activities, building fires, and health emergencies. One can imagine how critical communications are during an emergency, as initial assessments are made, and those personnel first on the scene report back to dispatchers and senior officers.

The general area to be serviced is along Rye Street, the west end of Sullivan Avenue, on U.S. Route 5 and Main Street northerly of Strong Road, in the Connecticut River meadows to the west, and along the Scantic River down to its confluence with the Connecticut River.

In January we presented an application to the Planning & Zoning Commission for a zoning text amendment (Section 7.18) allowing lattice telecommunication towers for the Town's emergency services. Participants were Police Chief Kristian Lindstrom, Fire Chief Kevin Cooney, Fire Marshal Walter Summers, Peter DeMallie of DPI, and Bruce Marcus of Marcus Communications. The lattice tower option was selected for this application, among other reasons, because it has better aesthetics, lower operational cost, requires a smaller capital investment, and can be more readily serviced (via rigging rather than a tall crane). The Commission suggested increasing the maximum tower height to 150 feet, and the tower base to 20'x20'. The zoning text amendment was subsequently adopted on February 14.

The site plan and details shows a 150' tall lattice tower on a 20'x20' base, surrounded by a 7' tall chain link security fence with black vinyl slats. In the absence of a dumpster enclosure on the site, a new enclosure is proposed, surrounded by a 6' high chain link fence, also with black vinyl slats. Note that this tower is lower than the Town's other communication towers, e.g., the tower at the Police HQ is 200' tall. See Sheet SP-1 for the site plan. Truck turning movements are satisfactory

for the typical Sprinter maintenance van to readily service the facility (see Sheet TR-1). Sheet CD-1 & 2 depict the dumpster and tower enclosures, Sheet C-D2 (detail #5) represents the anticipated Townwide coverage area and reception levels when the tower becomes operational.

The surrounding parcels are in the Industrial or General Commercial zones, and the subject property is not in close proximity to any school, playground or residence (they are outside of the “fall zone”). The property to the east is a commercial development, now under construction. This address was selected after evaluating numerous alternate locations, and it also had the benefit of being Town-owned, at lower cost (short- and long-term). The site is not habitat for endangered species; is not known to have archeological or historic resources, does not attract birds (no shelf for bird nests), had a relatively short access road, does not affect any major natural area, and its implementation would be of benefit to the health, general welfare, and safety of the public and of our first responders. This proposal is consistent with the Commission’s POCD and zoning regulations (as recently amended), the land is physically suited for this facility, presents nominal, if any, impacts on the environment, traffic, infrastructure, noise, existing uses, surrounding property values, and neighborhood character.

Thank you for your consideration of this most important application.