

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

J. McIntyre

NCPC File No. 6608



VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER
Rooftop Telecommunications Installation (Antennas)
50 Irving Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

Submitted by the Department of Veterans Affairs

September 1, 2005

Abstract

The Department of Veterans Affairs has submitted building plans for the installation of twelve Verizon Wireless telecommunication antennas (transmitting and receiving) and equipment on the roof of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center located at 50 Irving Street, NW. The proposal conforms to the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the Presidential Memorandum that encourages placement of commercial antennas on federal property. The telecommunications carrier involved in this proposal has minimized the visual impacts to the government property by utilizing the latest state-of-the-art antenna technology that presents minimal effects to the exterior of the building. Currently there are twelve mobile telecommunication antennas located on the federal facility rooftop.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final building plans pursuant to 40 U.S.C. § 8722(d) and Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1))

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

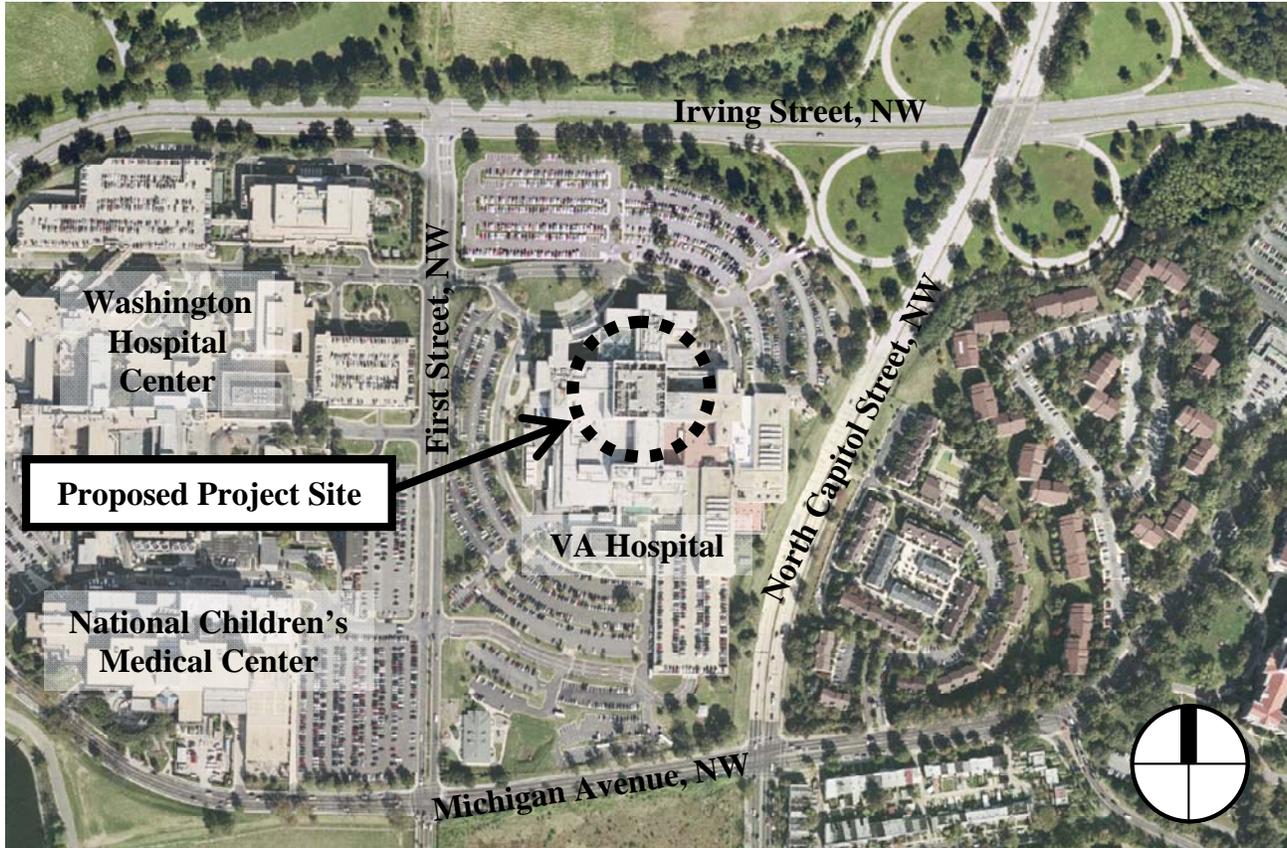
Approves the preliminary and final building plans for twelve transmitting and receiving antennas and an equipment shelter located on the rooftop of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center located at 50 Irving Street, NW in Washington, D.C., as shown on NCPC Map File No. 12.20(38.30)-41662, for a period not to exceed ten years.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site

The Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center is located on a 34 acre site in northwest Washington, D.C. and is bounded to the north by Irving Street, NW, to the east by North Capitol Street, to the south by Michigan Avenue, NW and to the east by First Street, NW. The Washington Hospital Center and National Children’s Medical Center are located to the west, the McMillan Reservoir property is located to the south, and the Armed Forces Retirement Home is located to the north.

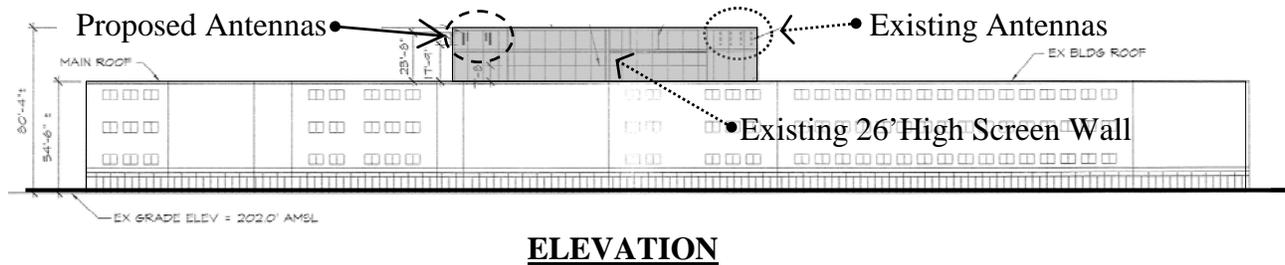
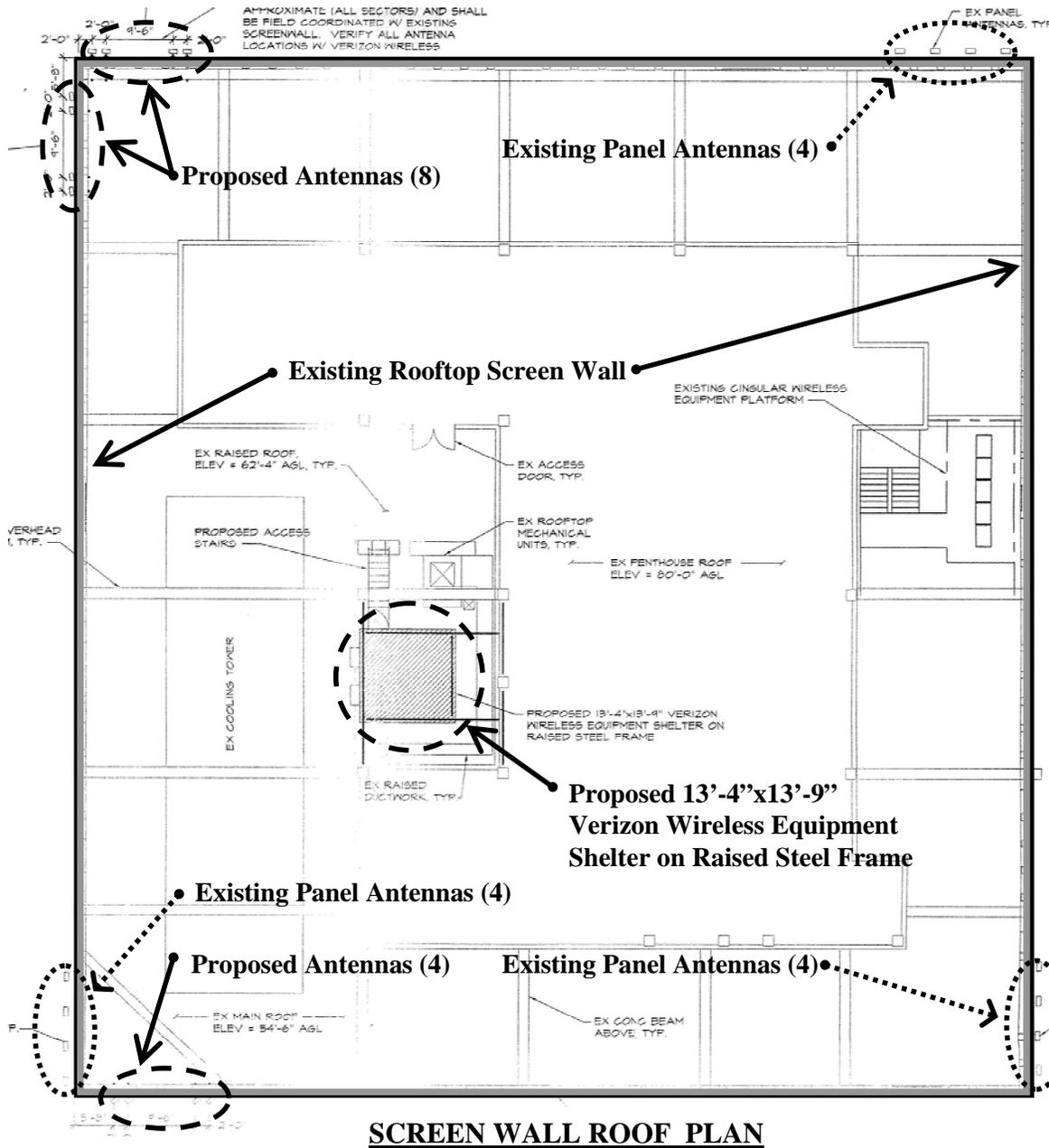


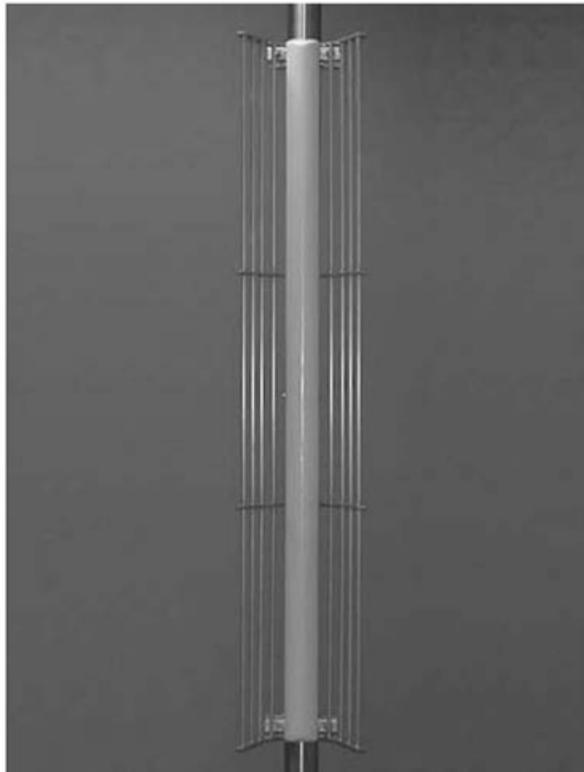
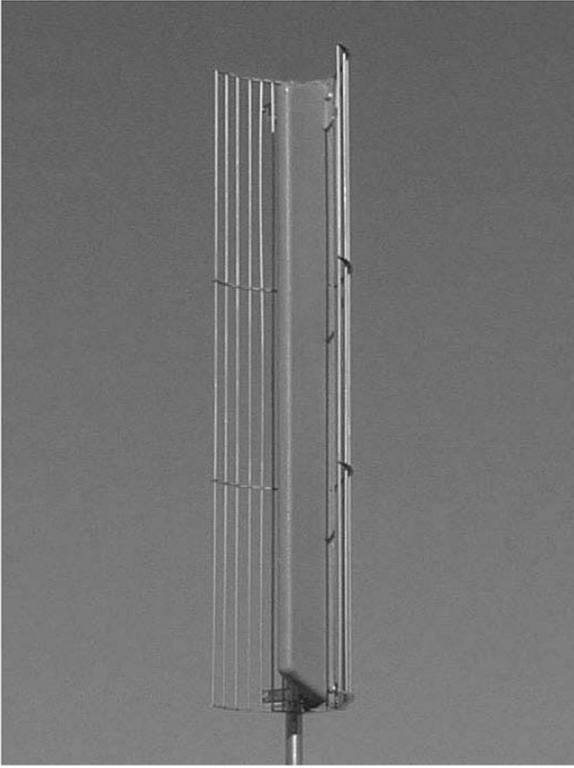
AERIAL

Proposal

The proposed Verizon Wireless telecommunications installation will provide quality coverage and capacity in the vicinity of the Washington Hospital Center and National Children’s Medical Center located in northwest Washington. Twelve antennas (six approximately 5 feet by 11 inches by 8 inches and six approximately 8 feet by 21 inches by 14 inches) will be flush mounted to the existing, 26-foot-high, rooftop penthouse screen wall which is set back from the edge of the building parapet. The antennas will not extend above the screen wall and will be painted to match the existing screen wall finish. The project will include installing a wireless equipment

shelter, approximately 13 feet by 14 feet, in the center of the roof behind and below the existing screen wall.





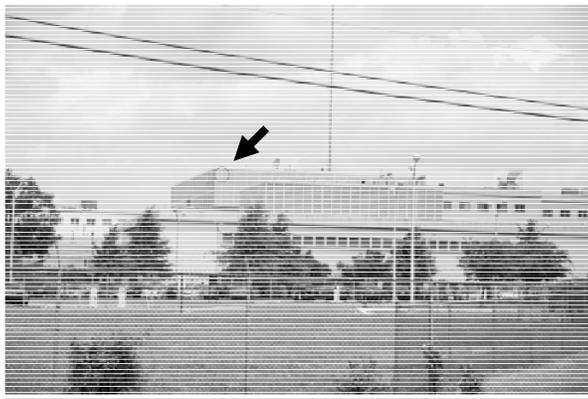
ANTENNAS



NORTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The **staff recommends approval** of the preliminary and final site and building plans for the installation of twelve antennas and equipment shelter. The submission is consistent with the Commission's preference for collocation of antennas when possible. The proposed antennas will visually blend and be finished to match the existing rooftop screen wall.

Installation of the antennas is consistent with policies set forth in the Telecommunications Act of 1996; and the President's Memorandum dated August 10, 1995 which specifically directs federal departments and agencies to make federal property available for the placement of new telecommunications service equipment.

The proposal was evaluated in accordance with the Commission's policy set forth in Section I of the "Guidelines and Submission Requirements for Antennas on Federal Property in the National Capital Region," approved, January 7, 1988, as amended in August 2001. The applicant submitted certification that the proposed project conforms to Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Occupational Health & Safety Administration (OSHA) standards regarding radio frequency emissions. The maximum power densities are well below the maximum permissible exposure standards established by the Federal Communications Commission. Cumulative RF effects are not significant and would not impact people on the ground in any general public area.

Since the proposed project is located outside of the Monumental Core and the Commission has the authority to approve antennas for a period of ten years for projects in these locations, staff recommends that this approval be limited to ten years.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

Staff has determined that the proposed project is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*, in particular the Federal Environment Element. The proposed project will "...collocate antennas to reduce aesthetic impacts and limits the area of radio frequency (RF) exposure."

Master Plan

The Commission approved a revised master plan for the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in April 1979. The proposed antennas are not inconsistent with the master plan.

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

Pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Commission staff has

reviewed the submission and has found the applicant specified that the proposal is consistent with the Commission's Categorical Exclusion provisions at Section 8 of the Commission's Environmental Procedures. The staff finds the Section 8 Categorical Exclusion applies to the proposal regarding criteria of collocation of transmitting antennas on federal property. The submitted RF information for operation of the antennas confirms the elements coincide with all environmental impact criteria of the Federal Communications Commission.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

The applicant has determined that the project is not subject to Section 106 review of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposed project at its meeting on August 17, 2005, and forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies participating. The participating agencies were: NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; the District of Columbia Department of Housing and Community Development; the District of Columbia Fire Department; the General Services Administration; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) staff reviewed the project and found no objections. CFA staff noted that the project would not require a formal presentation to their Commission.