

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT

Project #/Name	SP-2024-19: UVA CCU PWSF
Review Type	Advisory Review for a Tier III Personal Wireless Services Facility
Parcel Identification	07600-00-00-05500
Location	1201 5 th Street (Fig. 1)
Zoned	Highway Commercial (HC) / Entrance Corridor (EC)
Owner/Applicant	University of Virginia Community Credit Union Inc. / Williams Mullen (Valerie Long)
Magisterial District	Scottsville
Proposal	To construct a new 165'-tall monopole tower approximately 400' to the northeast of the existing 155.5' tower on the same parcel, and to construct related features including an enclosed lease area at the base of the tower and associated equipment. The existing tower will be removed.
Context	The site is located north of I64 and west of 5 th St. A mix of commercial development is located along 5 th St. north of the interchange. Residential developments are to the northwest and south of the Interstate. Gardens and parkland are to the west. An existing telecommunications facility stands just west of the existing building.
ARB Meeting Date	September 16, 2024
Staff Contact	Margaret Maliszewski

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

- Tier III Personal Wireless Service Facilities are permitted by special use permit in accord with Chapter 18, Section 24.2.2(16) of the Code of Albemarle and are subject to the supplementary regulations in Chapter 18, Section [5.1.40](#). The Board of Supervisors approved revisions to the wireless ordinance on 9/4/24.
- The Architectural Review Board (ARB) advises the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on impacts of the visibility of wireless facilities on the Entrance Corridors (ECs). A Certificate of Appropriateness from the ARB is required for the base equipment portion of telecommunications facilities in the ECs. The ARB may impose conditions on the Certificate, based on the EC Guidelines, and consistent with Section 5.1.40 of the Zoning Ordinance.
- The existing building on site predates the establishment of the ECs. The ARB reviewed a preliminary proposal for a new bank headquarters building for this site on July 15, 2024. An incomplete demolition permit application (B2024-2041) was received for the existing building on 6/28/24.
- A balloon test was conducted on August 27, 2024, to assist in determining impacts of the current proposal.

PROJECT DETAILS The proposal includes the following:

- Installation of a 165'-tall monopole (plus a 2'-tall lightning rod) located approximately 462' from the property line along I64 and 409' from the property line along 5th St.
- Steel pole color to be matte grey.
- A lease area of 1,488 sf (18' x 82'), accommodating 4 users each with lease areas measuring 15' x 16'. Lease area located in the north corner of the existing parking lot, occupying approximately 10 existing parking spaces.
- Installation of ground equipment within the lease areas, surrounded by a screening fence, with equipment height not to exceed fence height.
- Screening fence to be 8'-tall board-on-board wooden (pressure treated Southern yellow pine) fence surrounding the lease area.
- A row of 7 trees is proposed on the north side of the lease area, wrapping around the short ends of the lease area. A note specifies the trees as "large deciduous trees for screening".
- Creation of a 10'-wide utility easement within the existing paved parking lot.
- Installation of at least 2, and likely more, arrays of antennas. Number of arrays to comply with Albemarle County ordinance requirements. Applicant proposes no limit to number of arrays.
- Antenna color to match pole color.
- Antenna size and projection to comply with Albemarle County ordinance requirements. Narrative says antennas are proposed to be no more than 6' from the monopole.

ANALYSIS REGARDING THE GROUND EQUIPMENT

A Certificate of Appropriateness from the ARB is required for the base equipment portion of telecommunications facilities in the ECs. The ARB may impose conditions on the Certificate of Appropriateness, based on the EC Guidelines, and consistent with Section 5.1.40 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Ref	Guideline	Issues	Recommendations
	Accessory structures and equipment		
17	The following should be screened to eliminate visibility from the Entrance Corridor street: e) Mechanical equipment	The applicant proposes to install an 8'-tall board-on-board wood fence around the lease area. A note on the plan indicates that all ground equipment will be less than 8' in height. If all contents of the lease area (other than the pole) are less than 8' tall, the proposed fence will provide sufficient screening. The fenced lease area is not expected to be visible from the I64 corridor. It will have limited visibility from the 5th St. corridor, from distances ranging from approximately 500' to 900'. (Fig. 2) Trees located in the right-of-way or on the property will filter the views, particularly when leaves are on the trees. The trees proposed along the fence won't screen the fence (or the equipment within). Shrubs or other low-to-mid-level planting along the fence could help blend the fence into the surroundings. Distance is expected to mitigate the view of the lease area from the 5th St. EC.	Because the ground equipment is expected to be sufficiently screened from the ECs by the wooden fence, and because the fence is expected to have minimal visual impact on the ECs, staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the ground equipment and base station as proposed. Note that low-to-mid-level planting along the lease area fence could help blend the fence into the surroundings.



Fig. 2: View of the lease area from the 5th St. corridor. (The light-colored vehicle in the parking lot is located where the lease area would be at its closest point to the 5th St. corridor.)

ANALYSIS REGARDING VISIBILITY OF THE FACILITY

The ARB may act in an advisory capacity to the Agent as to whether the facility is being sited to minimize its visibility.

If constructed as proposed, visibility and the visual impact of the monopole are expected to be similar to that of the existing facility. The proposed monopole is expected to be somewhat less visible from the I64 corridor and somewhat more visible from the 5th St. corridor than the existing pole. (Fig. 3)

During the balloon test, the balloon was intermittently visible from I64 from approximately the vicinity of Azalea Park (Fig. 4) west of the interchange to the on/off ramps east of the interchange. When the balloon was visible, it was skylit and well above the trees.

On 5th St. the balloon was visible in the vicinity of the County Office Building at 5th St. (Fig. 5) It was also visible approaching the interchange and, on the overpass, traveling northbound. (Fig. 6) The balloon was visible southbound on 5th St. from the city/county line and the site entrance. (Fig. 7) It was visible from both ramps on the north side of the Interstate. (Fig. 8) In these locations, the balloon was skylit and flying well above the trees. The balloon was also minimally visible through the trees in the right-of-way, from the site entrance to the ramps on 5th St. (Fig. 2)

Ref	Guideline	Issues	Recommendations
	Development pattern		
33	The relationship of buildings and other structures to the Entrance Corridor street and to other development within the corridor should be as follows: f. The placement of structures on the site should respect existing views and vistas on and around the site.	The balloon test confirmed that the proposed facility will be visible from both corridors, in some locations skylit and well above the trees. However, that degree of visibility is generally consistent with the current condition and no additional negative impacts on the general character of the area are expected.	Given the degree of visibility displayed at the balloon test, the proposed location of the facility is expected to result in similar visual impacts as are produced by the existing facility. No additional negative impacts on the general character of the area are expected.

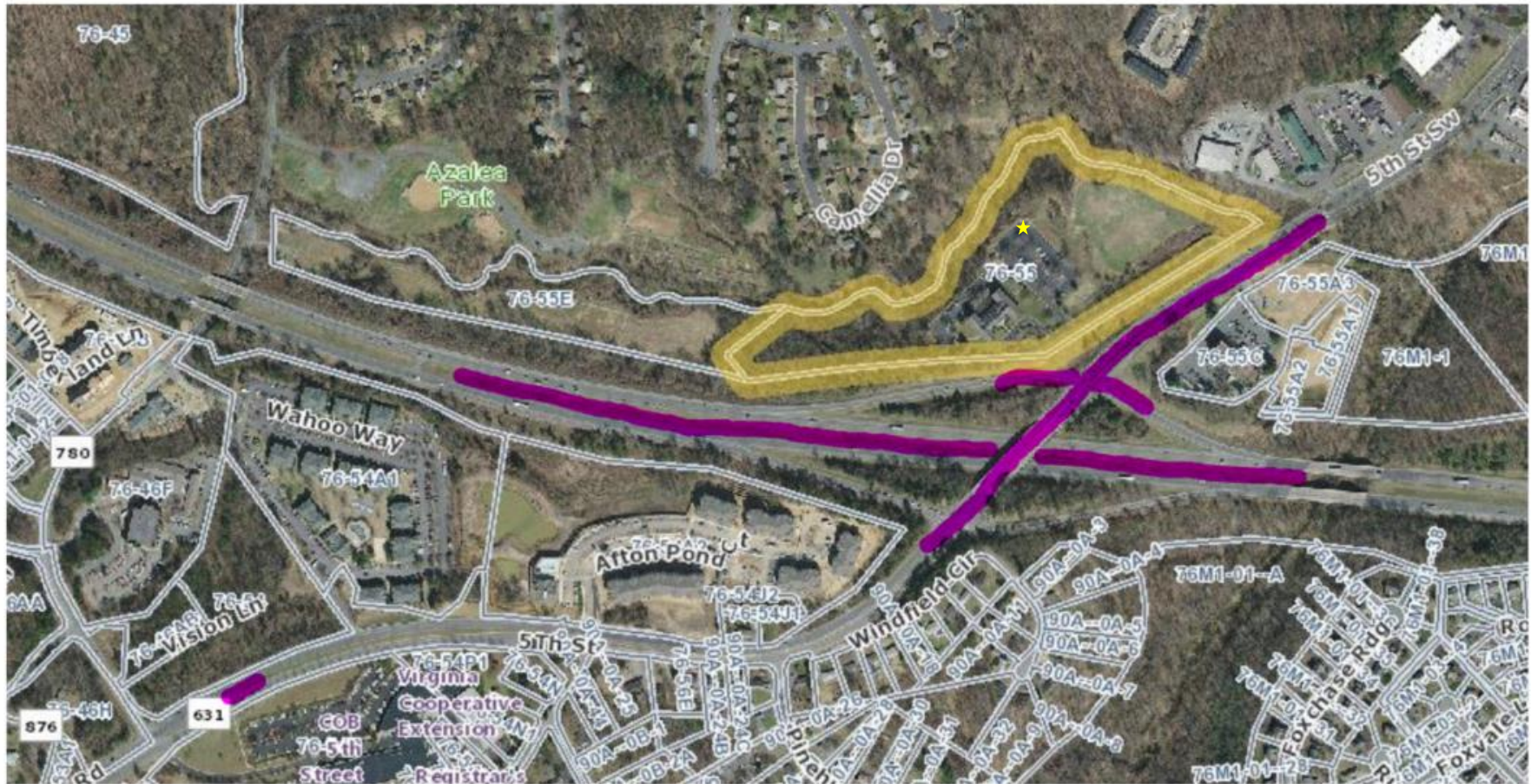


Fig. 3: Purple highlight identifies approximate areas of visibility of the balloon from the Entrance Corridors.



Fig. 4: View of the balloon from I64 eastbound in the vicinity of Azalea Park, approaching the interchange.



Fig. 5: View of the balloon traveling north on 5th St. near the County Office Building.



Fig. 6: View of the balloon traveling north on 5th St. at the interchange.



Fig. 7: View from southbound 5th St. facing west near the entrance into the site.



Fig. 8: View of the balloon from I64 westbound at the off-ramp to 5th St. facing north/northwest.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Points of Discussion

1. Anticipated visibility of the ground equipment and base station; proposed landscaping
2. Anticipated visibility of the monopole and resulting visual impacts

Recommendations

Regarding the Certificate of Appropriateness for the ground equipment and base station:

Because the ground equipment is expected to be sufficiently screened from the ECs by the wooden fence, and because the fence is expected to have minimal visual impact on the Entrance Corridor, staff recommends approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness for the ground equipment and base station. Note that low-to-mid-level planting along the lease area fence could help blend the fence into the surroundings.

Regarding visibility of the monopole:

Staff recommends that the ARB forward the following recommendation to the Agent:

The ARB finds that the proposed location of the facility is expected to result in similar visual impacts as are produced by the existing facility. No additional negative impacts on the general character of the area are expected.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attach. 1: [SP2024-19: UVA CCU PWSF: Plan \(Revised\)](#)
Attach. 2: [SP2024-19: UVA CCU PWSF: Existing Condition Images](#)
Attach. 3: [SP2024-19: UVA CCU PWSF: Project Narrative](#)
Attach. 4: [SP2024-19: UVA CCU PWSF: Photo-simulations](#)