



REPORT TO CITY PLAN COMMISSION

Plan Commission Public Hearing Date: October 21, 2013

Common Council Meeting Date: November 6, 2013

Item: Special Use Permit #14-13 for a Wireless Telecommunication Tower

Case Manager: Brad Schmidt, AICP *BS*

GENERAL INFORMATION

Owner/Applicant: Rice Enterprises, Owner
Kelly Schmitz (Wireless Planning, LLC) representing Cellcom, Applicant

Address/Parcel #: 1050 S. Grider Street (31-3-4000-00)

Petitioner's Request: The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit for a 195-foot monopole telecommunication tower with associated ground equipment.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Existing Site Conditions: The subject property is zoned M-2, General Industrial district. Wireless telecommunication towers require a Special Use Permit in the M-2 district. The subject property is currently used by a construction company and an architectural firm according to most recent assessor records. An open area exists south of the existing building on the subject site which appears to be used for outdoor storage. The area is enclosed with an approximate 8-foot tall chain link fence with privacy slats and topped with barbed wire.

Special Use Permit: The proposed wireless telecommunication facility is to be located within the enclosed area on the south side of the site in an area 2,500 square feet in size (See Attached Site Plan). Within this area the applicant is proposing to construct a 195-foot monopole wireless telecommunication tower and associated ground equipment. The proposed location of the tower and ground equipment meet the minimum setback standards in the M-2 district.

The proposed site would be enclosed within the existing chain link fence on the south and west sides and a new chain link fence on the east and north sides. The existing and proposed chain link security fence includes barbed wire to prohibit unauthorized access to the site.

Zoning Code Article XIII Sec. 23-424 (i) (2) requires a 4-foot wide landscaped buffer of plant materials around the wireless telecommunication facility. The applicant has not included this buffer in their proposal; however, the site plan review coordinator has the authority to reduce or waive this requirement in locations where visual impact of the tower and ground equipment would be minimal. In this case, the proposed location of the wireless telecommunication facility is located in an industrial area surrounded by industrial users on all sides including an existing large radio tower to the north. Residential properties are located approximately 400 feet from the tower location (See Map A). The closest residential properties are separated from the proposed site by a railroad corridor. Additionally, the proposed site is enclosed by an 8-foot tall chain link fence with privacy slats. Large mature trees approximately 40 feet in height are located just outside the proposed site and add additional screening from property owners to the south.

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Staff does not believe the surrounding property owners will have a negative visual impact from this proposed use (See Attached Photos).

The applicant is proposing a new telecommunication tower as opposed to co-locating on an existing tower or structure. The Zoning Code requires the applicant to demonstrate why co-location of their wireless telecommunication equipment was not chosen as an alternative to constructing a new tower. The applicant submitted a letter from Cellcom's Director of Engineering describing why they choose to construct a new tower over co-locating on an existing tower or structure (See Attached Letter). According to the propagation map provided with the letter, Cellcom has a weak signal strength and low capacity around the area of the proposed site. In addition the applicant describes how Cellcom has used co-location in the surrounding area, but the options to co-locate are not feasible in this situation. The new proposed wireless telecommunication tower has the capability of supporting additional tenants and will work with other carriers who are seeking co-location options.

Surrounding zoning and land uses:

North:	Zoning: M-2 Land Use(s): Valley Transit garage and office
South:	Zoning: M-2 Land Use(s): Wisconsin Central LTD railroad corridor
West:	Zoning: M-2 Land Use(s): Appleton Supply Co. and WEMI (FM) radio station
East:	Zoning: M-2 Land Use(s): Wisconsin Central LTD rail yard

2010-2030 Comprehensive Plan: The Community Development staff has reviewed the City's 2010-2030 Comprehensive Plan which indicates this area is appropriate for a wireless telecommunication tower and associated ground equipment. The proposed Special Use Permit for the subject parcel is consistent with the following goal of the 2010-2030 Comprehensive Plan:

Overall Community Goals

■ **Goal 1 – Community Growth** (Chapter 10 – Land Use)

Appleton will continue to provide opportunities for residential, commercial, and industrial growth, including appropriate redevelopment sites within the downtown and existing neighborhoods and greenfield development sites at the City's edge.

Finding of Fact: This request was reviewed in accordance with the standards for granting a Special Use Permit under 23-66 (e)(1-6) and Article XIII of the Zoning Code, which were found in the affirmative.

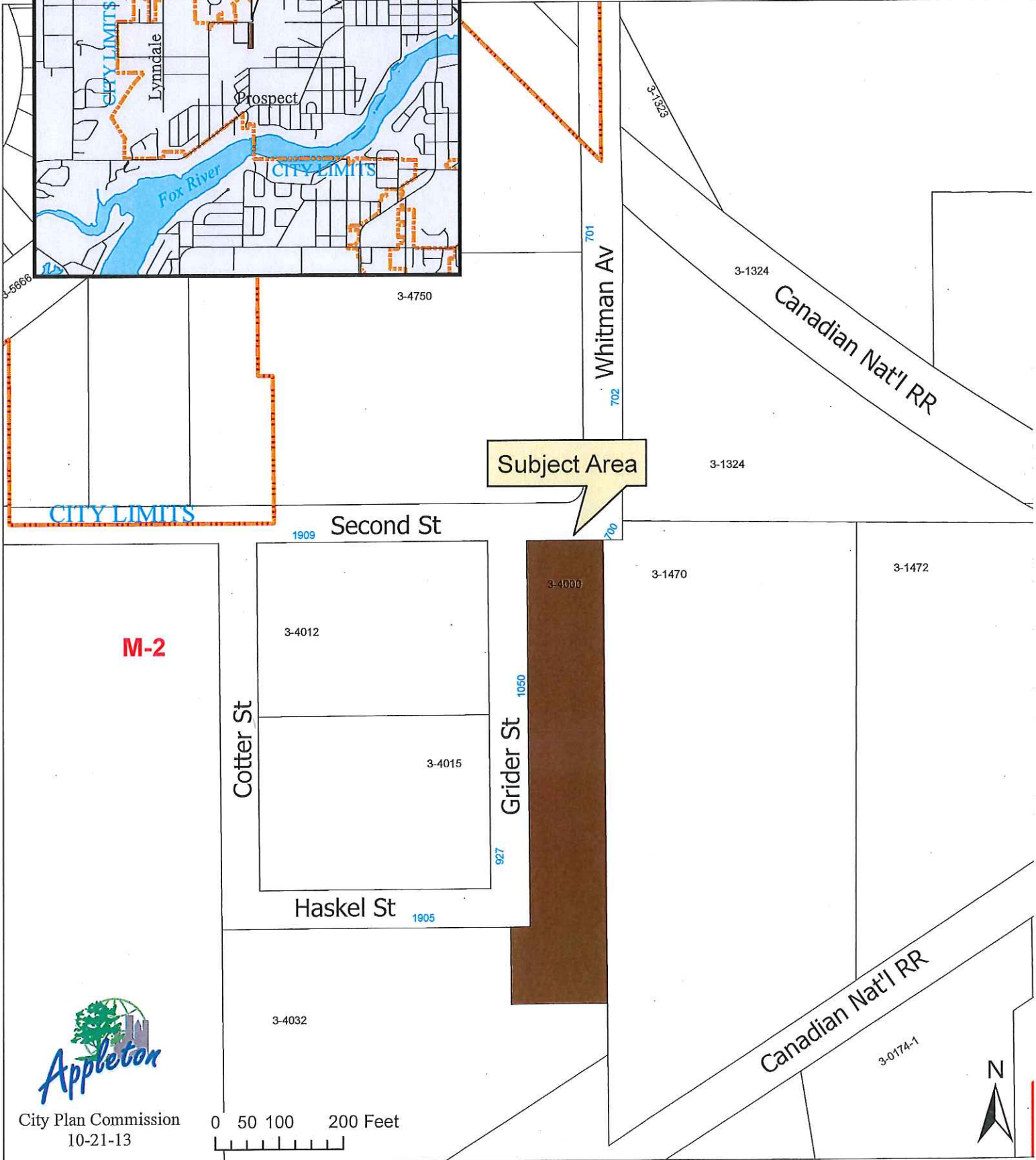
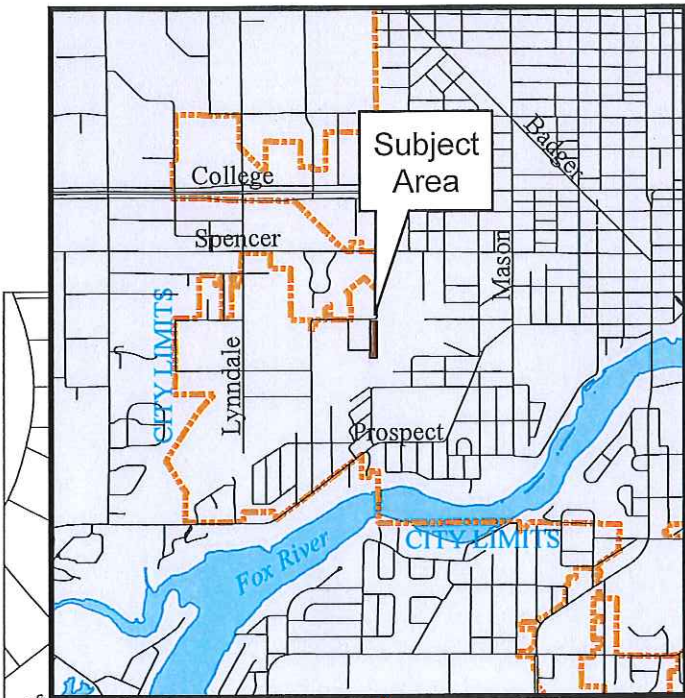
Technical Review Group Report (TRG): This item was discussed at the October 8, 2013, Technical Review Group meeting. No negative comments were received.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends, based on the above, that Special Use Permit #14-13 for a wireless telecommunication tower and associate ground equipment, subject to the following conditions, **BE APPROVED:**

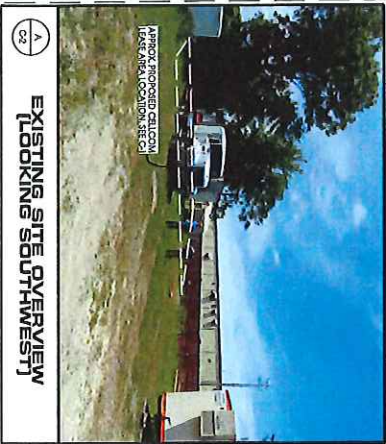
1. A site plan review application must be submitted and approved by the Community and Economic Development Department prior to building permits being issued for the construction of the proposed wireless telecommunication facility.
2. The approved security fencing with privacy slats as described above must be maintained so as to fully screen the wireless telecommunication facility site. If this screening becomes ineffective or removed, the land owner is responsible for ensuring that screening is maintained and that any new screening is approved by the Community and Economic Development Department before installation.
3. Compliance with the approved site plan at all times. Changes to the approved site plan may require an amendment to the Special Use Permit.

1050 South Grider Street
 Special Use Permit
 Cellcom Telecommunication Tower
 Zoning Map

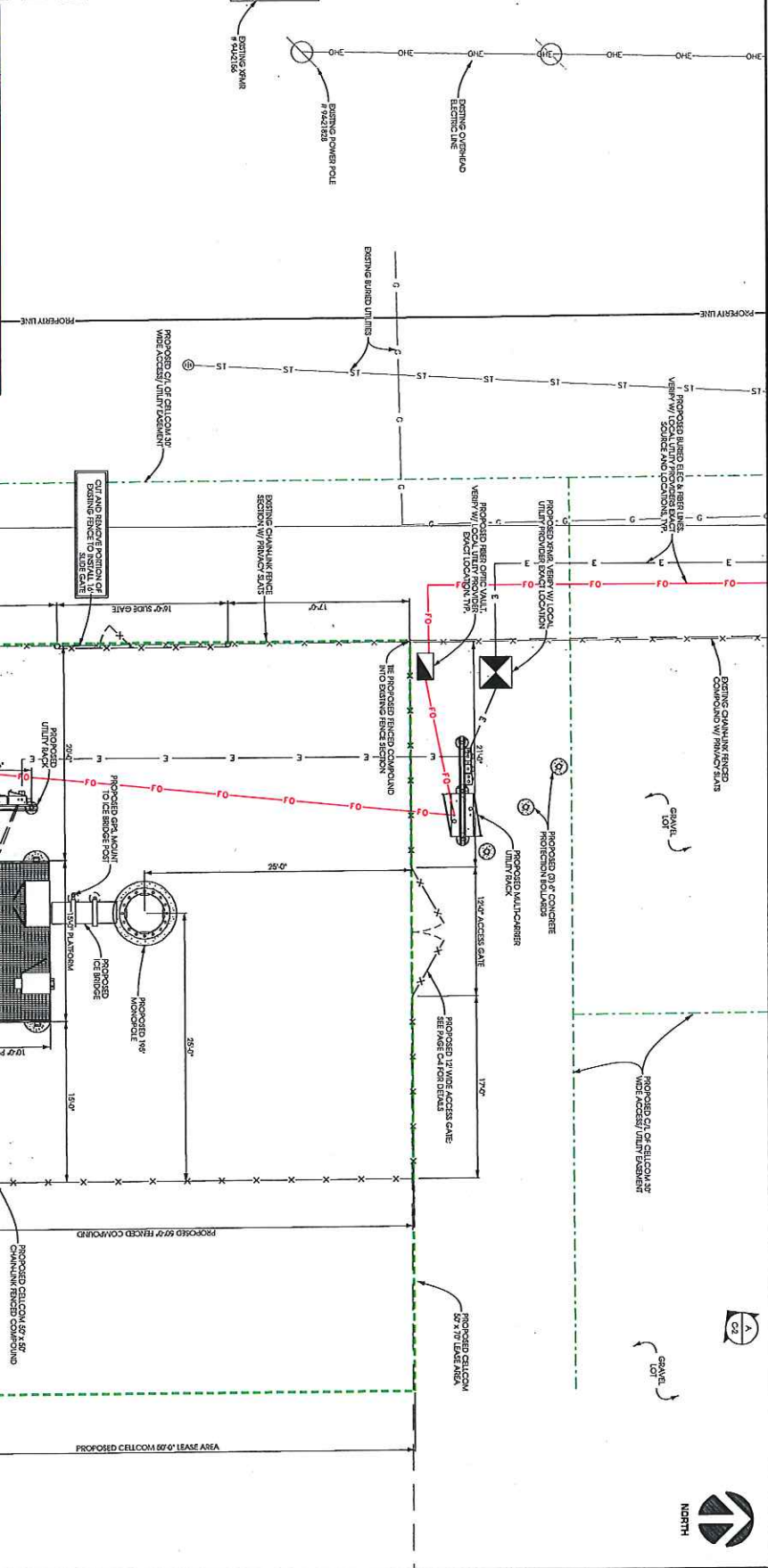


M-2





EXISTING SITE OVERVIEW (LOOKING SOUTHWEST)



SHEET NUMBER:		C-2	
DATE:	DESIGNED BY:	DRAWN BY:	CHECKED BY:
PROJECT NAME:	PROJECT NUMBER:	DATE:	SCALE:
<p>EDGE CONSULTING ENGINEERS, INC.</p> <p>424 Water Street P.O. Box 1649 Green Bay, WI 53037 Phone: 920.444.1649 Fax: 920.444.1649 www.edgeconsult.com</p>			

COMPOUND PLAN

XAVIER H.S. / PREMIER PLUMBING

GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

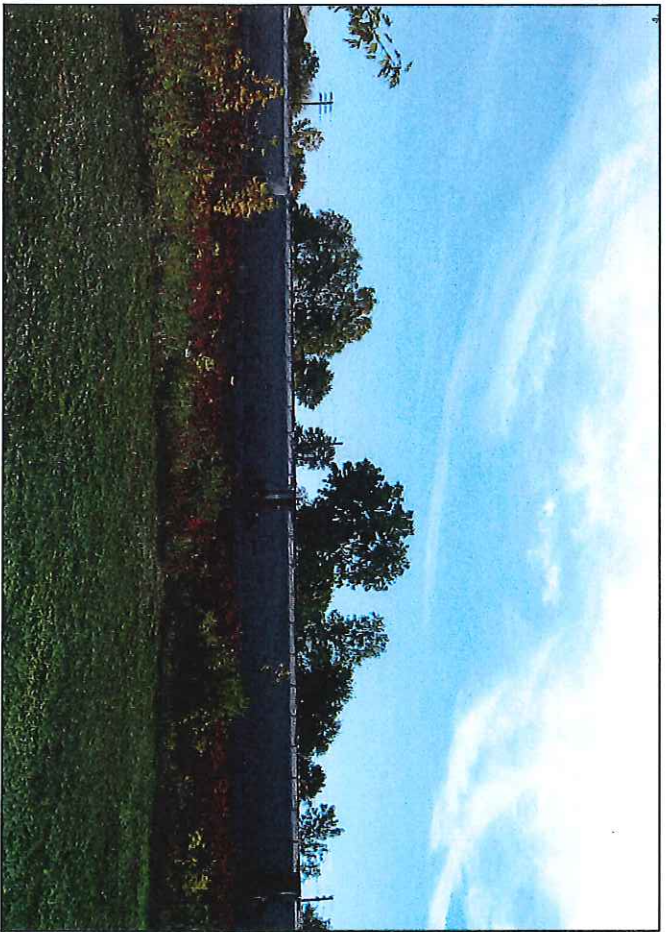
Edge
 Consulting Engineers, Inc.
 424 Water Street
 P.O. Box 1649
 Green Bay, WI 53037
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 Fax: 920.444.1649
 www.edgeconsult.com



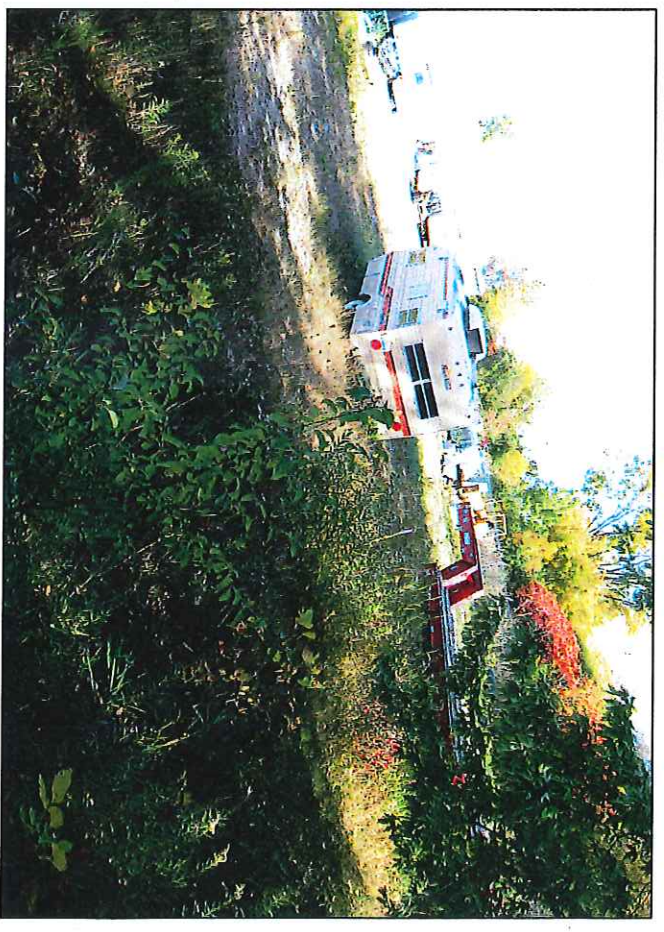
MAP A

Wireless Telecommunication Tower Distance from Surrounding Properties

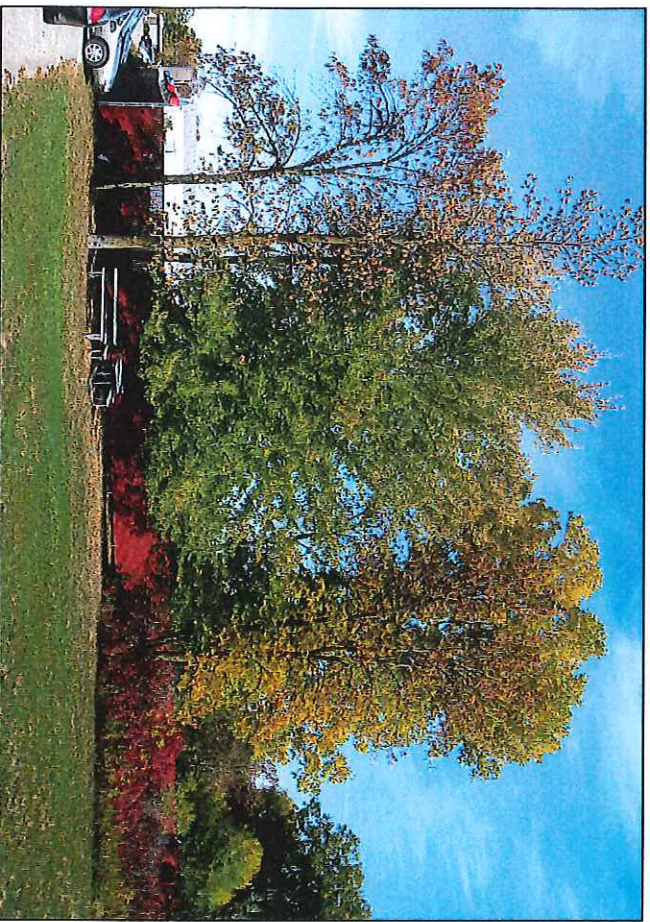




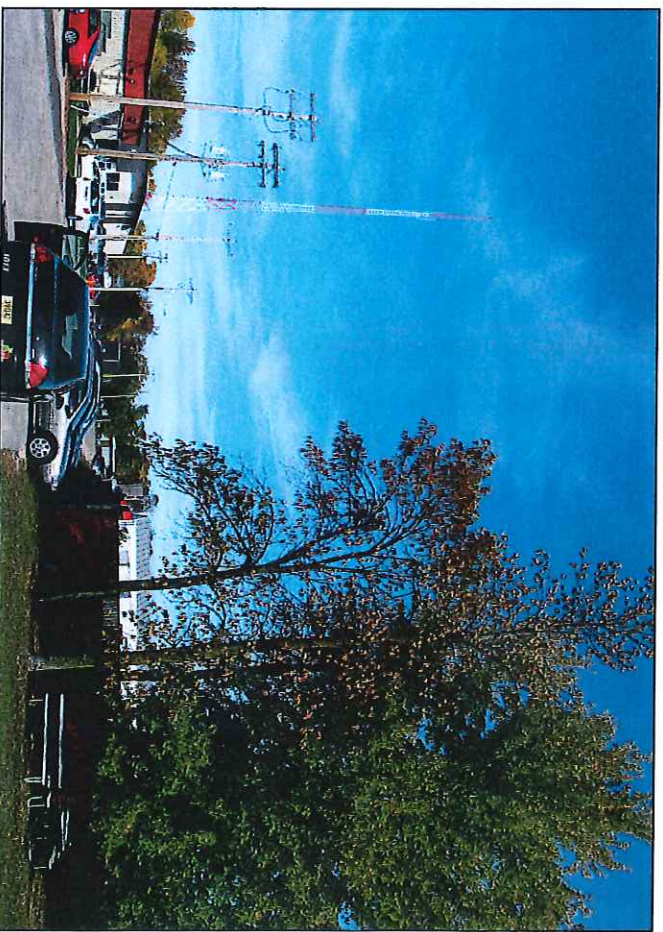
Standing on south side of property looking south



Standing on south side of property looking north over fence



Standing on south side of property looking north



Standing on south side of property looking north

Memo

To: Brad Schmidt
From: Bob Sobieck
CC: Kelly Schmitz, Jim Weinmann
Date: October 15, 2013
Re: Special Use Permit engineering explanation for proposed tower on South Grider St.

Brad,

The purpose of this memo is to provide information regarding Cellcom's decision to locate the proposed tower at this location and why co-location on an existing structure is unacceptable per your October 3, 2013 letter to Kelly Schmitz at Wireless Planning and City of Appleton Special Use Requirements.

Please refer to the attached propagation map showing Cellcom's existing coverage. Cellcom has a large area of weak signal strength and low capacity in the area around Xavier High School. Weak coverage areas exist south of Xavier across the Fox River to Valley Road, west of Xavier to Lyndale, east of Xavier to the river, and northeast of Xavier to College Avenue. In order to cover this area a site needed to be located on the north side of the river in the vicinity of Xavier High School. A new site in this area will increase signal strength, add much needed capacity to Cellcom's current system, and increase wireless internet speed and reliability. Each of these are required for effective 4G deployment in Appleton.

There is one existing tower near the proposed tower site that was considered for co-location. This tower is approximately 300 yards northwest of the proposed tower location. The tower is owned by the radio station WEMI. This tower was rejected as a possible co-location site for technical and structural reasons. This tower's primary function is for radio transmission. Radio transmission towers are generally dismissed by carriers because of the time and money required to make the engineering compatible. In addition, carriers have other concerns namely worker safety because of the high power FM transmitters. In addition, the tower is not structurally capable of supporting Cellcom's proposed loading. Cellcom has not performed a formal structural analysis of the tower because a visual inspection provide sufficient information. The WEMI tower might be capable of supporting up to 3 Cellcom antennas but Cellcom's loading for this site ranges from 6 antennas to 12 antennas depending on market growth and customer usage. The WEMI tower is not capable of supporting this loading. There are no other towers within a reasonable distance to the desired coverage area.

The attached propagation map shows Cellcom's other existing sites which surround the proposed site. These sites are as follows:

- BSC0404: Holiday Inn 1.67 miles from proposed site. Rooftop site.

- BSC0418: College Ave Tower .6 miles from proposed site. Tower co-location site.
- BSC0402: 222 Building 1.6 miles from proposed site. Rooftop site.
- BSC0735: Lawrence University 1.8 miles from proposed site. Rooftop site.
- BSC0739: St. Elizabeth's Hospital 1.7 miles from proposed site. Rooftop site.
- BSC0423: UW Fox Valley 1.7 miles from proposed site. Tower co-location site.

As the bullet point list above shows, Cellcom has utilized co-location on existing structures for each of the 6 existing sites which cover the majority of Appleton. Cellcom does not own either of the towers listed above. This is Cellcom's first tower proposal in a 2 to 3 mile radius which shows Cellcom's willingness to work with the City and accept co-location rather than propose a new tower. Unfortunately in this case, Cellcom is not able to co-locate on any existing structures so a new tower is being proposed.

Cellcom intends to make the tower capable of supporting additional tenants and will work with any other carrier who seeks space for co-location.

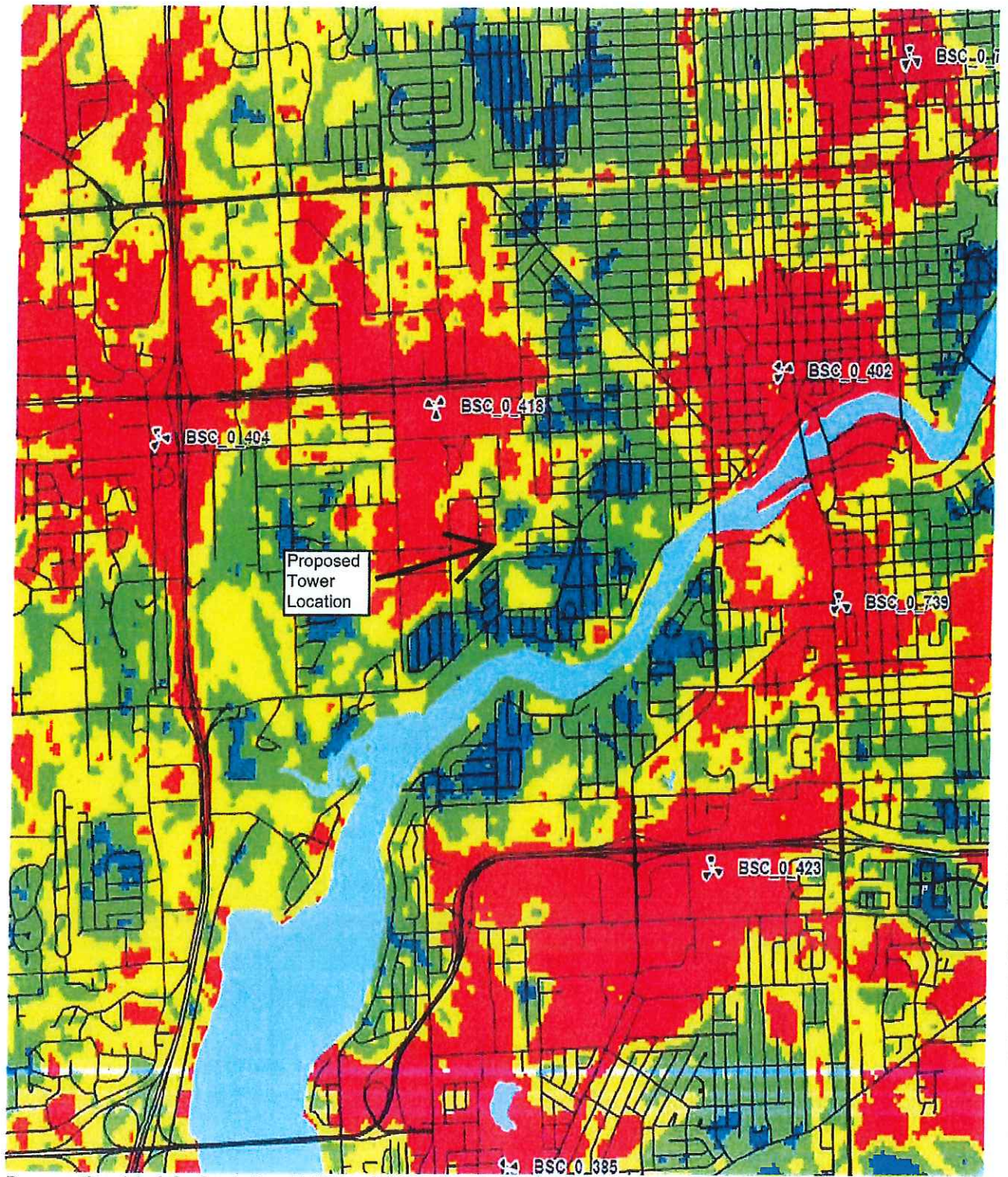
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 920-617-7066.

Thank you,



Robert Sobieck

Director of Engineering, Cellcom



Propagation Model of existing Cellcom Sites