

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment

FROM: Karen Thomas, Case Manager

Joel Joel Lawson, Associate Director Development Review

DATE: April 24, 2025

SUBJECT: BZA Case 21276: Special Exception application by Verizon Wireless to construct a new monopole at 151 T Street SE

I. OFFICE OF PLANNING RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning (OP) recommends **approval** of the following:

- Special exception pursuant to Subtitle X, § 900.2 from Subtitle C § 1313.2 for a monopole 94 feet in height.

II. LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Address	151 T Street SE
Applicant	Verizon Wireless/DGS
Legal Description	Square 3530, Lot 0891
Ward / ANC	Ward 5; ANC 5F
Zone	RF-1: Intended for moderate density single-family homes and institutional uses.
Historic District	N/A
Lot Characteristics	The lot is irregularly shaped and owned by the District government.
Existing Development	The property is developed by the McKinley Technical High School, the Langley Elementary School, McKinley Tech's athletic track and some portions of the Harry Thomas Recreation Center located to the west fronting Lincoln Road.
Adjacent Properties	The property abuts the side yard of a semi-detached row dwelling to the west and an east west alley along its southern property line separating the rear yards of row homes which front R Street NE.
Surrounding Neighborhood Character	The neighborhood is developed primarily with a variety of row dwellings, including two- and three-story homes from North Capitol Street to the west, Rhode Island Avenue to the north, Q Street to the south and 3 rd Street to the east.
Proposed Development	Verizon Wireless intends to construct a 94-foot tall monopole as a replacement for an existing light pole to accommodate antenna arrays for the carrier.

III. OFFICE OF PLANNING ANALYSIS

Subtitle C Section 1313.2 permits a monopole as a special exception use in the R, RF, RA, MU, D, and most **PDR** zones, and the zones of Subtitle K, where monopoles are permitted as a matter-of-right subject to Subtitle C § 1309.

Special Exception Relief pursuant to § 1313.1 – Monopoles Subject to BZA Approval

i. Special Conditions/Criteria

Section	Criteria	OP Response
§1313.5	<i>The location, height, and other characteristics of an antenna tower or monopole shall be:</i>	
(a)	<i>Consistent with the purpose of this chapter;</i>	The location of the proposed monopole within the athletic field is consistent with the purposes of the chapter, which permits necessary antenna facilities, while ensuring the safety of the population and minimizing their impact on the aesthetic interests of the District of Columbia (C-1300.1). The proposed pole would not appear significantly different from light fixtures on the field and due to its location, OP does not anticipate an adverse visual impact.
(b)	<i>Designed and available for collocation by other service providers;</i>	The proposed monopole would be designed for collocation of wireless carriers.
(c)	<i>Located so the visual impacts are minimized to the greatest practical extent, from neighboring property and adjacent public space, or appropriately screened by landscaping or other techniques to minimize the visibility of the antenna tower or monopole; and</i>	The monopole would be located away from residential properties. It would be visible from public space but located within the large campus and well set back from any public street where there are street trees that may obstruct some views at grade level. Its visibility from public spaces would be like that of existing light poles that are typically observed from those spaces.
(d)	<i>Designed and constructed to preserve existing trees to the greatest practical extent.</i>	The immediate area around the monopole is without trees. The equipment area for the monopole would be fenced.
§1313.6	<p><i>If an applicant is unable to meet the special exception requirements of section, the Board of Zoning Adjustment may nevertheless grant the application if the applicant demonstrates that:</i></p> <p>(a) <i>There is a significant gap in wireless service;</i></p> <p>(b) <i>The proposed <u>antenna tower or monopole</u> will fill this gap;</i></p>	<p>The installation would satisfy the criteria, as follows:</p> <p>A significant gap in wireless service is anticipated when existing antennas which serve the coverage area will be soon decommissioned. As stated by the applicant, Verizon Wireless has responsibility to provide the District's First Net emergency coverage and improve coverage in the surrounding area. Justification with related coverage maps. The replacement pole would fill the gap as stated and shown on its coverage map.</p>

Section	Criteria	OP Response
	<p><i>(c) No other mounting options are available;</i></p> <p><i>(d) The site is the only location from which the gap can be filled or, if other sites are available, the antenna tower or monopole at the proposed location will generate the least adverse impacts;</i></p> <p><i>(e) That the height and other physical design characteristics of the proposed antenna tower or monopole do not exceed those which are minimally necessary to fill the gap in wireless service;</i></p> <p><i>(f) That it is using the least intrusive means to provide wireless service necessary to fill the gap in such service; and</i></p> <p><i>(g) That the proposed antenna tower and monopole, even when supporting all possible co-locators will be in full compliance with FCC's cumulative and individual RF emission levels.</i></p>	<p>The applicant has documented that no other co-location opportunities were available to fill this gap in service by examining possibilities within a 2-mile radius. There are two towers within two miles, but both are too far outside of the desired coverage area and the available heights on the poles are below the desired height to meet the coverage goals for the commercial carrier and for DC's emergency systems.</p> <p>At this location the pole would generate the least impact due to visibility, since it would be among like structures and in the industrial zone where such structures are anticipated.</p> <p>The proposed monopole is the minimum height to provide the desired coverage for Verizon which would be placed at 90 feet on the pole. This location, away from residential uses, is the least intrusive means to provide the necessary services for the general public and the District.</p> <p>The pole will comply with all FCC requirements, per the applicant's statement of Exhibit 8, Page 59.</p>
§1313.7	<p><i>Any antenna tower or monopole with a proposed height in excess of that permitted by the Act of June 1, 1910 (36 Stat. 452), as amended, shall not be permitted, unless the height is approved by the Mayor or his or her designee</i></p>	<p>The height of the monopole is proposed at 94 feet (to top of lightening rod) and the Height Act is not applicable.</p>
§1313.8	<p><i>An antenna tower or monopole shall be set back a minimum horizontal distance equal to its total height as measured from the ground, from any residentially developed or zoned property.</i></p>	<p>The monopole is set back approximately 350 feet from the closest property line.</p>
§1313.9	<p><i>Each part of an antenna tower or monopole shall be set back from each lot line the greater of the following:</i></p> <p><i>(a) Twenty feet (20 ft.); or</i></p> <p><i>(b) A distance of at least one-third (1/3) of the total constructed height.</i></p>	<p>The proposed monopole would conform to the setback requirements. It would be set back 298.8 feet from the northwest property line, 202-9 feet from the east property line, and 225.7feet from the south property line. These setbacks exceed the minimum 67 feet setback required under this section.</p>

Section	Criteria	OP Response
§1313.10	<i>The Board of Zoning Adjustment shall submit the application to the Office of Planning for review and report.</i>	The application was provided to OP.
§1313.11	<p><i>The applicant shall provide written and/or graphic documentation of the following:</i></p> <p><i>(a) The area to be served by the proposed new antenna tower or monopole;</i></p> <p><i>(b) The area being inadequately served;</i></p> <p><i>(c) A map indicating the location of any other antenna or related facility sites providing service by the applicant within a two (2)-mile radius, including public space, of the proposed site;</i></p> <p><i>(d) Other towers or monopoles within a two (2)-mile radius of the proposed site with identified heights above grade;</i></p> <p><i>(e) An explanation of why the applicant cannot collocate on an existing tower or monopole;</i></p> <p><i>(f) A written statement agreeing to permit the collocation by other service providers on a commercial basis on an antenna tower;</i></p> <p><i>(g) A written statement agreeing to design a proposed monopole for at least three (3) antenna arrays and to make the array space available on a commercial basis for collocation by any telecommunications service provider whenever unused by the initial telecommunications service provider(s);</i></p> <p><i>(h) The topographic conditions of the area to be served;</i></p> <p><i>(i) The relative height of the antenna tower or monopole to the tops of surrounding trees within one-quarter mile (.25 mi.) radius of the proposed site as they presently exist;</i></p> <p><i>(j) The proposed appearance of the antenna tower or monopole, including exterior finish;</i></p> <p><i>(k) A maintenance plan explaining how the property manager will control ice build-up, falling ice, and potential falling debris; the plan should also address how inoperative antennas will be removed; and</i></p>	<p>(a), (b) Verizon's installation on the monopole would maintain and enhance the coverage of the soon to be decommissioned antennas existing at RFK Stadium.</p> <p>See <u>1313.6 (a) (b) (c) above</u></p> <p>(d), (e) The applicant's statement – Exhibit 5, pages 55 – provide two locations including a tower to the north at 279 feet AGL and another 2 miles south neither of which could fulfill the coverage requirements due to its distance outside the coverage gap.</p> <p>(f) Verizon Wireless certifies other commercial wireless operators would be allowed, including ones referenced in this report. There is room for two additional providers to collocate if desired.</p> <p>(g) This statement is included in the applicant's submission including for at least two other carriers at 66 feet and 56 feet (Exhibit 8 Page 4, Paragraph 3) and it is noted on the site plans for permitting on Exhibit 3, Sheet A-1, reproduced at the end of this report.</p> <p>(h) A topographical map of the area to be served was not included separately but a coverage map of the area served was provided.</p> <p>(i) At 94 feet, the proposed monopole would be taller than the nearest set of trees and other trees observed in the area.</p> <p>(j) The existing pole's exterior finish would be silver coating typical of wireless installations.</p> <p>(k) The applicant states that the unmanned equipment facility would be secured by fencing to prevent unwanted entry into the equipment compound. A technician is typically assigned to site visits for routine inspection and maintenance of equipment twice per month.</p>

Section	Criteria	OP Response
	<i>(1) Other information as may be necessary for impact assessment of the antenna tower or monopole.</i>	(1) OP does not require additional information for impact assessment due to the pole's location within the secured property.

ii. Special Exception Review Standards: Subtitle X § 901

Is the proposal in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Regulations and Zoning Maps?

Based on the satisfaction of the above criteria and conditions, the proposed monopole use primarily by Verizon Wireless would be in harmony with the intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations. The location is an appropriate zone, away from residential uses and it would provide colocation opportunities for other carriers as desired by the regulations to reduce the need for other poles in the community.

iii. Would the proposal appear to tend to affect adversely, the use of neighboring property?

The proposal should not adversely affect the use of neighboring property as it is a use presumed compatible within this zone district provided the conditions are adequately met. The proposed monopole would be located on a large campus property and while within a residential zone would not adversely affect residential uses which are not in the immediate vicinity.

IV. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

At the writing of this report, other District agencies' reports were not included in the record.

V. ANC COMMENTS

ANC 5F has not submitted a report to the record at the writing of this report.

VI. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

No comments from individual residents or community members have been submitted to the record to date.

(Provided by the applicant)

