



ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING
STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Project Name: CCP201900002 Regional P25 Radio Infrastructure Project	Staff: Andrew Knuppel, Neighborhood Planner
Planning Commission Public Hearing: September 24, 2019	Board of Supervisors Hearing: N/A
Owner: County of Albemarle	Applicant: County of Albemarle
TMP: 076000000054P0, 076000000054P1, 076000000054N1, 076000000054Z0 Acreage: 13.36 acres	Request for Comprehensive Plan Consistency: Proposal to establish a new public use at an existing public facility.
Location: 1600 5 th Street	Zoning/by-right use: CO Commercial Office – offices, supporting commercial and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre)
Magisterial District: Scottsville	Proffers/Conditions: No
School District: Monticello High School, Burley Middle School, Cale Elementary School	
DA (Development Area): Yes	Requested # of Dwelling Units/Lots: N/A
Proposal: Establish a microwave radio communications facility supporting operations of the Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) at its COB5 backup dispatch and equipment facility. The proposed facility design is a 123 foot tall monopole containing a total of two microwave dish antennas, mounted at 67' and 120' AGL.	Comp. Plan Designation: Institutional – schools, libraries, utilities, hospitals, universities, colleges and other developed and undeveloped publicly owned property in Neighborhood 5 in the Southern Urban Neighborhood.
Character of Property: Developed, mostly cleared site containing County offices and services located between 5 th Street and Stagecoach Road.	Use of Surrounding Properties: Wooded parcels and multifamily residential developments across 5 th Street, low-density residential dwellings on Stagecoach Road.

<u>Factors Favorable:</u> 1. The proposed use would support the operations of the Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Emergency Communications Center. 2. The proposed use addresses prioritized emergency needs and health and safety concerns. 3. The proposed use collocates an emergency communications facility at an existing public safety facility. 4. The location and design of the facility is not expected to have a negative visual impact on Monticello's Viewshed.	<u>Factors Unfavorable:</u> 1. The location and design of the facility is expected to have a negative visual impact on the 5th Street and Interstate 64 Entrance Corridors and is inconsistent with the Entrance Corridor design guidelines. However, the facility serves a prioritized public safety and emergency communications purpose identified in the Entrance Corridor regulations.
Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Commission find the location, character, and extent of the proposed public use to be in substantial accord with the County's Comprehensive Plan.	

STAFF CONTACT:
PLANNING COMMISSION:

Andrew Knuppel, Neighborhood Planner
September 24, 2019

CCP201900002 – REGIONAL P25 RADIO INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT
Review for compliance with the Comprehensive Plan (per Va. Code §15.2-2232)

PROJECT: CCP201900002 – Regional P25 Radio Infrastructure Project

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Scottsville

TAX MAP/PARCEL(S): 076000000054P0, 076000000054P1, 076000000054N1, 076000000054Z0

LOCATION: County Office Building, 5th Street (COB5) – 1600 5th St., Charlottesville, VA 22902

PROPOSAL: Establish a microwave radio communications facility supporting operations of the Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) at its COB5 backup dispatch and equipment facility. The proposed facility design is a 123 foot tall monopole containing a total of two microwave dish antennas, mounted at 67' and 120' AGL.

ZONING: CO Commercial Office – offices, supporting commercial and service; residential by special use permit (15 units/ acre).

ENTRANCE CORRIDOR (EC): Yes

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Institutional – schools, libraries, utilities, hospitals, universities, colleges and other developed and undeveloped publicly owned property in Neighborhood 5 in the Southern Urban Neighborhood.

POTENTIALLY IN MONTICELLO VIEWSHED: Yes

BACKGROUND

The Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) operates a regional public safety land mobile radio system serving nearly 3,000 regional public safety and public service users. In order to improve coverage, reliability, and redundancy of the radio system, the ECC is undertaking a series of tower upgrades, collocations, and replacements of the current system's components. The current system was constructed in the late 1990s and has been in operation since the early 2000s.

The County Office Building, 5th Street (COB5) is home to Albemarle County's police and fire and rescue departments and serves as a backup dispatch facility for the ECC's regional Enhanced 911 (E911) system and is also home to its computer systems. As part of the system upgrades, the ECC hopes to establish a radio communications connection between its COB5 backup dispatch facility and the existing dispatch facility on Ivy Road to provide redundancy and support for the existing facility (Attachment 2).

PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

A Compliance with the Comprehensive Plan Review ("CCP Review" or "2232 Review," in reference to the Code of Virginia statute which necessitates this type of local review process), considers whether the general location, character, and extent of a proposed public facility are in substantial accord with the adopted Comprehensive Plan. It is reviewed by the Planning Commission, and the Commission's findings are forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for their information; no additional action is required of the Board. The Commission's action is only related to the appropriateness of the site for the proposed public use, and is not an action or recommendation on whether the facility should be funded and/or constructed.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE AND AREA

The COB5 property is a 13.36 acre site located on the east side of 5th Street / SR 631, approximately 2000' southwest of the 5th Street/Interstate 64 interchange and between 5th Street and Stagecoach Road (Attachment 1). The primary structure on the property is the existing County Office Building, which can be accessed from entrances on 5th Street and Stagecoach Road. The Stagecoach Road entrance includes access to a gated vehicle & equipment storage lot. The portion of the property facing 5th Street includes the primary visitor and employee parking lot and a landscaped area. The site increases in elevation from 5th Street as it approaches Stagecoach Road.

The site is designated Institutional in Neighborhood 5 in the Comprehensive Plan and is zoned CO Commercial Office. Adjacent and surrounding properties across 5th Street include wooded parcels and the Cavalier Crossing and 5th Street Place multifamily residential developments. The site borders primarily single-family dwellings on Stagecoach Road.

SPECIFICS OF THE PROPOSAL

The proposed facility is a 123 foot tall monopole that would be located within the rear vehicle & equipment storage lot accessed from Stagecoach Road. The monopole would include 2 microwave dishes to provide backhaul for the COB5 facility, which would be mounted at 67 feet and 120 feet above ground level. Plans are included in Attachment 3. Although no paint color was indicated in the plan set, the applicant has indicated that it would be a gray color.

COB5's service as a backup dispatch facility requires continuous communications with the overall P25 system and necessitates the location of a microwave antenna on the COB5 site. The applicant has indicated that the monopole has also been designed to support a broadband facility for Albemarle County Public Schools. This facility was not shown in the included plans and would be subject to applicable local, state, and federal telecommunications regulations. However, as this facility serves a critical emergency purpose, the ECC plans to limit collocations to ensure the facility can reliably serve its intended emergency function.

COMMUNITY MEETING

A community meeting was held in conjunction with the 5th & Avon Community Advisory Committee's July 18, 2019 meeting at the County Office Building – 5th Street. Adjoining property owners were invited. Community members raised questions regarding visibility impacts, collocation of other wireless facilities on the tower, light/noise emissions, and interference with other signals and frequencies. Written correspondence received from community members is included in Attachment 6.

CONFORMITY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Compliance of this proposal relative to the policies and plans contained in the County's Comprehensive Plans is analyzed below:

- **Historic, Cultural, and Scenic Resources Goal:** "Albemarle's historic, cultural, and scenic resources will be preserved. Attractive entrance corridors will welcome visitors and residents to and within the County."
- **Historic, Cultural, and Scenic Resources Objective 5:** "Help protect Monticello's Viewshed."
 - Strategy 5c: When reviewing discretionary land proposals, consider impacts on Monticello's viewshed and encourage mitigation measures that are consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Staff comment: The Thomas Jefferson Foundation was notified of this request and had no concerns about negative impact on the Monticello Viewshed due to the distance from Monticello.

- **Historic, Cultural, and Scenic Resources Objective 7:** "Maintain or improve the visual quality of all of Albemarle's roadways."
- **Historic, Cultural, and Scenic Resources Objective 8:** "Maintain the visual integrity of Albemarle's Entrance Corridors."
 - Strategy 8b: Continue to use the Entrance Corridor design guidelines to help maintain the integrity of Entrance Corridors in Albemarle County.

Staff comment: A balloon test was conducted on July 30, 2019 to assess visibility. The Architectural Review Board (ARB) provided an advisory review of this request at its September 3, 2019 meeting. The staff report and photographs from the balloon test are included in Attachment 4. The ARB had no objection to the facility's ground equipment and base station, as they will not be visible from the Entrance Corridor. Regarding visibility of the monopole, the ARB recommended that the proposed location does not sufficiently minimize the visibility of the monopole from the 5th Street and Interstate 64 Entrance Corridors, and that negative visual impact is anticipated from construction of the proposed facility. The ARB recommended a shade of light gray for the color of the monopole. The ARB's action letter is included in Attachment 5.

However, Section 30.6.9 of the Zoning Ordinance states "Where the public health or safety and any requirement of this section 30.6 or any term or condition of a certificate of appropriateness conflict, the public health or safety shall prevail." Although the design of the facility is inconsistent with the Entrance Corridor design guidelines, the project serves a public safety purpose.

- **Community Facilities Goal:** "Albemarle County's facilities and services will be of high-quality and delivered in an environmentally responsible and cost-effective manner."
- **Community Facilities Objective 1:** "Continue to provide public facilities and services in a fiscally responsible and equitable manner."
 - Strategy 1a: Give priority to facilities and services that address emergency needs, health and safety concerns, and provide the greatest cost-benefit ratio to the population served.
 - Strategy 1b: Give priority to the maintenance and expansion of existing facilities to meet service needs.
 - Strategy 1c: Continue to design all buildings, structures and other facilities to permit expansion as necessary. Sites should be able to accommodate existing and future service needs.
 - Strategy 1d: Continue to locate related or complementary services and facilities together when possible and when other goals of the Comprehensive Plan can be met.
 - Strategy 1g: Ensure that all government facilities conform to County regulations, site development standards, and policies.

Staff comment: This proposal provides for the collocation of a new public use that services an

emergency service need at an existing public facility. COB5 is an existing public safety facility for police and fire and rescue services, as well as the ECC's backup dispatch and equipment facility. This proposal would allow COB5 to function as the primary dispatch facility in case of a critical event and provide redundancy for the ECC's existing facility on Ivy Road. COB5's functionality as a backup dispatch facility necessitates this communications link and prevents the location of the proposed facility at a different site.

The proposed facility would not conform to the Entrance Corridor design guidelines, as discussed earlier.

- **Community Facilities Objective 6:** “Continue to operate an emergency communications center that coordinates emergency communications within the region in an expedient and professional manner.
 - **Strategy 6a:** Continue to be a member of the regional Emergency Communications and Emergency Operations Center in conjunction with the City of Charlottesville and UVA in order to direct emergency calls to service providers and to coordinate a unified regional response to emergencies.

Staff comment: The proposed facility would directly support the operations of the ECC and provide redundancy for the existing dispatch center.

SUMMARY:

Factors favorable to this request include:

1. The proposed use would support the operations of the Charlottesville-UVA-Albemarle County Emergency Communications Center.
2. The proposed use addresses prioritized emergency needs and health and safety concerns.
3. The proposed use collocates an emergency communications facility at an existing public safety facility.
4. The location and design of the facility is not expected to have a negative visual impact on Monticello's Viewshed.

Factors unfavorable to this request include:

1. The location and design of the facility is expected to have a negative visual impact on the 5th Street and Interstate 64 Entrance Corridors and is inconsistent with the Entrance Corridor design guidelines. However, the facility serves a prioritized public safety and emergency communications purpose identified in the Entrance Corridor regulations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Commission find the location, character, and extent of the proposed Regional P25 Radio Infrastructure Project facility, and use thereof, to be in substantial accord with the County's Comprehensive Plan, for the reasons identified as the favorable factors in this staff report.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS:

- A. I move to find the location, character, and extent of the Regional P25 Radio Infrastructure Project public facility and public use thereof, as proposed, to be in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan.
- B. I move to find the location, character, and extent of the Regional P25 Radio Infrastructure Project public facility and public use thereof, as proposed, to not be in substantial accord with the Comprehensive Plan *[state reason(s) for non-compliance with Comprehensive Plan]*.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1 – Vicinity Map
- 2 – Application & Narrative
- 3 – Application Plans
- 4 – September 3, 2019 Architectural Review Board Staff Report and Balloon Test Photographs
- 5 – September 3, 2019 Architectural Review Board Action Letter
- 6 – Correspondence