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To: Planning Commission  
From: Urban Design Committee  
Date: December 19, 2016  
RE: **Final location, character, and extent review of new public safety communications facilities at three sites; UDC 2016-50, Fire Station 23 495 Labrook Concourse**

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**I. APPLICANT**

Stephen Willoughby, Department of Emergency Communications

**II. LOCATION**

Fire Station 23, 495 Labrook Concourse

**Property Owner:**

City of Richmond Department of Public Works

**III. PURPOSE**

The application is for location, character, and extent review of a new emergency communications tower and a compound with associated equipment on land owned by the Department of Public Works and located adjacent to Fire Station 23.

It is part of a larger network of new and improved emergency communications facilities that involves the construction of three new sites, co-locating at one site, relocating to a new tower at an existing site, and reusing two of the City's current sites.

**IV. SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

The project locates the tower site on publicly-inaccessible land, reusing security fencing, and avoids additional tree removal. Therefore, the Urban Design Committee should recommend that the Planning Commission grant approval as submitted.

**Staff Contact:**

Kathleen Onufer, (804) 646-5207

**V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

**a. Site Description and Surrounding Context**

This project would install a new communications tower and associated outbuildings on land owned by the Department of Public Works and located adjacent to Fire Station 23. The property is currently used for storage of some Public Works maintenance supplies and vehicles.

The surrounding neighborhood is zoned R-3 single family, with a B-3 commercial area to the North along German School Road. A large capacity power line, with associated clearing, runs across the North of the site. A small stand of trees buffers the site to single-family homes; it is largely located on the single-family lots. To the west of the site, along Warwick Road, is the future Southside Community Center.

**b. Scope of Review**

The project is subject to location, character, and extent review as a public structure under Section 17.07 of the City Charter.

**c. UDC Review History**

The UDC has reviewed a number of equipment installations on public facilities and property over the last few years, as well as installation of collocated equipment on new monopoles and upgrades to existing equipment.

**d. Project Description**

It is part of a larger network of new and improved emergency communications facilities that involves the construction of three new sites, co-locating at one site, relocating to a new tower at an existing site, and reusing two of the City's current sites.

This project is able to utilize an existing access drive and fence around the property and an area where vehicles are stored; a new fence will divide the tower site from the DPW structure on site.

The vacant building on site will be demolished and becomes the primary location compound with an aggregate base surface, surrounded by a fence. The site is polygonal due to the property line, but approximates the same area as the other sites. The compound contains equipment for the tower, including generator shelter, 1000 gallon diesel tank, and equipment shelter. All of these items will be on concrete foundations. Future lease areas are designated within the compound area in order to allow for future collocation.

Fencing is proposed as either galvanized 8' chain link security fencing, or 12' fencing. There will be a 16' vehicular gate as well as a 5' pedestrian gate for each site.

The tower itself will be 350' tall and self-supporting design of steel materials on a concrete foundation. Communications equipment and antennas will be installed at elevation 92', 105', 330', 350' along the tower.

**e. Master Plan**

The subject properties are part of the Midlothian Planning District. The Master Plan for this area designates the area as single-family low density development (213). The Master Plan is supportive of improvements to Fire Stations generally (90).

**f. Urban Design Guidelines**

The Public Facilities section of the Urban Design Guidelines states that "whenever possible, new telecommunication devices shall be located on existing infrastructure" and further that "telecommunication devices that are able to be co-located on existing towers are encouraged" (page 16).

**VII. ATTACHMENTS**

- a. Vicinity Map**
- b. Application**
- c. Plans**