

CITY of BURIEN
Department of Community Development

Interpretation # 01-03

Subject: Installation of PWSF antennas in conjunction with installation of existing or new mechanical screening equipment or additions to buildings.

Interpretation: It is my interpretation that PWSF antennas may be mounted on existing or new mechanical equipment screens and similar structures, provided that: 1) the screens or similar structures comply with BMC 18.30.170; and 2) new screens or similar structures installed for existing or new mechanical equipment or other related building needs, are the minimum height necessary to achieve the desired outcome such as visual screening or noise reduction; and 3) PWSF antennas may be mounted on those screens or similar structures, but shall not project above the screen or similar structure.

Findings of Fact:

- *The defined or common meaning of the words of the provision:*

BMC section 19.50.030.8.A allows for antennas to be attached to “an existing conforming mechanical equipment enclosure which projects above the roofline of the building, but may not project any higher than that enclosure.”

BMC section 18.30.170 allows mechanical equipment screens or similar structures to exceed allowable building height found in BMC chapter 19.15.

- *The general purpose of the provision as expressed in the provision.*

These standards were developed to protect the public health, safety and welfare, to protect property values and minimize visual impacts while furthering the development of enhanced telecommunication services in Burien. These standards were designed to comply with the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The provisions of this Chapter are not intended to and shall not be interpreted to prohibit or have the effect of prohibiting *personal wireless services*. This Chapter shall not be applied in such a manner as to unreasonably discriminate between providers of functionally equivalent *personal wireless services*.

- *The logical or likely meaning of the provision viewed in relation to the Comprehensive Plan and applicable purpose and intent statements in this Code.*

The logical meaning of the provision can be found in the comprehensive plan. Comprehensive Plan Goal VQ.1 states to “Ensure a quality visual environment through appropriate design standards and procedures”. The supporting discussion statement states that a quality visual environment contributes to the positive overall image and special concern is how existing and new development can enhance the quality of the built environment (comp plan pg. II-40). Goal UT.2 reads as follows; Minimize impact associated with the siting, development, and operation of utility services and facilities on adjacent properties and the natural environment. Policy UT 2.1 states; The City shall ensure that utility facilities are designed, located constructed and buffered (through extensive screening and/or landscaping) to blend in with their surrounding and to reasonable minimized significant, individual and cumulative adverse impact on adjacent property, and to protect environmentally sensitive areas. When sited within or adjacent to residential area, special attention should be given to minimizing noise, light and glare impacts.

Conclusions:

It is in the interest of the public health safety and welfare for new or existing mechanical equipment to be screened thereby reducing noise, visual impacts and improving over all aesthetics of buildings. To allow PWSF to locate on structures is beneficial for the general public in that it would conceivably reduce the need for utilitarian support structures, which distract from the existing neighborhood aesthetics. The ability to use existing structures allows variety of siting of such facilities and can reduce the impacts of large monopoles on the landscape. However the use of mechanical screens must be tempered as not to allow for the expansion or addition of such screens for the sole

purpose of providing a mounting surface and/or additional height for PWSF antennas. The original intent of the exemptions section (BMC 18.30.170) to allow limited projections above the height limit should not be compromised for the purpose of mounting PWSF antennas.

Scott Greenberg, AICP
Community Development Director

November 20, 2001
Date