



REPORT TO THE MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION

June 11, 2020

Agenda Item	
Application No.	32/20
Proposed Development	communication tower <i>*30 metre (98 feet) tall self-supported tower</i>
Legal Description	Pt. SE 21-40-28-W4M
Titled Area	40.63 hectares (100.39 acres)
Zoning	Agricultural 'A' District
Applicants	Scott Telecom Services Ltd. (on behalf of TELUS Communications Inc.)
Landowners	-

BACKGROUND

Scott Telecom Services Ltd. (Scott Telecom), on behalf of TELUS Communications Inc. (TELUS), have applied to construct a 30 metre (98 feet) tall self-supported communication tower on Pt. SE 21-40-28-W4M. The proposed tower is meant to improve TELUS' coverage in the surrounding area, near the Summer Village of Gull Lake.

The proposed tower is to be located on a 0.174 hectare (0.43 acre) leased area on the property, between two windrows of existing spruce trees. The subject property is adjacent to Highway 12 on its south side, and adjacent to CP Rail and Highway 12A on the north side. The proposed tower is directly south of the Ebeling subdivision.

The tower compound will be approximately 15 metre x 15 metre secured with a chain-link fence with barbed wire. The compound space consists of a locked gate not accessible by the public. All of the equipment necessary to operate this facility will reside within an approximate 8 metre x 10 metre equipment shelter. Access to the tower will be via an existing approach off Range Road 28-3.

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's (ISED) (formerly Industry Canada) requires all wireless carriers to operate in accordance with Health Canada's safety standards. TELUS attests that the installation described in the notification package will be installed and operated on an ongoing basis to comply with Health Canada's *Safety Code 6*.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A communication tower is considered a discretionary use in the Agricultural 'A' District of the County's *Land Use Bylaw*, and therefore requires approval of the Municipal Planning Commission (MPC).

The County's *Land Use Bylaw* defines a 'commercial communication tower' as "a structure that is used to convey communication, internet, radio or television signals and may include other structures necessary for the carrying out of this function for commercial purposes."

Section 6.20 of the County's *Land Use Bylaw* contains information on the regulations for communication towers. The regulations include design and screening requirements, and a list of applicable federal legislation that communication towers need to satisfy. The section also outlines the public consultation process that needs to be completed before a communication tower application can be presented to MPC.

CIRCULATION RESPONSE

As required by Section 6.20 of the County's *Land Use Bylaw*, Scott Telecom prepared public notification packages which were circulated to all property owners within a one (1) mile radius of the subject property. Each package (see Attachment A) included: a report with information on the proposed tower; a copy of the development permit application; and a self-addressed envelope for responses. In total, eighty-eight (88) packages were mailed out.

Scott Telecom received fourteen (14) responses during the circulation period. Four (4) of the responses were in support of the tower while ten (10) responses commented on why the tower was relocated from a previous application, health and safety concerns, aesthetics and proximity to the provincial park. Scott Telecom has prepared a report summarizing and responding to the comments and questions received (see Attachment B).

The application was also circulated to Alberta Transportation, CP Rail, the Summer Village of Gull Lake, and Lacombe County's Operations Department.

The County's Operations Department has no issues with the proposed development. Access is adequate, and the proposed traffic generated by the development should not affect the surrounding infrastructure. Due to the proximity to the rail line and highway, Lacombe County will require traffic accommodation plans if an oversized load is entering the site for construction.

Surrounding property owners and agencies will be notified of the MPC's decision, and their right to appeal.

ANALYSIS

The subject property is designated as Agricultural 'A' District. A communication tower is considered a discretionary use and therefore requires the approval of the MPC.

The proposed tower is meant to improve TELUS' coverage of the surrounding area. Scott Telecom has provided maps showing how TELUS' coverage would change with the proposed tower (see Attachment C). The maps show that the proposed tower would expand and improve on TELUS' coverage near the Summer Village of Gull Lake.

Scott Telecom has identified one communication tower located within a 4 kilometre (2.5 mile) radius of the proposed new tower, however, Scott Telecom attests the existing structure is incapable of meeting the coverage objectives of this proposal.

TELUS has attested that the proposed tower will be installed and operated to comply with Health Canada's *Safety Code 6*. Health Canada's *Safety Code 6* regulates the exposure to radiofrequency fields by telecommunications facilities. This code limits the levels of exposure to radiofrequency fields emitted from telecommunications facilities, in order to protect both workers in the telecommunications field and the general population. It is important to note that the radiofrequency fields this tower will be operating at will be at significantly lower levels than the limits established by *Safety Code 6*. Scott Telecom has advised that typically a fully-loaded communications tower would produce less than 2% of the *Safety Code 6* limit.

Staff consider that the proposed communication tower is a suitable use of the land. Staff do not expect the proposed communication tower to conflict with surrounding land uses once the tower is built.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE the application, subject to the following conditions:

1. proposed communication tower to be located and constructed in accordance with the site plan and information submitted with the development permit application
2. the applicant shall ensure that the proposed communication tower does not cause any nuisance to surrounding property owners due to noise or anything

else of a dangerous or objectionable nature, as determined by the County at its sole discretion

3. the proposed communication tower shall allow for co-location of any suitable communications equipment associated with any similar subsequent applications. In addition, as per Industry Canada guidelines 25 and 26 of CPC-2-0-17, elevations reserved for future use are only exempted from co-location if TELUS Communications Inc. proves that they have plans to install equipment on that elevation within 18 months of the Preliminary Information Package (PIP) request
4. proposed communication tower to adhere to Transport Canada Aviation Regulations – *Part VI Standard 621 Obstructing Marking and Lighting*, and a shield located on the base of the lighting apparatus is required to reflect the light away from the ground
5. no light fixture shall be installed above a height of 5 metres (16.4 feet) on the proposed communication tower, except for those prescribed by Transport Canada
6. stability/support structures associated with the proposed communication tower must be delineated or finished with all-weather reflective material a minimum length of 7.62 metres (25 feet) perpendicular from grade
7. fencing to be installed around the proposed communication tower's base and all associated buildings and structures. Fencing to be installed to the satisfaction of the County
8. access easement to be registered for maintaining legal access to the proposed communication tower site

All portions of the proposed communication tower must comply with the setback requirements of the Agricultural 'A' District of the County's Land Use Bylaw. The Agricultural 'A' District regulations direct that no buildings or structures shall be located within 7.62 metres (25 feet) from all other property boundaries.

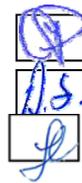
It is the responsibility of the applicants to ensure that the proposed development meets the requirements of the provincial Safety Codes Act and the associated Regulations. For more information on what permits may be required, contact one of the safety service agencies listed on the attached sheet.

MPC DECISION

PREPARED BY: Cajun Paradis, Senior Planner

REVIEWED BY: Dale Freitag, Director of Planning Services

REVIEWED BY: Tim Timmons, County Manager



Three stacked signature boxes containing handwritten initials in blue ink. The top box contains 'CP', the middle box contains 'DF', and the bottom box contains 'TT'.

Additional submissions received from affected landowners:

June 4, 2020

Lacombe County Municipal Planning Commission
File No. 32/20
Telus Communications Tower
Pt SE 21-40-28-W4M

The location proposed in this application is not appropriate. The visual impact of a large imposing structure that will be in place for many years could be avoided by locating the Tower away from Highway 12A in a large field. The proposed location is across Highway 12A from the entrance to Aspen Beach Provincial Park, a treasure for the citizens of Alberta and for Lacombe County. Hundreds of folks visit our oldest Provincial Park each year. A Communications Tower should not be visible at the entrance or anywhere in the park. The proposed Tower is also across Highway 12A from Lacombe County's Residential Rural Ebling Subdivision so would have a visual impact on those residents. The proposed location is adjacent to Alberta Parks Red Deer District office with permanent, full time staff.

Although Health Canada's guidelines for Communication Towers (2016) allow for the proposed Tower, there has been considerable research since 2016 to prompt other Canadian jurisdictions to limit proximity for residents and for workplaces. Lacombe County should err on the side of caution, keeping in mind the safety of their citizens.

The proposed Tower location is also less than 1 km from the shore of Gull Lake, home to an outstanding fishery and migratory bird flyways. Are the fish and wildlife safe with a Communication Tower so near the water?

On a more personal note, we would personally never purchase a home less than 1 mile from a Communication or Power Transmission Tower. We believe this proposed Tower location would affect the property values of the many residents nearby.

The attachments we received with the Scott Telecom Services application did not label Aspen Beach Provincial Park, Ebling Subdivision, Alberta Parks District office or the Summer Village of Gull Lake. The names of the roads are also incorrect. Our response to Scott Telecom Services, which we understand will accompany this application to Lacombe County, noted these errors and omissions on the site plans and location maps.

When we received our May 22, 2020 County News with the Tower application listed in the "Subdivision and Development Activity and Map of Activity", we were dismayed with the incorrect and misleading information for Lacombe County residents to review. The legal description is correct but the cross reference to the map shows the proposed Tower to be located south of Lacombe, nowhere near the actual proposed location. At minimum, any approval of this application should be postponed until the notice of the application appears correctly in the County News.

We would respectfully request this location be denied and time be taken to find a less visible and less populated Communication Tower location.

Sincerely,
Jacquie and Greg Halpen

Cc: Alberta Minister of Parks and Environment, Jason Nixon
Rimbey.RockyMountainhouse.Sundre@assembly.ab.ca

Allison Noonan

From: Charmaine Tootell on behalf of Planning Department
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 10:05 AM
To: Allison Noonan; Cajun Paradis; Dale Freitag
Subject: FW: Proposed Telus communications tower

From: Jim Heisler
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 9:43 AM
To: Planning Department <planning@lacombecounty.com>
Subject: Proposed Telus communications tower

Good morning. I would like to voice support for the proposed Telus communications tower.

We are full time residents in Ebeling Subdivision and would appreciate modern services such as consistent cell phone and internet services. A number of people against this tower are part time residents (many weekends only) and enjoy excellent cell and internet service at their permanent residence yet don't care if the permanent residents of Gull Lake have the same benefits.

Lack of service is also a safety issue. If an emergency occurs and we can't get to our land line and our cell phone doesn't work we could be in a very serious situation.

The proposed tower will offer consistent service to everyone regardless of the carrier as all carriers will have access to the tower.

We feel the location is appropriate as it is far enough off of Hwy 12A and hidden behind trees so as not to be visible.

The proposed tower is not close to any residence. It would be close to the Alberta Parks district office and maintenance yard. This should not be a problem as communication towers are located on buildings across the country with no ill effects. In fact their cell and internet services would be better.

We ask that this proposed tower be approved

Thank you

Jim and Katherine Heisler
Canada

Allison Noonan

From: Charmaine Tootell on behalf of Planning Department
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 10:57 AM
To: Allison Noonan; Dale Freitag; Cajun Paradis
Subject: FW: Proposed Telus communications tower

From: Jim Heisler
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 10:18 AM
To: Planning Department <planning@lacombecounty.com>
Subject: Proposed Telus communications tower

We sent an earlier letter and I made an erroneous statement. I said the part time residents don't care about the full time residents. I meant to say The part time residents don't care about the level of cell or internet service when at the lake.

I apologize for this error and would ask if you are able to amend my letter

Thank you

Jim Heisler
Canada