

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District of Columbia Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review & Historic Preservation

**DATE:** June 29, 2012

**SUBJECT:** ZC 12-06 : Proposed Text Amendment to Chapter 27 – Antennas: Section 2711

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The Office of Planning (OP) is petitioning the Commission to set down for public hearing minor amendments to Chapter 27, Antennas, to clarify that an OP report would not be required as part of the permitting process for upgrades and maintenance of existing antenna sites, as well as for the installation or maintenance of antenna-related equipment cabinets.

Several wireless carriers have begun extensive modification of their existing transmission sites as a result of diminished capacity brought on by increased data demands of consumer wireless equipment. As such, OP and the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) have experienced substantial increases in modification permits by wireless carriers for equipment upgrades of existing cell sites.

Upgrades typically involve replacement of older antennas with newer models in existing locations, addition of new antennas, maintenance and/ or changes to the related equipment cabinets or combinations thereof. OP has observed that the majority of requests, which involve installations in current locations of already permitted antenna sites have no negative visual impacts, and as such do not violate the intent of the regulations.

Review of such applications requires significant staff time by OP and is repeated by DCRA's zoning review when applications are submitted for permitting. Thus, OP's review is redundant.

In collaboration with the Zoning Administrator (ZA) and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), OP proposes to improve the efficiency of antenna installation reviews by amending Section 2711 and clarifying that *an OP report would not be required for the following:*

- *Installation, maintenance or upgrades to an antenna-related equipment cabinet or shelters consistent with the roof structure regulation; or*
- *Modification of an existing antenna site that involves a one-to-one replacement of antennas or an increase of one antenna to a mount or sector, for no more than four (4) antennas per mount or sector, and provided that there would be no change to the permitted locations on roof tops or increase in the height of the antennas.*

Therefore, OP proposes that the Commission setdown the following:

AMEND CHAPTER 27 WITH NEW TEXT IN **BOLD**:

2711 OFFICE OF PLANNING REPORT

2711.1 The Zoning Administrator shall not take final action on an application to permit an antenna tower, a monopole, or an antenna not exempted by § 2407, **or for the modification of an existing antenna not exempted by 2711.4**, until a report is received from the Office of Planning or thirty (30) days have passed since the application was submitted to the director of the Office of Planning, whichever occurs first.

2711.2 The Director of the Office of Planning and the Zoning Administrator may agree to lengthen the time period indicated in § 2411.1, but in no event shall the review period exceed sixty (60) days.

2711.3 The report of the Office of Planning shall provide specific criteria and information sufficient to enable the Zoning Administrator to determine whether the antenna complies with the applicable requirements of this chapter.

**2711.4 A report from the Office of Planning is not required for the:**

- (a) Installation or maintenance of antenna-related equipment cabinets and shelters consistent with the roof structure regulation;**
- (b) Modification of an existing antenna site that involves a one-to-one replacement of antennas or an increase of one antenna to a mount or sector, for no more than four (4) antennas per mount or sector, and provided that there would be no change to the permitted locations on roof tops or increase in the height of the antennas.**