

DATE OF MEETING February 24, 2025

AUTHORED BY PAYTON CARTER, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING

**SUBJECT PROPOSED TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITY – 4600
HAMMOND BAY ROAD**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present Council with information regarding a request from Telus Communications Inc. for land use concurrence for a proposed telecommunications tower at 4600 Hammond Bay Road.

Recommendation

That Council direct Staff to provide a letter of concurrence to Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada in response to a proposed 63m telecommunications facility at 4600 Hammond Bay Road.

BACKGROUND

Cypress Land Services Inc., on behalf of Telus Communications Inc. (TELUS), has requested concurrence from the City of Nanaimo (the “land-use authority”) for a proposed telecommunications facility at 4600 Hammond Bay Road, the existing location of the Regional District of Nanaimo Greater Nanaimo Pollution Control Centre. TELUS has entered into an agreement with the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) for the placement, construction, and operation of the facility on RDN land to be a shared tower for TELUS and Rogers Communications Inc. (Rogers).

The regulation of telecommunication facilities is within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED). Proposals for telecommunications facilities are subject to a Federal approval process, which includes consultation with the local land-use authority. Subsection 6.1.1(c) of the “City of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500” (the “Zoning Bylaw”) permits utilities, such as telecommunication towers, in all zones and these structures are exempt from height restrictions (Subsection 6.8.1.1).

The City of Nanaimo does not have an established siting protocol or public consultation process for the siting of telecommunications facilities, therefore, Cypress Land Services Inc. has utilized ISED’s Default Public Consultation Process in accordance with CPC-2-0-03: *Radiocommunication and Broadcasting Antenna Systems*. The ISED process requires, at a minimum, that the proponents provide a notification package to the local public (including nearby residences, community gathering spaces, public institutions, and schools), neighbouring land-use authorities, businesses, and property owners, located within an area three times the tower height.

DISCUSSION

The subject property is zoned Community Service Two (CS2) and is located within the Hammond Bay Neighbourhood in North Nanaimo. The surrounding area contains low-density residential development, Ecole Hammond Bay, and Neck Point Park. The subject property has many accessory buildings and structures, with challenging topography and large mature trees. The proposed facility will be located near the centre of the subject property, setback from existing on-site operations. The facility is proposed to include the following:

- A 63m tall lattice tower (60m tower and 3m lighting rod) with 19 antennas for multiple providers;
- A 400m² compound area, enclosed by a secure 2.4m high chain-link fence;
- Two 7.4m² utility buildings with motion sensor downlit lighting, a diesel tank, and generator;
- A right-of-way through the site to facilitate access to the compound; and,
- A 120m² turn-around area is located outside the compound.

The proposed telecommunications facility is intended to address the need for improved wireless service to meet the personal, business, and emergency needs of the community. A development permit is not required for the proposed telecommunications facility but a Tree Removal Permit will be required. Approximately 31 trees are proposed to be removed to facilitate the construction and maintenance of the tower, however, the compound will remain screened from the road by existing buildings, retained vegetation and mature trees. The proposed siting will maximize setbacks from neighbouring residential properties (approximately 200m from the nearest dwelling) and avoids conflict with existing City utilities and easements within the subject property.

The proponent conducted pre-consultation with City staff in Fall 2024 and has corresponded with the City to address relevant questions and comments. The proponent distributed an information package to properties within the prescribed distance (189m) of the telecommunications facility, and two newspaper advertisements were published on 2024-OCT-09 and 2024-OCT-16. The 30-day public consultation process concluded on 2024-NOV-16 and 128 responses were received (Attachment C). Of those responses, 115 expressed support for the project, and 13 expressed concerns for public safety and radio frequency output. Additional discussions between the proponent and the following neighbourhood associations also occurred and demonstrated neighbourhood support for the tower location and design:

- Lost Lake Neighbourhood Association;
- Dover Community Association;
- Rocky Point Neighbourhood Association; and,
- Linley Valley/Stephenson Point Neighbourhood Association.

TELUS is seeking to improve wireless service in the immediate area, which is geographically challenging due to existing topography and tree cover. Existing buildings and structures in the surrounding area were assessed to determine whether they could be utilized. None of the existing structures were adequate to support the operations of the proposed telecommunications facility. Due to a lack of towers in the surrounding area, co-location of services on existing towers is not achievable.

The proposal is supportable with consideration of the City's practice to encourage the co-location of infrastructure typically within existing commercial and industrial sites. The proposed tower will be located among compatible uses (utilities) within the Community Service Two (CS2) zone. This zone is intended for uses that have special location needs and must be strategically located throughout the community. The proposal will address wireless service needs in this neighbourhood and be strategically sited to avoid impacts on existing on-site operations and neighbouring properties.

Following the conclusion of the ISED default public consultation process, the proponent has requested a letter of concurrence from the City for the proposed telecommunications facility at 4600 Hammond Bay Road.

OPTIONS

1. That Council direct Staff to provide a letter of concurrence to Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada in response to a proposed 63m telecommunications facility at 4600 Hammond Bay Road.
 - The advantages of this option: The TELUS and Rogers wireless services would be enhanced.
 - The disadvantages of this option: None identified.
 - Financial Implications: None identified.

2. That Council direct Staff to provide a letter of non-concurrence to Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada indicating the reasons and/or concerns regarding a proposed telecommunications facility at 4600 Hammond Bay Road.
 - The advantages of this option: This option would allow Council additional opportunity to identify any concerns for ISED's consideration.
 - The disadvantages of this option: Non-concurrence could delay improvement to the TELUS and Rogers wireless services.
 - Financial Implications: None identified.

3. That Council direct Staff to provide a letter to Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada advising that the City has no comment regarding the proposed telecommunications facility at 4600 Hammond Bay Road.
 - The advantages of this option: None identified.
 - The disadvantages of this option: ISED is the approving authority, thus the TELUS and Rogers telecommunications facility may be approved by ISED, provided the technical requirements are met.
 - Financial Implications: None identified.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The City had received a request for a letter of concurrence for a proposed 63m telecommunications facility at 4600 Hammond Bay Road.
- The proponent concluded the required ISED default public consultation process on 2024-NOV-16.
- The proposed telecommunications facility is compatible with the permitted uses of the site and is setback from existing on-site operations and neighbouring properties.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Aerial Photo
ATTACHMENT B: Subject Property Map
ATTACHMENT C: Public Consultation Summary & Land Use Concurrence Request (Telus)
ATTACHMENT D: Tower Elevations & Compound Details
ATTACHMENT E: Map of Impacted Trees
ATTACHMENT F: Predicted Coverage Area

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Concurrence by:

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