

October 1, 2004

MEMORANDUM—MANDATORY REFERRAL

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief *JAC*
Community-Based Planning Division

Khalid Afzal, Team Leader *KA*
Georgia Avenue Planning Team

FROM: Frederick Vernon Boyd, Community Planner (301-495-4654) *FVB*
Georgia Avenue Planning Team

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral 04503-MCPS-1: Wheaton High School Stadium Light Pole/Telecommunications Antenna Replacement Project; 12601 Dalewood Drive, Wheaton; Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

PROJECT SUMMARY

Montgomery County Public Schools proposes, in cooperation with Omnipoint Communications CAP Operations LLC, to replace one existing stadium light pole at Wheaton High School with a replacement light pole that would hold stadium lights as well as telecommunications antennas belonging to Omnipoint's parent, T-Mobile Wireless. The existing 80-foot pole would be replaced by a 100-foot pole.

THE SITE

Wheaton High School occupies a 28.2-acre site on Dalewood Drive, north of Randolph Road and about 1800 feet east of the intersection of Randolph Road and Connecticut Avenue. It is adjacent to Glenmont Local Park. The Greenwood Knolls community is located north and west of the site. The community of Connecticut Avenue Estates is located south of the site and across Randolph Road. Glenmont Hills lies to the east. These neighborhoods are dominated by single-family detached houses in the R-60 Zone. The campus houses two schools—Wheaton High School and Thomas A. Edison High School of Technology, which offers technical and career education courses for students from throughout the county.

The site slopes from north to south and is oriented to Dalewood Drive. Its playing fields and stadium are located between the campus buildings and Randolph Road to the south. The stadium lights are visible to homes across Randolph Road from the campus. Those nearest these homes will be about 210 feet away. The proposed telecommunications antenna will be located on a pole on the Randolph Road side of the stadium. The tower housing the telecommunications antenna, as noted above, will be 100 feet tall and will be more visible to neighboring houses than the existing 80-foot stadium light pole. Rows of mature trees on both sides of Randolph Road will mask both the visual impact of the lights and the levels of light visible from neighboring homes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Wheaton High School's stadium is currently illuminated by four towers, each about 80 feet high. MCPS proposes to remove one of the light poles and replace it with a 100-foot pole. The lights and public address speakers would be replaced at the 80-foot level. At the top of the pole, T-Mobile would install six antennas, each about six feet long. T-Mobile would install electronic equipment related to the antennas on a concrete pad under the stadium bleachers and surround that equipment with a solid wood fence. The area used for the electronic equipment totals about 500 square feet.

T-Mobile's submission to the Montgomery County Tower Coordinator indicates that the proposed antennas will provide phone service along Randolph Road between Connecticut Avenue and Livingston Street to the east of the high school. The submission indicates that coverage would be available along Connecticut Avenue as well. The company is evaluating sites to the south to complete its coverage between Randolph Road and Viers Mill Road. The proposed monopole is designed to accommodate other carriers that may wish to co-locate.

The proposed monopole site would be unmanned. Direct vehicular access to the tower and its equipment is not necessary and the school's existing circulation system will be used when visits to the antenna occur.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

Master Plan

The 1989 *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton* had as its objective the provision of "public school facilities needed to sustain high quality educational programs at reasonable cost." The Plan recommended reliance on the Master Plan for Educational Facilities, and the Capital Improvements Program as guides for developing public schools in the planning area.

Development Standards for the Zone

Development standards in the R-60 Zone require that structures taller than 15 feet proportionally increase minimum setbacks in side and rear yards. For the proposed tower, the minimum setback is 90 feet from rear and side lot lines. The tower is 250 feet from the eastern side lot line, 830 feet from the western side lot line, and 1050 feet from the rear lot line. The tower meets the development standards for the zone.

Environment

Forest Conservation—This project has an approved Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation. It qualifies for an exemption to the Forest Conservation Law because it is a modification of an existing developed property. No forest will be cleared as part of the project, and it does not require subdivision.

Stormwater Management—The project can be accommodated by the existing stormwater management systems.

Transportation

T-Mobile has submitted a traffic statement for the project, which states that the proposed monopole will be unmanned, and that the company expects to make no more than two maintenance visits each month. Transportation Planning has reviewed the statement, and concurs that the proposed monopole will have no peak hour traffic impacts. No changes to existing vehicle access or circulation systems are planned, and the project will not have an impact on sidewalks around the campus or the stadium.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Local residents had an opportunity to review and discuss the proposed monopole project at a community meeting organized by Wheaton High School's Parent-Teacher Association in May 2004. Representatives of MCPS and T-Mobile attended the session. The PTA subsequently endorsed the proposal. The Montgomery County Tower Committee also discussed the proposal, and the Tower Coordinator recommended its approval in April 2004.

CONCLUSION

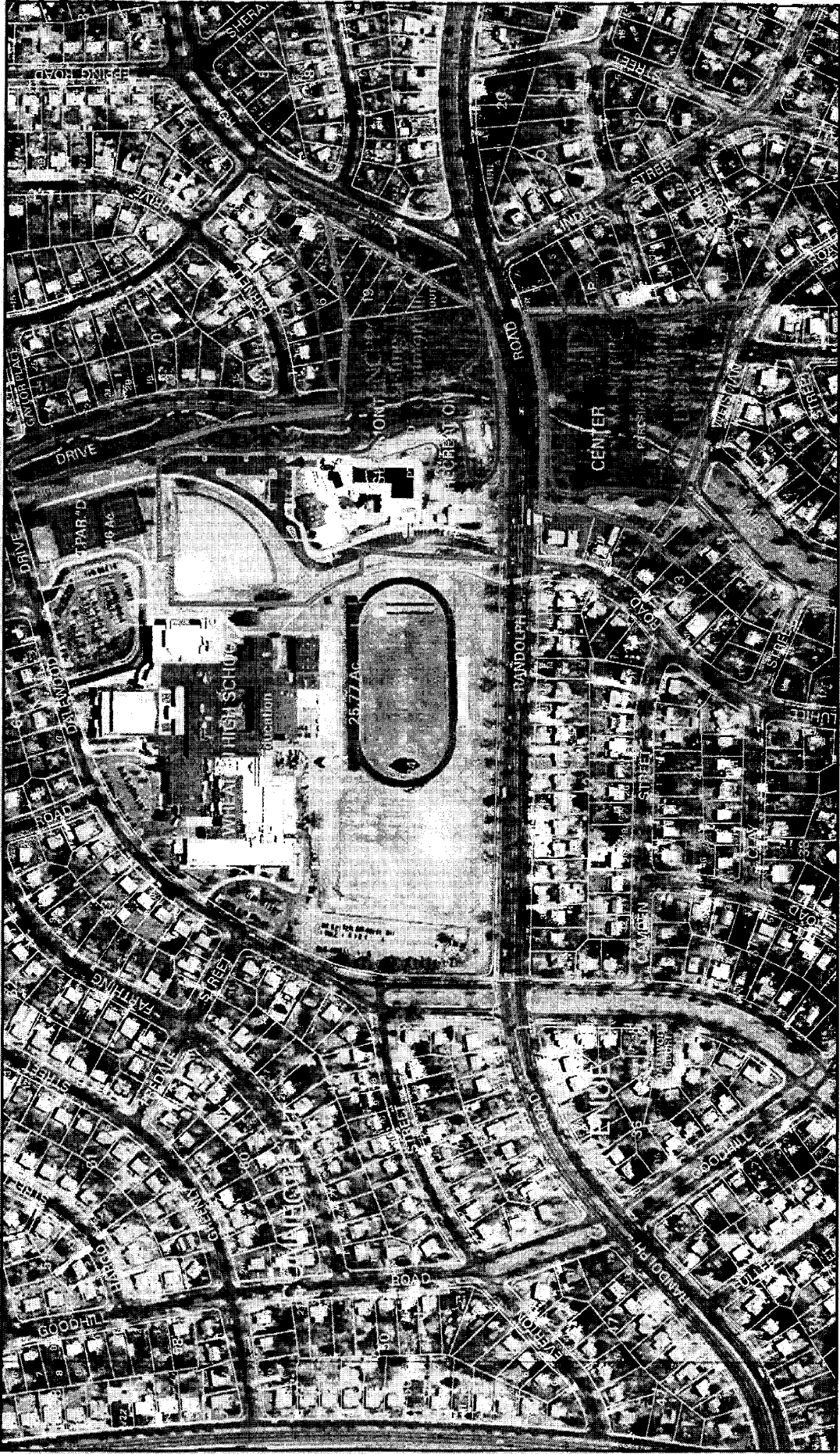
The proposed project has no appreciable impact on the environment and so meets applicable environmental standards and guidelines. It has no peak hour traffic impacts and therefore meets applicable guidelines for adequate public facilities. The staff recommends approval of this mandatory referral.

FVB:ha: j:\staff reports\team5\wheatonmobile

Attachments

1. Vicinity Map
2. Site Plan
3. Detailed Elevation Map

WHEATON HIGH SCHOOL



Map compiled on September 30, 2004 at 10:11 AM | Site located on base sheet no - 216NW03 | Date of Orthophotos - March 2002 | Orthophoto Images Licensed from VARGIS LLC.

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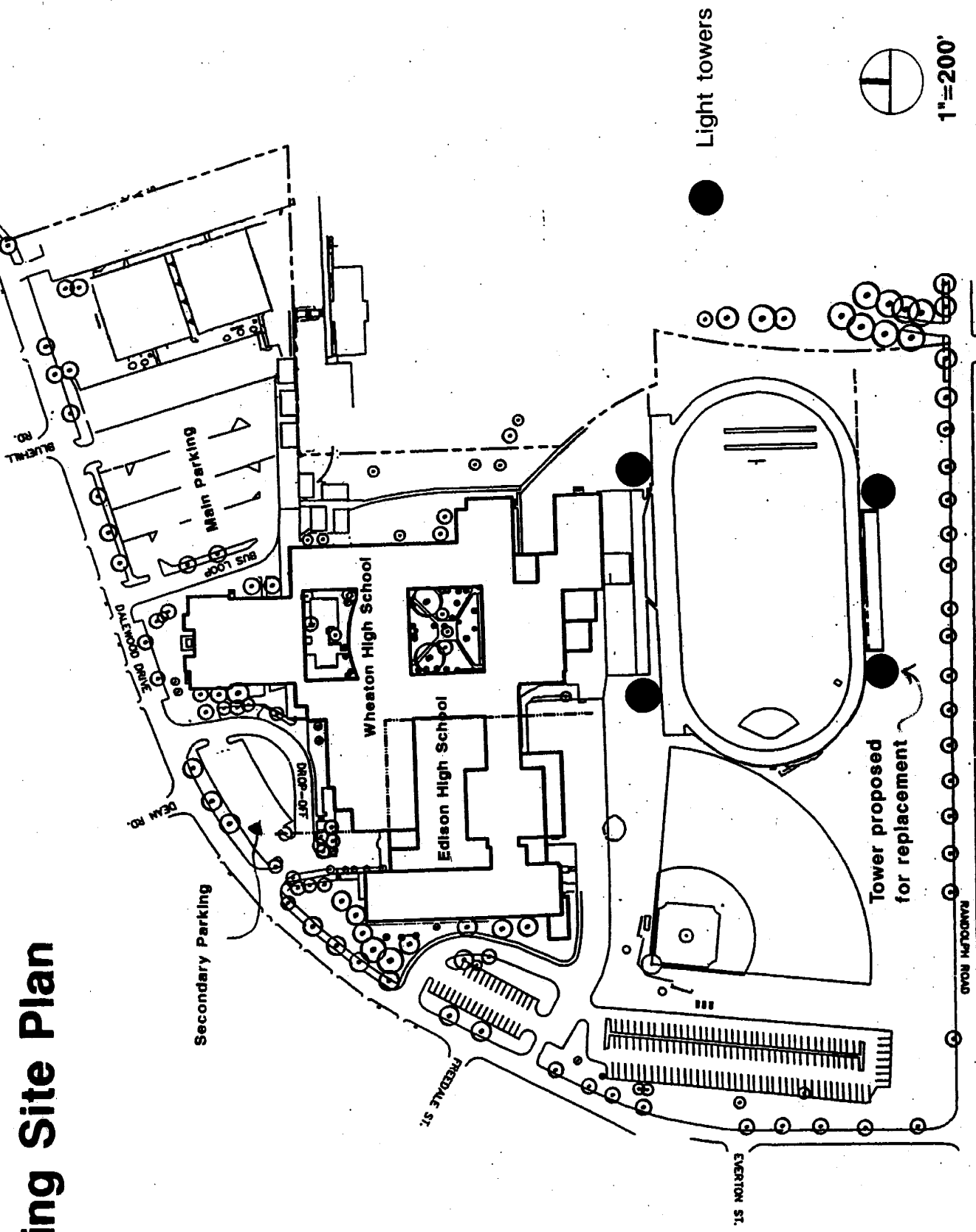
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

4787 Georgia Avenue - Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

Key Map

Research & Technology Center
0 400
1 inch = 400 feet
1:4800

Existing Site Plan



Light towers

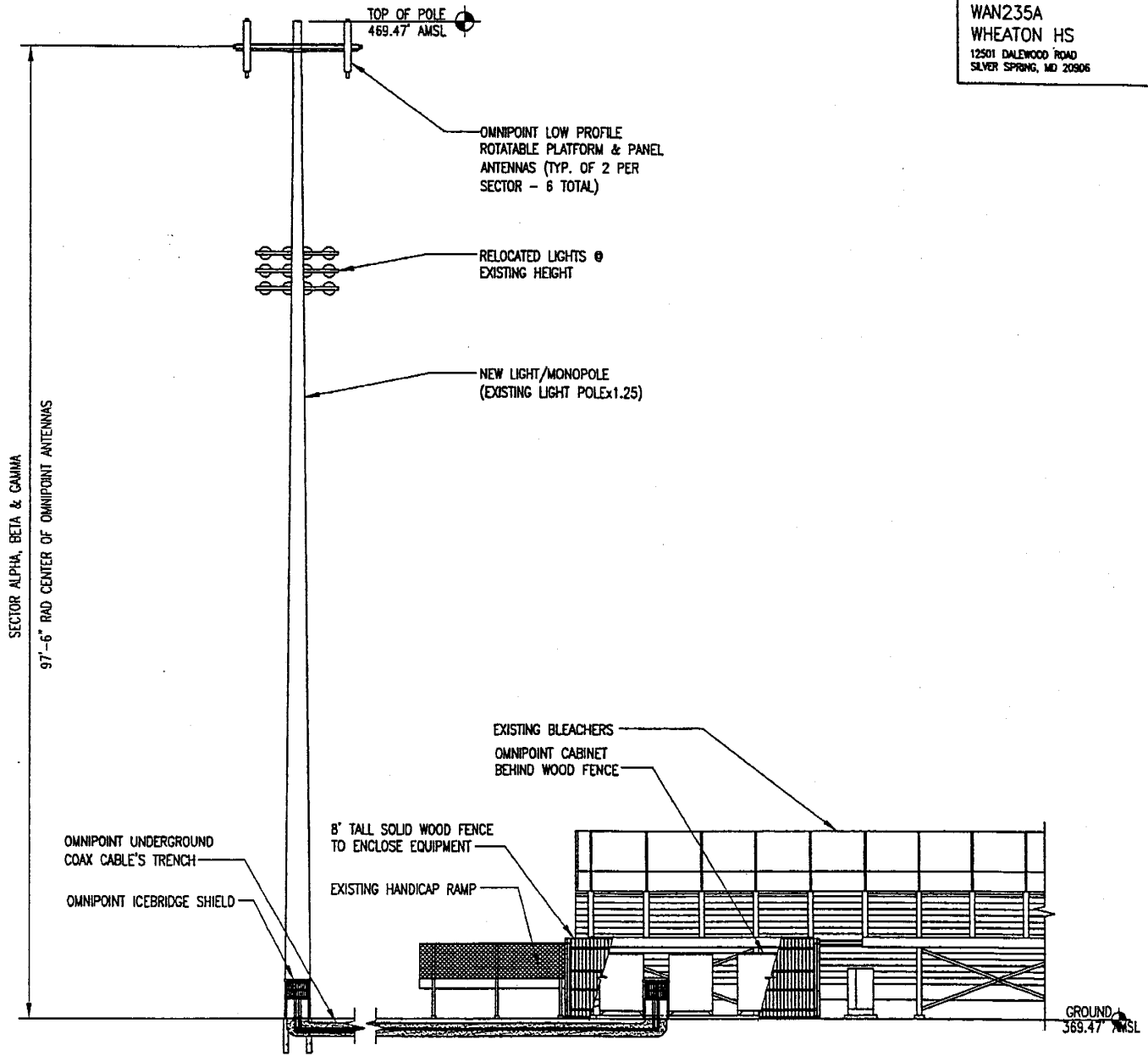


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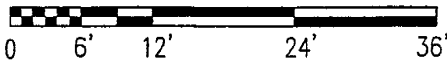
Tower proposed for replacement

PROPOSED
UNMANNED
WIRELESS
COMMUNICATION
SITE

WAN235A
WHEATON HS
12501 DALEWOOD ROAD
SILVER SPRING, MD 20906



SCALE IN FEET



03-29-04 GREG WOLOZYN 15:29:10 F:/Drawings - 2004/T-Mobile - DC/Raw land/WAN235A - WHEATON HS/LE 3-29-04/SS-3.dwg

1/16" = 1'-0"

DATE: 03-29-03	REV. 1
SHEET NUMBER	SHEET 3 OF 3

LEASE EXHIBIT