

TO: Nevada City Planning Commission

FROM: David Adams, Richard Cristdahl, Paula Orloff, Susan Pelican, and a Group of Concerned Citizens, Businesses, and Property Owners

DATE: August 3, 2016

RE: Decrease in Property Values for Properties near Cellular Antennas and Towers

This memo documents our points about decreases in property values in the vicinity of cellular antennas. It is increasingly recognized and documented that putting cell antennas and towers near business or residential properties is just bad business. For residential owners, it means decreased property values. For local property businesses (realtors and brokers) representing and listing these properties, it creates decreased income. For city governments, it results in decreased revenue (property taxes).

Residents and property owners are justifiably concerned about the proposed cluster of 8 cellular antennas reducing the value of their homes and businesses. Who would want to live or work right next to one, or under one – let alone 8? And there is the disappointment to people who purchase their dream home or start their dream business, only to later have an unwanted cell antenna/tower installed just outside their window. This negative effect can also contribute to a deterioration of neighborhoods and school districts when residents want to move out or pull their children out because they don't want to live or have their children attend schools nearby a cluster of cellular antennas.

Studies find that people don't want to live next to them not just because of health concerns, but also due to aesthetics and public safety reasons, i.e., cell towers/antennas become eyesores, obstructing or tarnishing cherished or historic views, and also in some areas can attract crime, are potential noise nuisances, and create fire and fall hazards.

While the Telecommunications Act of 1996 states that health concerns will not impact decisions regarding location of cellular antennas, Congress is unable to dictate the marketplace that responds to such installations. It can be argued that installing these antennas constitutes a taking of property without due process.

Here is a selection of studies and articles documenting the above:

1. The National Institute for Science, Law and Public Policy's survey "Neighborhood Cell Towers and Antennas—Do They Impact a Property's Desirability?" completed by 1,000 respondents as of June 28, 2014, found the following:

- 94% said a nearby cell tower or group of antennas would negatively impact interest in a property or the price they would be willing to pay for it.
- 94% said a cell tower or group of antennas on top of, or attached to, an apartment building would negatively impact interest in the apartment building or the price they would be willing to pay for it.
- 95% said they would opt to buy or rent a property that had zero antennas on the building over a comparable property that had several antennas on the building.
- 79% said under no circumstances would they ever purchase or rent a property within a few blocks of a cell tower or antennas.
- 88% said that under no circumstances would they ever purchase or rent a property with a cell tower or group of antennas on top of, or attached to, the apartment building.

2. "Cell Towers Are Sprouting in Unlikely Places," *The New York Times*, January 9, 2000 (fears that property values could drop **between 5 and 40 percent** because of neighboring cell towers).

3. A *New York Times* news story, "A Pushback Against Cell Towers," published in the paper's Real Estate section, on August 27, 2010, found that **property values will decrease 4 to 10%**, depending on

the nearness and size of a cellular installation. "Homeowners have given voice to concerns that proximity to a monopole or antenna may not be just aesthetically unpleasing but also harmful to property values. Many also perceive health risks in proximity to radio frequency radiation emissions, . . ." Tina Canaris, an associate broker and a co-owner of RE/MAX Hearthstone in Merrick, N.Y., said, "You can see a buyer's dismay over the sight of a cell tower near a home just by their expression, even if they don't say anything." http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/29/realestate/29Lizo.html?_r=1&ref=realestate.

4. The Appraisal Institute, the largest global professional membership organization for appraisers with 91 chapters throughout the world, has spotlighted the issue of cell towers/antennas and the fair market value of a home and educated its members that such an installation should, in fact, **cause a decrease in home value**. It concluded that "media attention to the potential health hazards of [cellular phone towers and antennas] has spread concerns among the public, resulting in increased resistance" to sites near those towers. **The percentage of decrease moves toward the higher range the closer the property is to the cellular antenna.**"

5. A market transaction-based regression study in Christchurch, N.Z. included **4283 property sales in four suburbs that occurred between 1986 and 2002** (approximately 1000 sales per suburb). The sales data that occurred before a CPBS was built were compared to sales data after a CPBS (Cell Phone Base Station, i.e., antenna) was built to determine any variance in price, "If purchasing or renting a property near a CPBS, over a third (38%) of the control group respondents would **reduce price of their property by more than 20%.**" Bond, S.G., Beamish, K. (2005). "Cellular Phone Towers: Perceived Impact on Residents and Property Values", *Pacific Rim Property Research Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 158-177. Also: Sandy Bond and Karen Beamish, "Residents' Perceptions Towards Living Near Cell Phone Towers" presented to the **Twentieth American Real Estate Society Conference**, April 20-24, 2004, Captiva Island, Florida.

6. Case studies were performed in four suburbs of Christchurch, New Zealand where a cellular base station had been established. Survey data was collected on people's perceptions about the impact of the base station on their property value and, most importantly, that data was combined with actual housing price changes over time In the two suburbs studied where towers were built in 2000, the effect of a tower on home prices was **a decrease of between 20.7% and 21%**. Bond, S.G. and Wang, K. (2005). "The Impact of Cell Phone Towers on House Prices in Residential Neighborhoods", *The Appraisal Journal* (Summer 2005) Volume LXXIII, No.3, pp.256-277; http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-5011857/The-impact-of-cell-phone.html

7. This 2004 study in Christchurch, N.Z., involved analysis of the residential transaction data for a total of ten suburbs: five suburbs with CPBSs located in them and five control suburbs without CPBSs. "The effect of proximity to a CPBS **reduces price by 15%, on average**. This effect reduces with distance from the CPBS and is negligible after 1000 feet." Bond, S.G. and Xue, J., "Cell Phone Tower Proximity Impacts on House Prices: A New Zealand Case Study", **European Real Estate Society and International Real Estate Society Conference**, June 15-18, 2005, Dublin, Ireland.

8. 27 Burbank, CA real estate professionals in December 2009, signed a petition/statement offering their professional opinion that a proposed T-Mobile cell tower at Brace Canyon Park would negatively impact the surrounding homes, stating: "It is our professional opinion that **cell towers decrease the value of homes in the area tremendously**. Peer reviewed research also concurs that cell sites do indeed cause a decrease in home value." , , , Higher property values mean more tax revenue for the city, which helps improve our city."

"I've done research on the subject and as well as spoken to many real estate professionals in the area, and they all agree that there's no doubt that cell towers negatively affect real estate values.' **Steve Hovakimian, Burbank, California real estate broker, and the publisher of "Home by Design"**

monthly real estate magazine, stated that he has seen properties near cell towers **lose up to 10% of their value** due to proximity of the cell tower. . . So even if they try to disguise them as tacky fake metal pine trees, as a real estate professional you're required by the California Association of Realtors that sellers and licensees must disclose material facts that affect the value or desirability of a property including conditions that are known outside and surrounding areas."

(Submitted to City Council, Planning Board, City Manager, City Clerk and other city officials via e-mail on June 18, 2010. To see a copy of this, scroll down to bottom of page and click "Subpages" or: <http://sites.google.com/site/nocelltowerinourneighborhood/home/decreased-real-estate-value/burbank-real-estate-professionals-statement>)

9. Windsor Hills/View Park, CA, 2009: Residents opposing a T-Mobile antenna in their neighborhood received several letters from local real estate companies, appraisers, homeowner associations, and resident organizations in their community confirming that **real estate values would decrease with a cell phone antenna** in their neighborhood, which must be disclosed to buyers according to the California Association of Realtors as a "known condition" that "affects the value or desirability of the property." To see copies of these letters, see "Report from Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission regarding CUP Case No. 200700020-(2)," from L.A. County Board of Supervisors September 16, 2009, Meeting documents, Los Angeles County website at: <http://file.lacounty.gov/bos/supdocs/48444.pdf>

10. A Houston jury awarded **\$1.2 million** to a couple in 1999 because a 100-foot-tall cell tower was determined to have **lessened the value of their property** and caused them mental anguish: Nissimov, R., "GTE Wireless Loses Lawsuit over Cell-Phone Tower," *Houston Chronicle*, February 23, 1999, Section A, page 11. (Property values depreciated by **about 10 percent** because of the tower.)

11. In 2001 the assessed values of sixteen residential properties located in **Colwood, British Columbia** were **reduced by BC Assessment by an average of 7.2%** (approx. \$9,500 each) due to the aesthetic impacts of a broadcasting antenna tower installation. Facsimile from Dave Hitchcock, area assessor, BC Assessment (February 23, 2001) Re: Radio Transmissions and Towers, Triangle Mountain, Colwood, 2001 Assessment Reductions Due to Proximity to Transmission Towers; provided by the Colwood Transmission Towers Citizens Committee at a meeting held on 21 August 2003 in Colwood, BC.

12. Glendale, CA: During the January 7, 2009 Glendale City Council public hearing about a proposed T-mobile cell tower in a residential neighborhood, local real estate professional Addora Beall described how a Spanish home in the Verdugo Woodlands, listed for 1 million dollars, sold for **\$25,000 less** because of a power pole across the street. "Perception is everything," said Ms. Beall stated. "It the public perceives it to be a problem, then it is a problem. It really does affect property values." See Glendale City Council meeting, January 7, 2009, video of Addora Beall comments @ 2:35:24: http://glendale.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=12&clip_id=1227

13. "Tower Opponents Ring Up a Victory," by Phil Brozynski, in the *Barrington [Illinois] Courier-Review*, February 15, 1999, 5, reporting how the Cuba Township assessor **reduced the value of 12 homes** following the construction of a cell tower in Lake County, IL. <http://spot.colorado.edu/~maziara/appeal&attachments/Newton-43-LoweredPropertyValuation/>

14. Santa Cruz, CA: This is a story about how a preschool closed because of a cell tower installed on its grounds; "**Santa Cruz Preschool Closes Citing Cell Tower Radiation**," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, May 17, 2006; Source, EMFacts website: <http://www.emfacts.com/weblog/?p=466>.

15 This British article reports that a new cell-phone antenna/tower/mast "will knock **between 15 and 25 per cent off the value** of a house, depending on how close it is and the size of the structure. "Melfyn Williams, chairman of the National Association of Estate Agents, said in some cases a mast could see a

home **reduce in value by between 5 and 10 per cent**. . . . "Campaigners are considering **legal action** to seek compensation for the loss in value of their properties or to get the masts removed. Last week, seven householders in Swindon won sums of **between £10,000 and £20,000 each** from their local council after it mistakenly allowed a mast to be erected in the middle of their residential street, causing their properties to crash in value."

The Observer (U.K.), "Phone masts blight house sales: Health fears are alarming buyers as masts spread across Britain to meet rising demand for mobiles," Sunday May 25, 2003 or:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2003/may/25/houseprices.uknews>

Almost any prospective property buyer would take the existence of a nearby cellular antenna cluster into account. Nevada City government should do what it can to protect its citizens' investments in their homes, businesses, and land — which includes having rules against unwanted intrusions by cell phone towers and antennas.