TO: The County Board of Arlington, Virginia
FROM: Ron Carlee, County Manager
APPLICANT: Omnipoint Communications Cap Operations
BY: Daniel Ryan
12050 Baltimore Avenue
Beltsville, MD 20705
SUBJECT: U-3037-02-1 Use Permit Request of Omnipoint Communications Cap Operations, LLC, Daniel Ryan, Manager, to permit the placement of six (6) telecommunication antennas with associated equipment on the roof; premises known as 1220 N. Pierce Street. (RPC #17-033-007)

RECOMMENDATION: Approve the use permit request for the placement of six (6) telecommunication antennas with associated equipment on the roof, subject to the conditions of the staff report.

SITE: The subject property has an area of 1.049 acres and is located on the west side of North Pierce Street at its intersection of 12th Street North. The site is currently developed with the Lauren Apartment complex. The building is located in a medium density residential neighborhood and is generally surrounded by garden to mid-rise multiple-family properties to the north, east, and west, which are zoned “RA6-15” and designated “Medium” Residential on the General Land Use Plan. To the south of the site abuts the Fort Myer military reservation, which is zoned “S-3A” and designated “Government and Community Facilities” on the General Land Use Plan.

ZONING: “RA6-15” Apartment Dwelling District
LAND USE: “Medium” Residential (37-72 units per acre).
NEIGHBORHOOD: Radnor-Fort Myer Heights

July 11, 2002
Use Permit Request
U-3037-02-1

BACKGROUND
The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) has licensed the applicant, Omnipoint Communications Cap Operations, to provide domestic wireless service in the greater Washington metropolitan area. The placement of the antennas on the Lauren apartment rooftop will provide additional coverage for Omnipoint in Arlington County.

DISCUSSION
Typically, site plan conditions allow the placement of such equipment on the rooftop or penthouse structure of taller buildings in the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor. The conditions further state that any radio transmitter or receiver equipment and antenna installed or used by others on the rooftop or penthouse structure must not interfere with the emergency communication system of the County. However, the Lauren Apartment building, built in 1964 under the by-right option, is subject to the Arlington County Zoning Ordinance as it governs the placement of telecommunication equipment. Section 5.A.6.a.8 of the Zoning Ordinance requires a use permit for the installation of any “public utilities and services; such as railroad, trolley, bus, air, or boat passenger stations; railroad offices, rights-of-way, and tracks (but excluding car barns, garages, railroad yards, sidings and shops); static transformer stations, transmission lines and towers, commercial and public utility radio towers, telephone exchanges (but excluding service and storage yards); provided, however, that the exterior appearance of any building permitted under this paragraph shall be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood in which it is located.”

The applicant has indicated that the antennas are flush-mounted and the two equipment cabinets will be located no less than 19 feet from the edge of the roof. This maintains a one-to-one ratio of structure height to structure setback, which decreases the visibility of the cabinets at street level. Further, the applicant has indicated that they will paint the structures, the cables, and the antennas to match the existing penthouse structure. The location of the cabinets and the color of the equipment will keep in the character of the neighborhood and not be readily visible to the pedestrian. Staff contacted the Radnor-Fort Myer Heights Civic Association via mail and e-mail. At the writing of this report the civic association has not responded.

The applicant has also indicated that through the placement of the facilities and the regulation of the FCC, there will be no interference with AM/FM radios, television, direct satellite television, or other reception, including the emergency communication system of the County.

CONCLUSION
Staff conclude that the placement of six (6) telecommunication antennas and associated equipment on the roof of the Lauren Apartment complex will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood. The placement keeps within the character of the neighborhood and will not interfere with the emergency communication system of the County. Therefore, staff recommend
approval of the use permit for the placement of six (6) telecommunication antennas and associated equipment on the roof, subject to the following conditions.

1. The applicant agrees to install the six (6) telecommunication antennas and associated equipment on the rooftop of the Lauren Apartment building and as shown in the drawings from BC Architects Engineers dated 4-22-02 and labeled “Installation of Wireless Communication Equipment on the Roof Top of an Existing Building.”

2. The applicant agrees to paint the six (6) telecommunication antennas and associated equipment, including the cabinets, to match the color of the existing penthouse on the roof of the Lauren Apartment building.
PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD ACTIONS

There are no previous County Board actions on this property.