

Zion's Cell Tower Pagoda Chronology

July 21, 2015: Verizon submits an application to Zion National Park for a wireless telecommunication facility Right-of-Way (ROW) to be located in the park.

September 22, 2015: Zion begins its review of Verizon's application by filling out an "Environmental Screening Form." Under "Visitor Use and Experience," the park states:

"Currently cell phone coverage is spotty in the area of the visitor center. With the completion of the cell tower, cell service will improve dramatically."

The proposed Verizon facility is described as a "cellular facility near the Zion Canyon Visitor Center. The facility would be a stealth structure... The antennas would be fully concealed inside the structure... The building height is 36 feet 5 inches..."

October 8, 2015: A Zion staffer reviews the proposal and writes:

"The exact location of the structure is a major concern. It needs to be designed so that it does not draw attention... As it is depicted in the superimposed site photos it looks like it has been dropped out of the sky and it landed somewhat in front and to the northwest side of the comfort station and rotated so as to not line up with other structures. It needs to be closer to the comfort station and more behind it. The building should not be located in the open area that is in front of the comfort station as this will draw considerable attention to this structure."

June 15, 2017: Superintendent Bradybaugh signs a Categorical Exclusion (CE) Exclusion halting any further review of the Verizon proposal under the National Environmental Policy Act for the Verizon proposal. The category used is C18: "Construction of minor structures, including small improved parking lots in previously disturbed or developed areas."

October 3, 2019: The NPS Regional Director authorizes a ROW permit for the Verizon cellular facility.

June 1, 2020: Zion posts its cellular CE from June 2017 on the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website under "Park Projects." (It is listed as "ROW Verizon Wireless Cellular Facility @ Zion Canyon Visitor Center.") The CE refers to "attached drawings" and a "photo simulation," but these documents are not posted at PEPC.

This is the first public notice of this project five years after it was initiated by posting a document three years after it is issued.

In response to an inquiry about obtaining these documents, NPS replies that the attached drawings and photo simulation will need to be reviewed by Verizon before being released. PEER submits a Freedom of Information Act request to learn more about Zion's five years of consideration of the Verizon proposal.

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