

Below are the formal comments from Harpers Ferry National Historical Park relating to the proposed cell tower at the US Customs facility.

September 17, 2007

Ms. Gretchen E. Yarnall
Senior Project Manager
BL Companies
One South Market Square
213 Market Street, 6th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

REF: Section 106 Review: Proposed Monopole Telecommunications Tower
Shenandoah Mobile Site ID No. 127 (Halltown Site)
440 Koonce Road
Harpers Ferry, Jefferson County, West Virginia

Dear Ms. Yarnall,

This is in response to your August 27, 2007 letter regarding the above project. BL Companies is completing a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study for a 195 ft. tower proposed by Shenandoah Mobile which is to be located on federal government property managed by the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol Advance Training Center facility (facility) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Cellular coverage is described as a critical function of the facility and the border protection personnel who are trained there. It is stated that cellular coverage is extremely irregular or not available.

While we support the mission and goals of the Training Center and have worked closely with its staff regarding matters of mutual concern, the National Park Service (NPS) does not support Shenandoah Mobile's proposal to construct a 195 ft. tower to address cellular communications needs of the training center. The reasons for our position are as follows:

1. *A 195 ft. tower at the proposed site will have an adverse visual effect on the 1862 Harpers Ferry Battlefield.*

The facility is located adjacent to lands that were acquired for Harpers Ferry National Historical Park to preserve the 1862 Harpers Ferry battlefield. These rural agricultural lands were acquired pursuant to Public Law 108-307, approved September 24, 2004, and represent the western front of the Civil War battlefield. The skyline around the battlefield and views from battlefield locations are mostly undisturbed by modern development.

To assess the potential visual effects of the proposed tower to NPS lands, Shenandoah Mobile conducted a balloon test on July 16, 2007. The NPS provided a map showing nine park sites that would be visited to assess the visual impact at each site. The results of the balloon test and tower simulations provided by Shenandoah Mobile in an emailed memorandum dated July 17, 2007, show that the tower would be visible from the park's Perry Orchard property (Site #2), School House Ridge South property (Sites #4 and #5) and from Lower Bolivar Heights (Site #7). The balloon was not visible from the other sites (Sites #1, #3, #6, #8 and #9).

School House Ridge, which includes the Perry Orchard, was the western front of the battlefield where Confederate General "Stonewall" Jackson directed the siege and capture of Harpers Ferry. Lower Bolivar Heights is a battlefield skirmish location. It is estimated that about 50-70 ft. of the tower would be visible from these locations, as the tower extends well above the tree line. As a result, the proposed tower would be silhouetted against the sky at all locations from which it is visible, making it difficult to camouflage. Given that the views from these battlefield locations are currently unspoiled by modern development, we consider such an intrusion into the skyline to constitute an adverse visual effect.

2. A 195 ft. tower is not compatible with previous efforts to preserve Harpers Ferry's skyline and to protect scenic and historic views from locations within the national park.

This project is similar to other projects adjacent to the national park that involved the construction of towers to achieve cellular communication coverage. The NPS, State Historic Preservation Officers, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, FCC, Corporation of Harpers Ferry, Friends of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, and the Harpers Ferry Conservancy have worked with commercial providers (U.S. Cellular, AT&T, T-Mobile) to reach solutions that preserve the skyline and the scenic and historic views from locations within the national park.

3. A distributed antenna system appears to address the cellular communications needs of the training center facility.

Based on discussions with persons with technical knowledge in wireless telecommunications matters, it is not apparent that an antenna array atop a 195 ft. tower is needed to achieve cellular coverage for the facility. The facility is located on approximately 100 acres of rolling terrain between two low ridges along Koonce Road. The proposed tower is to be located on the west side of the facilities property behind the former Blue Ridge Outfitters building. It is our understanding of the current technology that cellular coverage within the facility for trainees, Continuation of Operations Post personnel from DHS, training center employees, and others who may be on training center grounds can be achieved through a distributed antenna system. These systems are designed for limited coverage areas like the training facility. Such a system would have no visual

effect on the national park since the antennas and wiring needed for the distributed system would be installed in the facility's buildings and other existing structures.

4. *The proposal is not in keeping with the Agreement to Transfer Administrative Jurisdiction of Land, dated January 4, 2001.*

Land on which the facility resides was administratively transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Treasury in an *Agreement to Transfer Administrative Jurisdiction of Land*, dated January 4, 2001. The U.S. Customs Service and Border Protection Service are now part of the Department of Homeland Security. While the Agreement specifies that Treasury has full administrative jurisdiction over the property, Section III states that Treasury hereby:

(1) Agrees to the extent reasonably possible to preserve the characteristics of the land transferred to it by the NPS. Accordingly, it is understood that the Customs Service will exercise reasonable care in planning and executing the removal of timber, excavation of the land and the construction of buildings, structures, roads, utilities, and/or any fixtures on the Premises.

We feel that preserving the characteristics of the land, including lands that are being acquired to expand the facility, includes the skyline and scenic and historic views from the national park.

While we do not support the telecommunications tower as currently proposed, we understand that there may be technical issues that we are not aware of. If a distributed antenna system is not technically feasible for cellular coverage within the facility, the NPS supports, with some qualifications, a tower at a Customs site or alternative site that does not have an adverse visual effect. The NPS would support a tower adhering to the following criteria. The tower:

- 1 not exceed the minimum height necessary to achieve the facility's cellular communications needs. Given the limited cellular coverage area of approximately 100 acres, antennas atop a 195 ft. tower far exceeds the needs of the facility.
- 2 is a monopole design with internal antennas. The NPS does not support any external antenna array as currently proposed.
- 3 is painted a neutral, non-reflective color that blends with the natural background.
- 4 is free of all lights.

In addition, the NPS reserves support of any alternative design until given the ability to review any proposed modifications to the original proposal.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this important matter. If you have

any questions, please contact me at (304) 535-6224 or Bill Hebb at (304) 535-6038.

Sincerely,

/signed/

Donald W. Campbell
Superintendent

cc:
U.S. Customs and Border Protection Advanced Training Center
Friends of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
Harpers Ferry Conservancy
West Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer
National Parks and Conservation Association
Civil War Preservation Trust

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