# Visual Assessment & Photo-Simulations

WILTON SOUTH CT TOWN OF WILTON 180 SCHOOL ROAD WILTON, CT

Prepared in January 2023 by: All-Points Technology Corporation, P.C. 567 Vauxhall Street Extension – Suite 311 Waterford, CT 06320

Prepared for Verizon Wireless





#### **VISUAL ASSESSMENT & PHOTO-SIMULATIONS**

Cellco Partnership, d/b/a Verizon Wireless ("Verizon Wireless") is seeking approval for the development of a new wireless communications facility (the "Facility") at 180 School Road in Wilton, Connecticut (the "Host Property"). At the request of Verizon Wireless, All-Points Technology Corporation, P.C. ("APT") completed this assessment to evaluate the potential visual effects of the proposed Facility from within a two-mile radius (the "Study Area"). The Study Area extends approximately to the municipal boundaries of New Canaan to the southwest and Weston to the northeast.

## **Project Setting**

The Host Property is a 109.27-acre, Town-owned parcel located west of Danbury Road (U.S. Route 7) and developed with Wilton High School, associated athletic fields and facilities, the Cider Mill Elementary School, a community center, a school bus depot, and an associated service shop. The proposed Facility would be located east of the bus parking lot ("Site"). Land use within the immediate area is primarily a mix of municipal/institutional and residential development to the north/northwest of the Host Property and, to a lesser extent the west and south. Commercial development predominates along Route 7 to the east.

The topography within the Study Area consists of relatively hilly terrain. Ground elevations range from approximately 137 feet above mean sea level ("AMSL") in the southeastern portion of the Study Area to approximately 604 feet AMSL in the northwestern portion of the Study Area. Tree cover within the Study Area (consisting primarily of mixed deciduous hardwoods) occupies approximately 5,236 acres (or  $\pm 65.1\%$ ) of the 8,042-acre Study Area.

#### **Project Undertaking**

The proposed Facility would be located at a ground elevation of approximately 378 feet AMSL and include a 123-foot tall brown monopole designed to resemble a pine tree ("monopine"). Associated ground-mounted equipment would be placed within a gravel based fenced compound surrounded by an 8-foot high chain link fence with privacy slats. Verizon Wireless would install antennas with a 120' above ground level ("AGL") centerline. The Facility has been designed to accommodate multiple service providers. Access to the Site would be gained from School Road over an existing paved drive and parking area<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Verizon Wireless is coordinating access with the Town of Wilton, please refer to Site Layout sheet L-2 "Option A" and "Option B".

## Methodology

APT used the combination of a predictive computer model, in-field analysis, and a review of various data sources to evaluate the visibility associated with the proposed Facility on both a quantitative and qualitative basis. The predictive model provides a measurable assessment of visibility throughout the entire Study Area, including private properties and other areas inaccessible for direct observations. The in-field analysis consisted of a crane test and field reconnaissance of the Study Area to record existing conditions, verify results of the model, inventory seasonal and year-round view locations, and provide photographic documentation from publicly accessible and private areas. A description of the procedures used in the analysis is provided below.

## **Preliminary Computer Modeling**

To conduct this assessment, a predictive computer model was developed specifically for this project using ESRI's ArcMap GIS<sup>2</sup> software and available GIS data. The predictive model incorporates Project- and Study Area-specific data, including the Site location, its ground elevation and the proposed Facility height, as well as the surrounding topography, existing vegetation, and structures (the primary features that can block direct lines of sight).

A digital surface model ("DSM"), capturing both the natural and built features on the Earth's surface, was generated for the extent of the Study Area utilizing State of Connecticut 2016 LiDAR<sup>3</sup> LAS<sup>4</sup> data points. LiDAR is a remote-sensing technology that develops elevation data by measuring the time it takes for laser light to return from the surface to the instrument's sensors. The varying reflectivity of objects also means that the "returns" can be classified based on the characteristics of the reflected light, normally into categories such as "bare earth," "vegetation," "road," "surface water" or "building." Derived from the 2016 LiDAR data, the LAS datasets contain the corresponding elevation point data and return classification values. The Study Area DSM incorporates the first return LAS dataset values that are associated with the highest feature in the landscape, typically a treetop, top of a building, and/or the highest point of other tall structures.

Once the DSM was generated, ESRI's Viewshed Tool was utilized to identify locations within the Study Area where the proposed Facility may be visible. ESRI's Viewshed Tool predicts visibility by identifying those cells<sup>5</sup> within the DSM that can be seen from an observer location. Cells

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> ArcMap is a Geographic Information System desktop application developed by the Environmental Systems Research Institute for creating maps, performing spatial analysis, and managing geographic data.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Light Detection and Ranging

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> An LAS file is an industry-standard binary format for storing airborne LiDAR data.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Each DSM cell size is 1 square meter.

where visibility was indicated were extracted and converted from a raster dataset to a polygon feature which was then overlaid onto aerial photograph and topographic base maps. Since the DSM includes the highest relative feature in the landscape, isolated "visible" cells are often indicated within heavily forested areas (e.g., from the top of the highest tree) or on building rooftops during the initial processing. It is recognized that these areas do not represent typical viewer locations and overstate visibility. As such, the resulting polygon feature is further refined by extracting those areas. The viewshed results are also cross-checked against the most current aerial photographs to assess whether significant changes (a new housing development, for example) have occurred since the time the LiDAR-based LAS datasets were captured.

The results of the preliminary analysis are intended to provide a representation of those areas where portions of the Facility may potentially be visible to the human eye without the aid of magnification, based on a viewer eye-height of five (5) feet above the ground and the combination of intervening topography, trees and other vegetation, and structures. However, the Facility may not necessarily be visible from all locations within those areas identified by the predictive model, which has its limitations. For instance, the computer model cannot account for mass density, tree diameters and branching variability of trees, or the degradation of views that occurs with distance. As a result, some areas depicted on the viewshed maps as theoretically offering potential visibility of the Facility may be over-predictive because the quality of those views is not sufficient for the human eye to recognize the Facility or discriminate it from other surrounding or intervening objects.

## **Seasonal Visibility**

Visibility also varies seasonally with increased, albeit obstructed, views occurring during "leaf-off" conditions. Beyond the variabilities associated with density of woodland stands found within any given Study Area, each individual tree also has its own unique trunk, pole timber and branching patterns that provide varying degrees of screening in leafless conditions which, as introduced above, cannot be precisely modeled. Seasonal visibility is therefore estimated based on a combination of factors including the type, size, and density of trees within a given area; topographic constraints; and other visual obstructions that may be present. Considering these dynamics, areas depicting seasonal visibility on the viewshed maps are intended to represent locations from where there is a potential for views through intervening trees, as opposed to indicating that leaf-off views will exist from within an entire seasonally-shaded area.

#### Crane Test and Field Reconnaissance

To supplement and fine tune the results of the computer modeling efforts, APT completed infield verification activities consisting of a crane test, vehicular and pedestrian reconnaissance, and photo-documentation. The crane test and field reconnaissance were completed on

December 2, 2022. The crane test consisted of positioning a crane at the proposed Facility location and extending the crane boom with a brightly-colored (red) flag to the top height of the tower (±123 feet AGL). This provided a fixed object unaffected by wind. Weather conditions were favorable for the in-field activities with partly cloudy skies.

APT conducted a Study Area reconnaissance by driving along local and State roads, other publicly accessible locations, and select private residential properties to document and inventory where the boom/flag could be seen above and through the tree canopy and other visual obstructions. Visual observations from the reconnaissance were also used to evaluate the results of the preliminary visibility mapping and identify any discrepancies in the initial modeling.

## **Photographic Documentation and Simulations**

Visual observations from the reconnaissance were used to evaluate the results of the preliminary visibility mapping, including identifying any discrepancies in the initial modeling, and to obtain photo-documentation from representative locations within the Study Area. Photographs were taken with a Canon EOS 6D digital camera body<sup>6</sup> and Canon EF 24 to 105 millimeter ("mm") zoom lens. The coordinates of the boom/flag (i.e., the proposed tower location) were entered as a "waypoint" into a handheld global positioning system ("GPS") device, with the "find" tool on the GPS unit then used to provide the distance and orientation to the flag position. The geographic coordinates of each photo location were recorded as meta data using GPS technology internal to the camera. APT typically uses a standard focal length of 50mm to present a consistent field of view. On occasion, photos are taken at lower focal lengths to provide a greater depth of field and to provide context to the scene by including surrounding features within the photograph. During this evaluation, four (4) photographs were taken at a 35mm focal length and two (2) were taken at 24mm focal length, as noted in Table 1 Photo Locations.

Photographic simulations were generated to portray scaled renderings of the proposed Facility from 22 locations presented herein where the Facility may be recognizable above or through the trees. Using field data, site plan information and 3-dimensional (3D) modeling software, spatially referenced models of the Site and Facility were generated and merged. The geographic coordinates obtained in the field for the photograph locations were incorporated into the model to produce virtual camera positions within the spatial 3D model. Photo-simulations were then created using a combination of renderings generated in the 3D model and photo-rendering software programs, which were ultimately composited and merged with the existing conditions photographs (using Adobe Photoshop image editing software). The scale of the subjects in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The Canon EOS 6D is a full-framed camera which includes a lens receptor of the same size as the film used in 35mm cameras. As such, the images produced are comparable to those taken with a conventional 35mm camera.

photograph (the crane boom and flag) and the corresponding simulation (the Facility) is proportional to their surroundings.

For presentation purposes in this report, the photographs were produced in an approximate 7-inch by 10.5-inch format. When reproducing the images in this format size, we believe it is important to present the largest view while providing key contextual landscape elements (existing developments, street signs, utility poles, etc.) so that the viewer can determine the proportionate scale of each object within the scene. Photo-documentation of the field reconnaissance and photo-simulations of the proposed Facility are presented in the attachment at the end of this report. The field reconnaissance photos that include the flag in the view provide visual reference points for the approximate height and location of the proposed Facility relative to the scene. The corresponding photo-simulations were created to represent the proposed monopole and antennas. The photo-simulations are intended to provide the reader with a general understanding of the different view characteristics associated with the Facility from various locations. Photographs were taken from publicly accessible areas and select private residential parcels, and unobstructed view lines were chosen wherever possible.

<u>Table 1 – Photo Locations</u> summarizes the photographs and simulations presented in the attachment to this report, and includes a description of each location, view orientation, distance from where the photo was taken relative to the Site, and the general characteristics of the view. The photo locations are depicted on the photolog and viewshed maps provided as attachments to this report.

**Table 1 – Photo Locations** 

Photo	Location	Orientation	Distance to Site	Height of Facility Visible	Visibility		
1	Ridgefield Road*	Northeast	± 0.51 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
2	Lovers Lane at Merwin Lane	North	± 0.53 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
3	Merwin Meadows Park	Northwest	± 0.57 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
4	Old Ridgefield Road	Northwest	± 0.94 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
5	Village Market	Northwest	± 0.79 Mile	10'-20'	Seasonal		
6	Ridgefield Road	Northwest	± 0.66 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
7	Danbury Road	Northwest	± 0.98 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
8	Perry Green Condos – Danbury Road	Northwest	± 0.50 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
9	Danbury Road	Northwest	± 0.41 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
10	Hurlbutt Street at Hyland Drive	Southwest	± 1.32 Miles	N/A	Not Visible		
11	Ambler Farm	Southwest	± 1.25 Miles	20'-30'	Year Round		
12	Wicks End Lane	Southwest	± 1.55 Miles	N/A	Not Visible		
13	Cannon Road at Pimpewaug Road	Southwest	± 1.04 Miles	N/A	Not Visible		
14	Danbury Road	Southwest	± 1.35 Miles	N/A	Not Visible		
15	Allens Meadows Park	Southwest	± 0.96 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
16	Catalpa Road at Kristine Lilly Way	Southwest	± 0.46 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
17	Kristine Lilly Way	Southwest	± 0.36 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
18	Kristine Lilly Way	Southwest	± 0.36 Mile	N/A^	Seasonal		
19	Cider Mill School	Southwest	± 0.27 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
20	Catalpa Road	South	± 0.26 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
21	Richdale Drive	Southwest	± 0.16 Mile	40'-50'	Year Round		
22	Richdale Drive	Southwest	± 0.13 Mile	10'-20'	Seasonal		
23	Olmstead Hill Road at Hemmelskamp Road	Southeast	± 1.11 Miles	N/A	Not Visible		
24	English Drive	Southeast	± 0.97 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
25	Signal Hill Road	Southeast	± 1.31 Miles	N/A	Not Visible		
26	Drum Hill Road	East	± 0.80 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
27	Middlebrook Farm Road at Middlebrook Lane	East	± 0.58 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
28	Middlebrook Farm Road	Southeast	± 0.58 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
29	School Road	Southeast	± 0.50 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
30	School Road	Southeast	± 0.42 Mile	10'-20'	Year Round		
31	Hunting Ridge Lane	Southeast	± 0.26 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
32	School Road*	Southeast	± 0.13 Mile	N/A	Not Visible		
33	School Road	Southeast	± 0.11 Mile	20'-30'	Seasonal		
*Photograph was taken at 35 mm focal length.  **Photograph was taken at 24 mm focal length.  Assolite not visible above ridgeling.							

^Facility not visible above ridgeline

Table 1 - Photo Locations Continued

Photo	Location	Orientation	Distance to Site	Height of Facility Visible	Visibility
34	Middlebrook School*	Northeast	±0.16 Mile	30'-40'	Year Round
35	Middlebrook School	Northeast	± 0.15 Mile	40'-50'	Year Round
36	Middlebrook School**	East	± 342 Feet	80'-90'	Seasonal
37	School Road**	Northeast	± 301 Feet	100'-110'	Seasonal
38	Middlebrook School*	Northwest	± 0.13 Mile	40'-50'	Seasonal
39	11 Cider Mill Place***	Northwest	± 0.20 Mile	N/A	Seasonal
40	15 Richdale Drive	South	± 0.15 Mile	50'-60'	Year Round
41	9 Richdale Drive	South	± 0.17 Mile	30'-40'	Year Round
42	9 Richdale Drive	South	± 0.18 Mile	20'-30'	Seasonal
43	83 Catalpa Road	Southeast	± 0.21 Mile	20'-30'	Seasonal
44	41 Hunting Ridge Lane	Southeast	± 0.23 Mile	30'-40'	Seasonal
45	41 Hunting Ridge Lane	Southeast	± 0.23 Mile	20'-30'	Seasonal
46	87 Catalpa Road	Southeast	± 0.26 Mile	20'-30'	Seasonal
47	103 Catalpa Road***	Southeast	± 0.31 Mile	N/A	Seasonal
48	119 Middlebrook Farm Road	Southeast	± 0.47 Mile	20'-30'	Seasonal
49	135 Middlebrook Farm Road	Southeast	± 0.56 Mile	20'-30'	Year Round
50	135 Middlebrook Farm Road	Southeast	± 0.56 Mile	10'-20'	Year Round

<sup>\*</sup>Photograph was taken at 35 mm focal length.

## **Final Visibility Mapping**

Information obtained during the field reconnaissance was incorporated into the mapping data layers, including observations of the field reconnaissance, the photograph locations, areas that experienced recent land use changes and those places where the initial model was found to over or under-predict visibility. Once the additional data was integrated into the model, APT recalculated the visibility of the proposed Facility within the Study Area.

#### **Conclusions**

As presented on the attached viewshed maps and photo-simulations, year-round visibility of the Facility would be primarily limited to areas of the Host Property and over portions of additional Town-owned property south of School Road. Year-round visibility also would extend up to approximately 0.55-mile to the northwest in the Turner Ridge area (see Photos 49 and 50 as

<sup>\*\*</sup>Photograph was taken at 24 mm focal length.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>No photo-simulation prepared for this location – highly obstructed by intervening trees.

examples) and over portions of the Rolling Hills Country Club and Ambler Farm (see Photo 11) over one-mile away to the northeast.

Seasonal visibility, when leaves are off the deciduous trees, would occur within 0.5-mile of the Site (see Photo 18 for a representative example). Seasonal visibility will extend to the north of the site throughout residential properties, primarily along Catalpa Road. Seasonal visibility is also anticipated along portions of Pimpewaug Road near the intersection with Danbury Road, and along Danbury and Ridgefield Roads in the vicinity of the Wilton Train Station at distances up to approximately 0.75-mile.

The combined predicted visibility associated with the proposed Facility could extend up to  $\pm 89$  acres, or  $\pm 1.1\%$  of the 8,042-acre Study Area. Nearly half of the combined predicted visibility, approximately 43.8% ( $\pm 39$  acres) occurs on Town-owned properties.

Predicted year-round visibility ( $\pm 12$  acres) is limited generally to within 0.25-mile of the Site, half of which occurs on Town-owned property, including the Middlebrook School (see Photos 34 and 35, which provide representative views from these locations).

Predicted seasonal visibility includes an additional  $\pm 77$  acres. Similar to the predicted year-round visibility, a large portion of the predicted seasonal visibility ( $\pm 33.7$  acres, or  $\pm 43.76\%$ ) would occur on Town property.

The results of the viewshed modeling and crane test photographs demonstrate that the Facility's visibility would be restricted to a small geographic area. The proposed camouflage design, combined with its relatively low height and surrounding mature hardwoods and conifers will assist in limiting the Facility's visibility to neighboring locations. The proposed monopine design is appropriate in this setting and would soften views of the Facility, particularly from residential properties to the north and south.

## **Proximity to Schools And Commercial Child Day Care Centers**

No schools or commercial child day care centers are located within 250 feet of the proposed Facility. Middlebrook School is located approximately 0.08-mile (±450 feet) south of the Site at 131 School Road in Wilton. Photos 34 and 35 depict visibility from this property. The Goddard School of Wilton child care center is located approximately 0.41-mile northeast of the Site at 385 Danbury Road in Wilton. No visibility is anticipated from the child care center.

#### Limitations

The viewshed maps presented in the attachment to this report depict areas where the proposed Facility may potentially be visible to the human eye without the aid of magnification based on a viewer eye-height of five (5) feet above the ground and intervening topography, tree canopy, and structures. This analysis may not account for all visible locations, as it is based on the combination of computer modeling, incorporating aerial photographs, and in-field observations from publicly accessible locations. This analysis does not claim to depict the only areas, or all locations, where visibility may occur; it is intended to provide a representation of those areas where the Facility is likely to be seen.

The photo-simulations provide a representation of the Facility under similar settings as those encountered during the field review and reconnaissance. Views of the Facility can change throughout the seasons and the time of day, and are dependent on weather and other atmospheric conditions (e.g., haze, fog, clouds); the location, angle and intensity of the sun; and the specific viewer location. Weather conditions on the day of the field review included partly cloudy skies.

# **ATTACHMENTS**

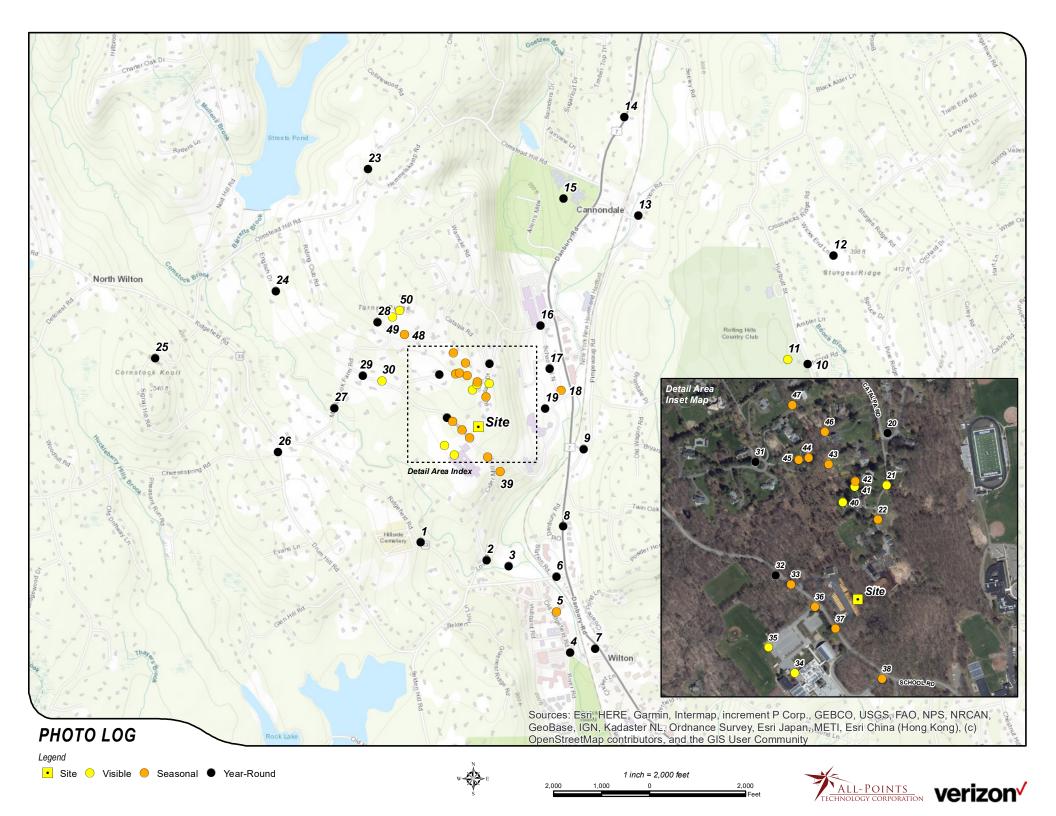




























PHOTO LOCATION ORIENTATION DISTANCE TO SITE VISIBILITY

5 VILLAGE MARKET NORTHWEST +/- 0.79 MILE SEASONAL







PHOTO LOCATION ORIENTATION DISTANCE TO SITE VISIBILITY

5 VILLAGE MARKET NORTHWEST +/- 0.79 MILE SEASONAL

















































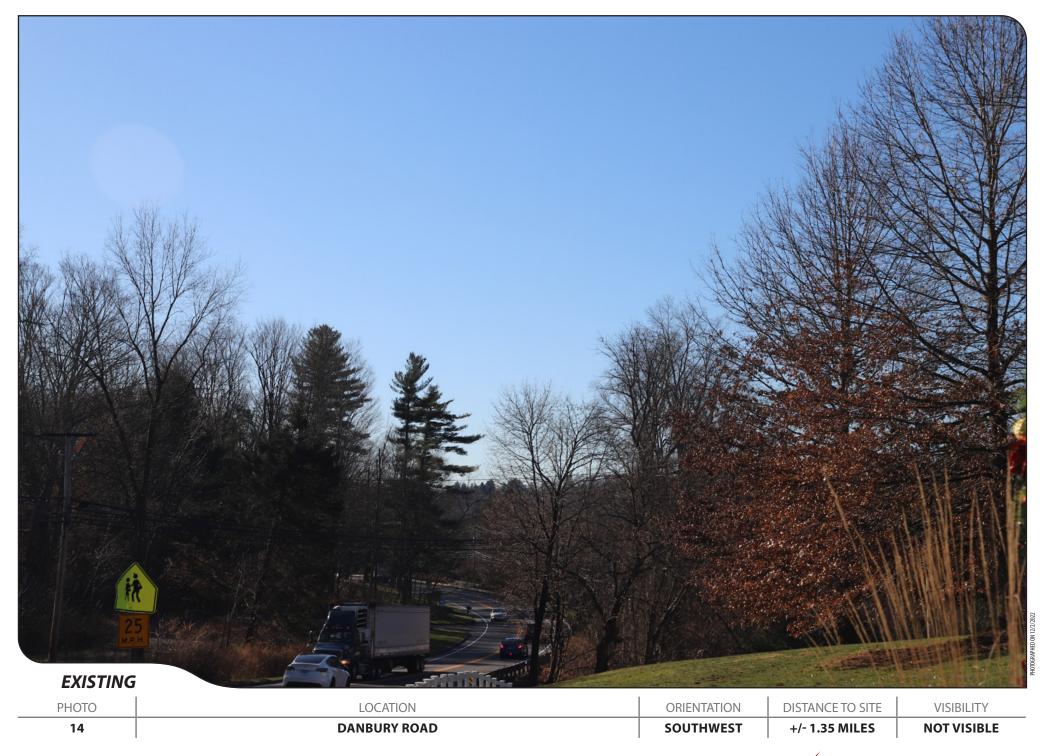














































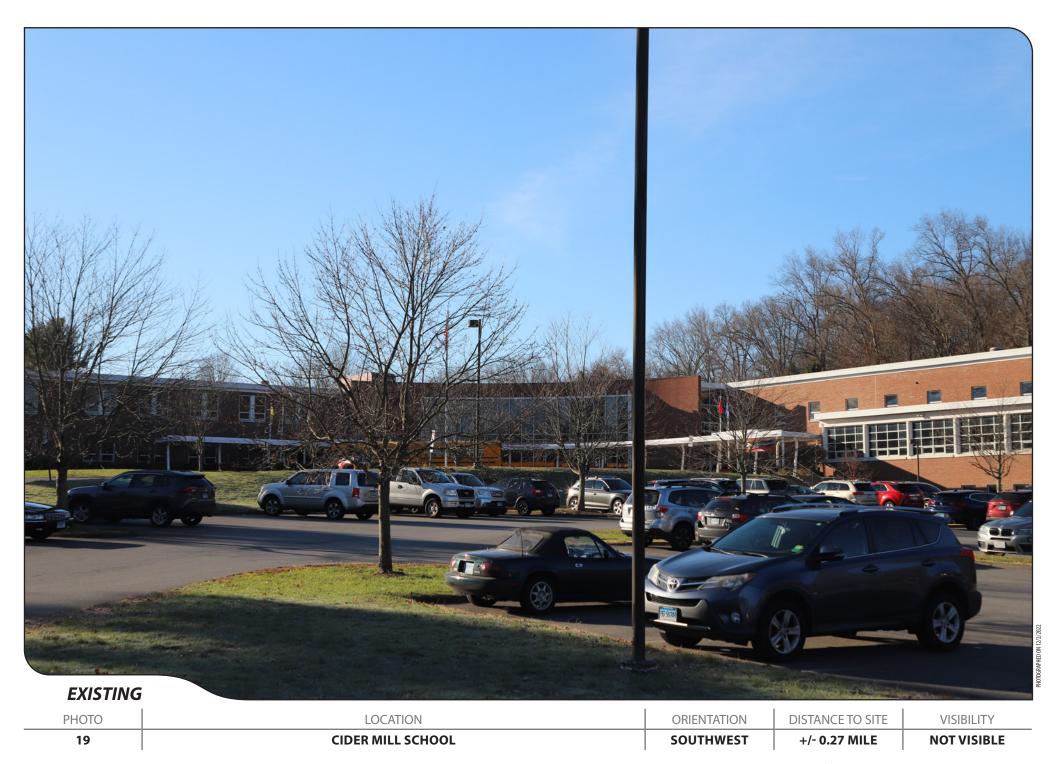
































PHOTO LOCATION ORIENTATION DISTANCE TO SITE VISIBILITY

22 RICHDALE DRIVE SOUTHWEST +/- 0.13 MILE SEASONAL













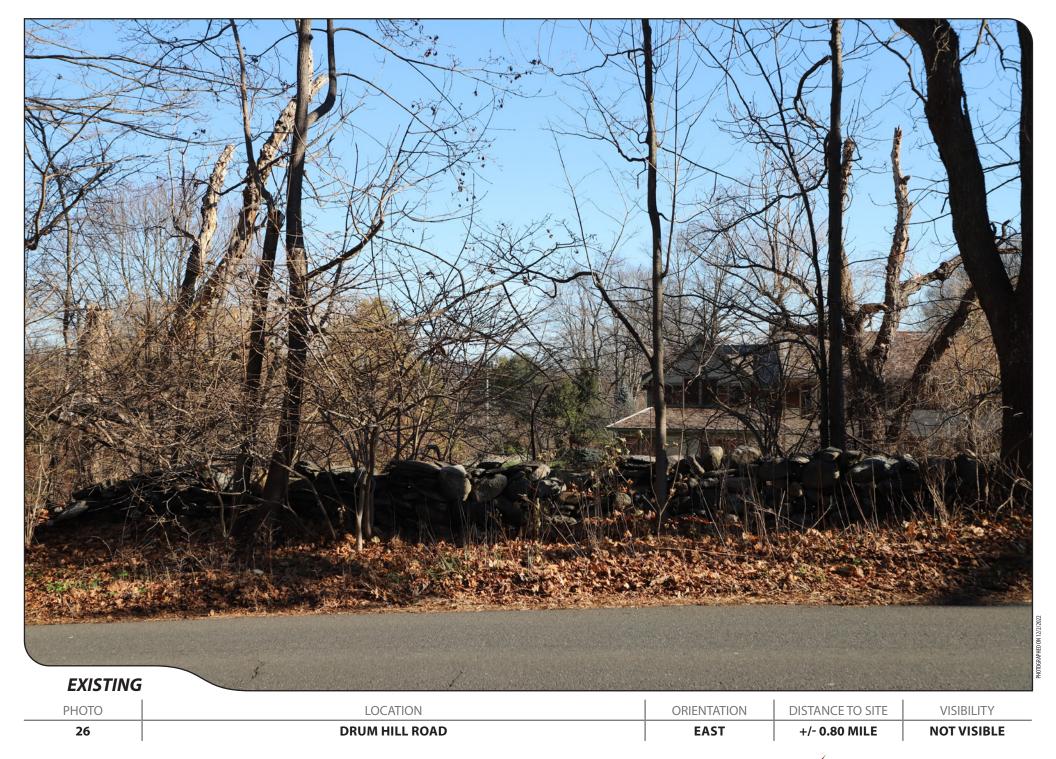






















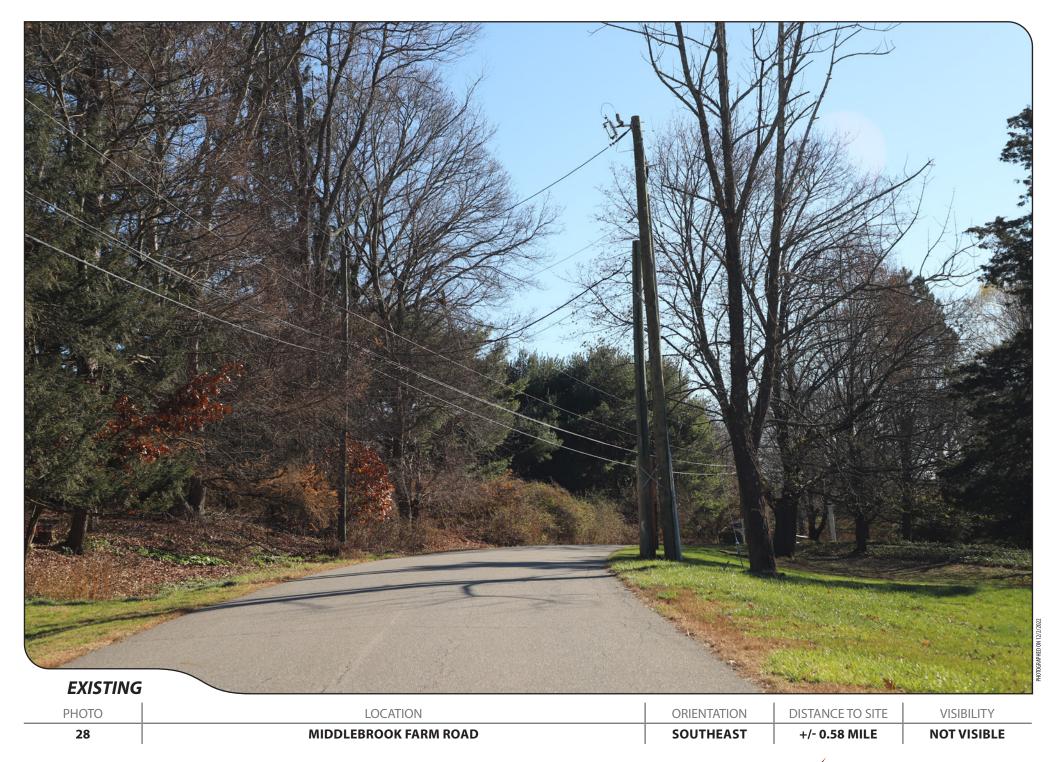
























































PHOTO LOCATION ORIENTATION DISTANCE TO SITE VISIBILITY

34 MIDDLEBROOK SCHOOL NORTHEAST +/- 0.16 MILE YEAR ROUND

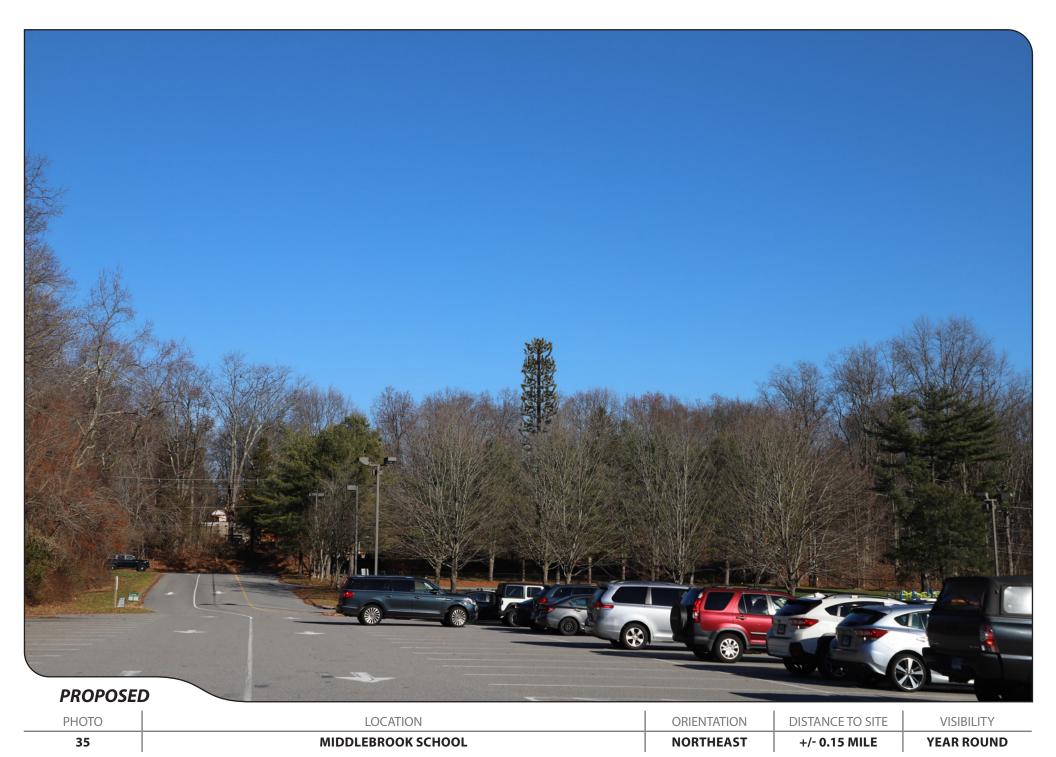
























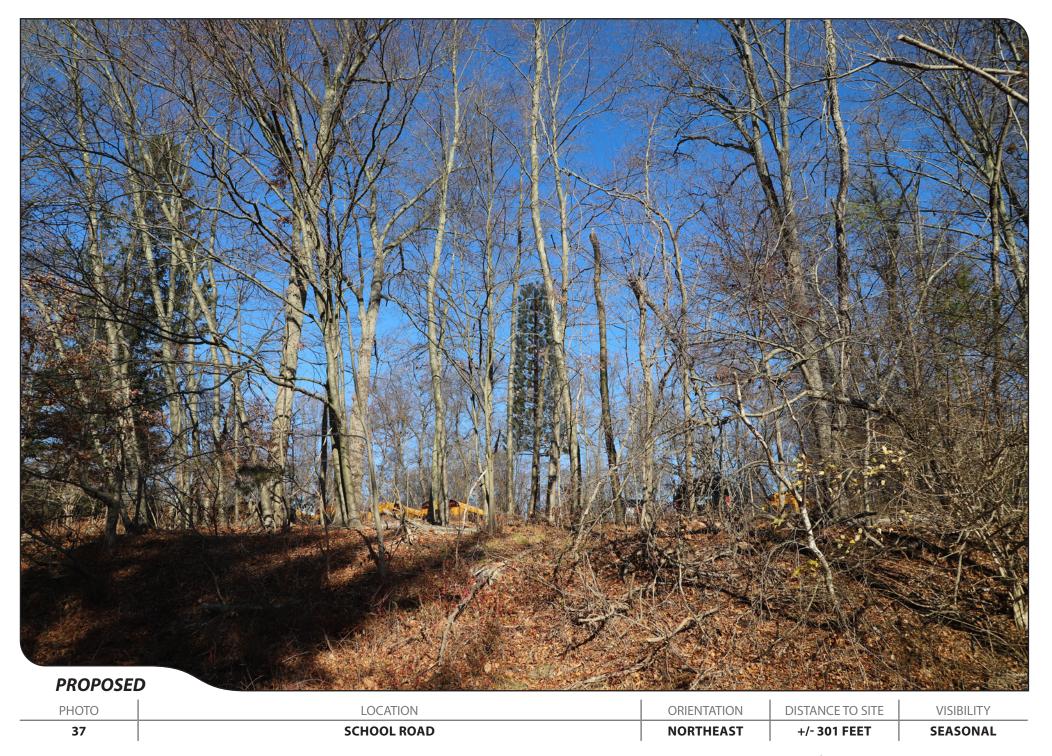




































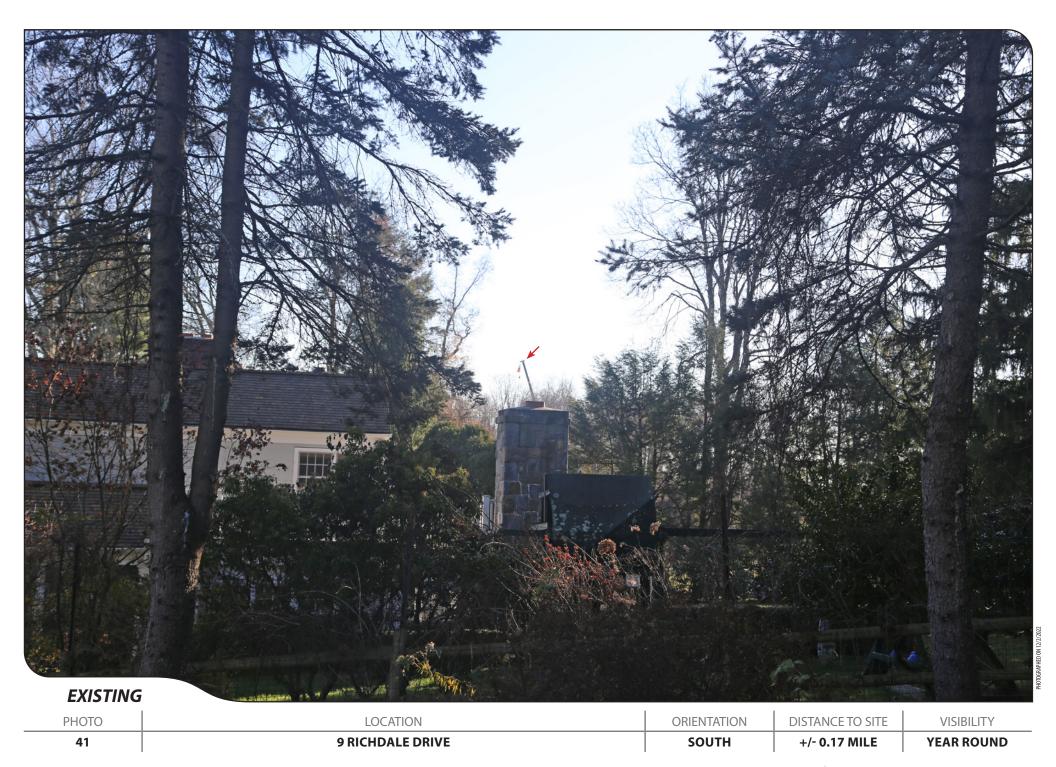






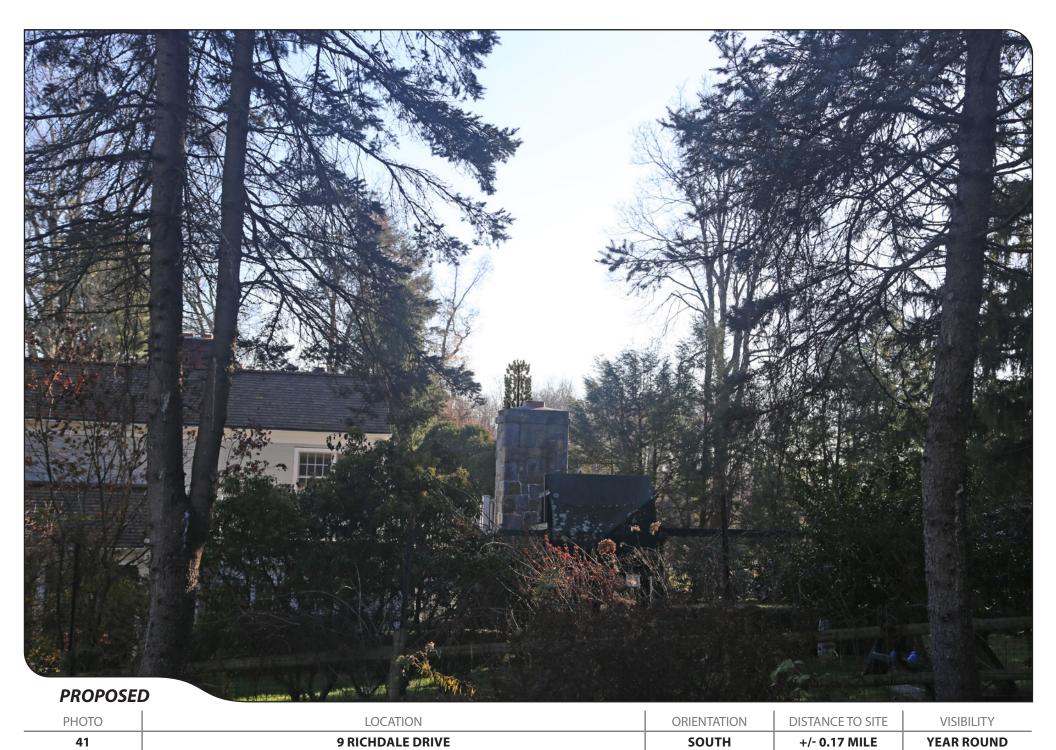














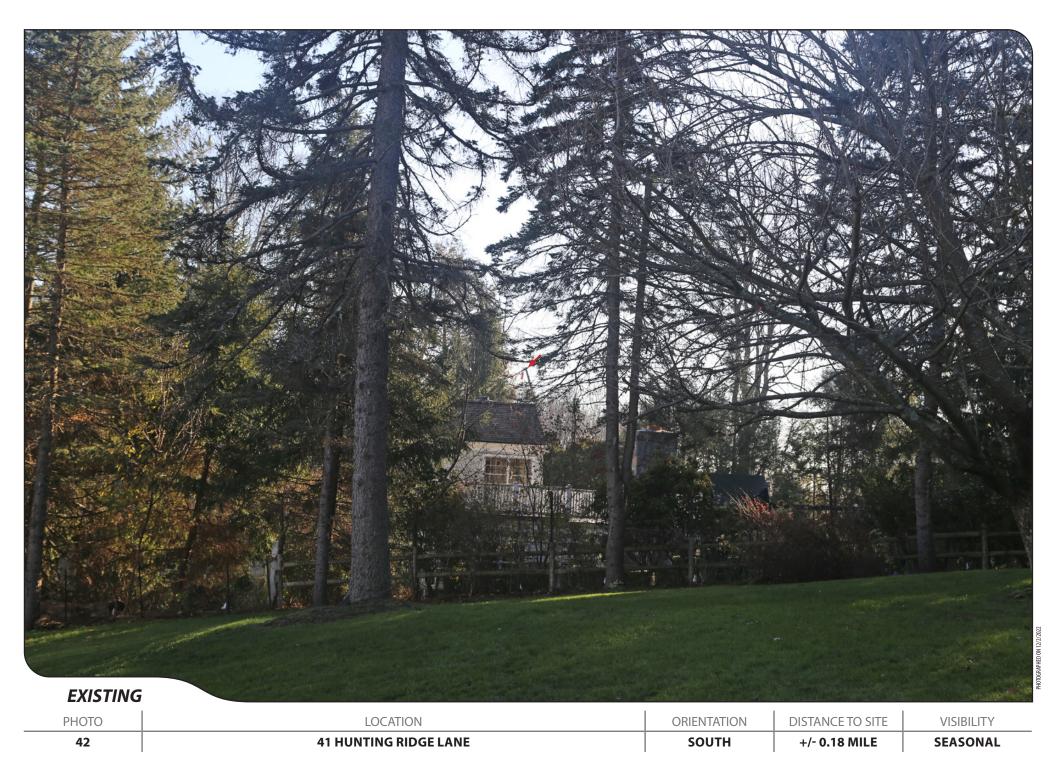








PHOTO LOCATION ORIENTATION DISTANCE TO SITE VISIBILITY

42 41 HUNTING RIDGE LANE SOUTH +/- 0.18 MILE SEASONAL

























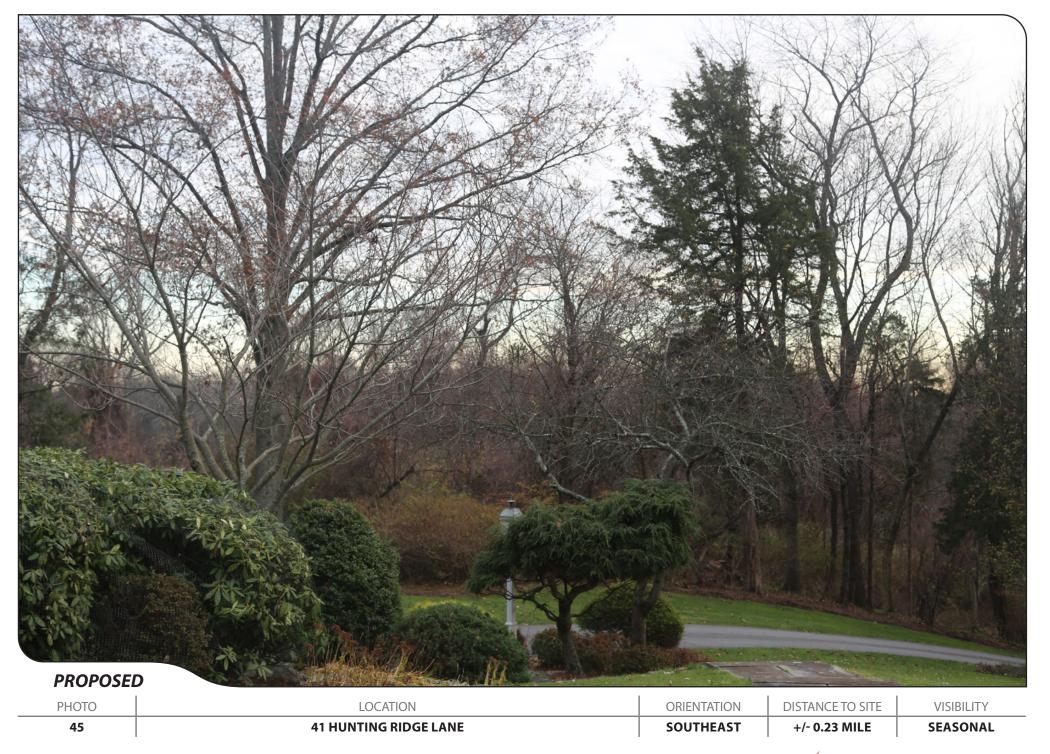




























































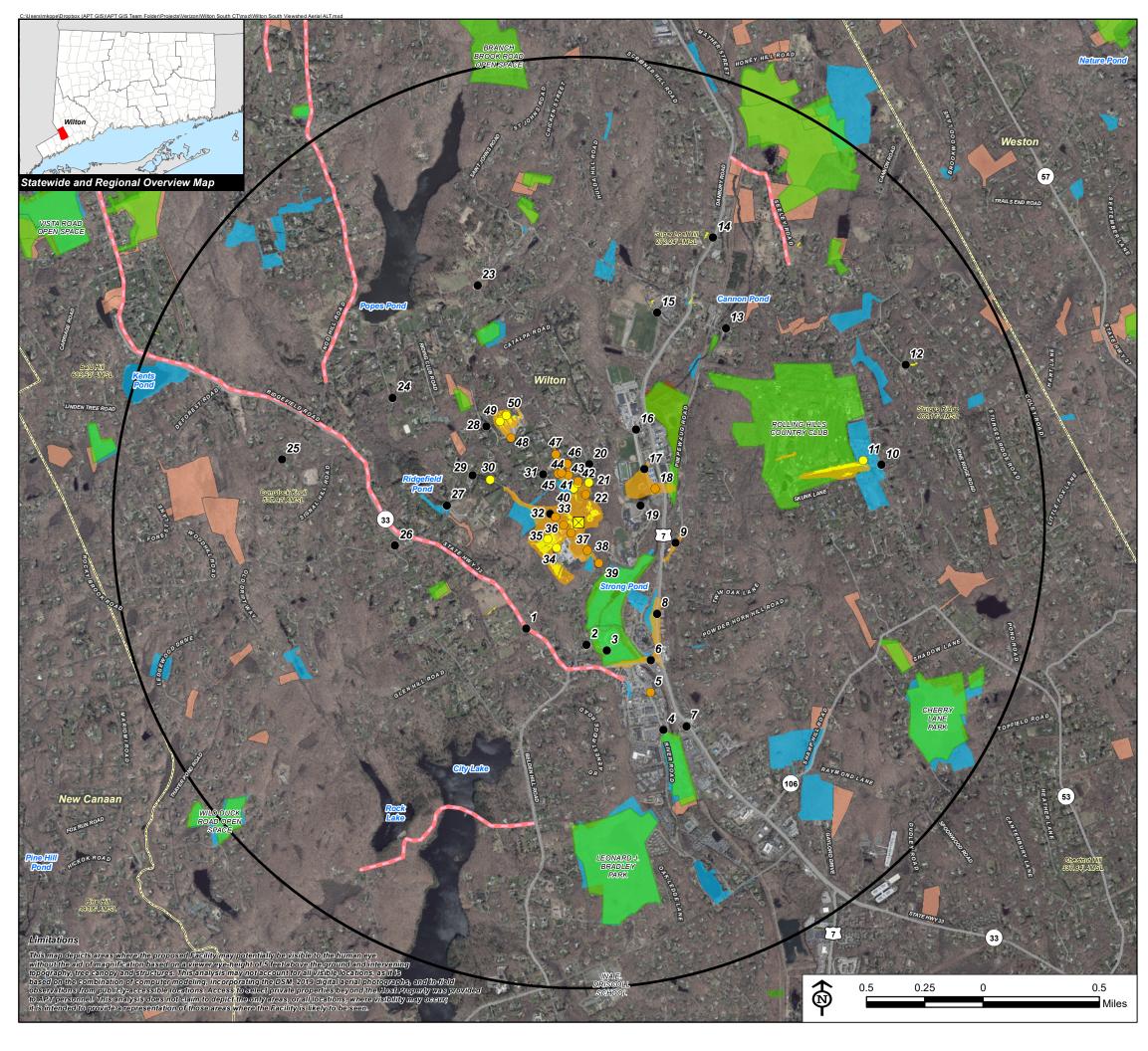


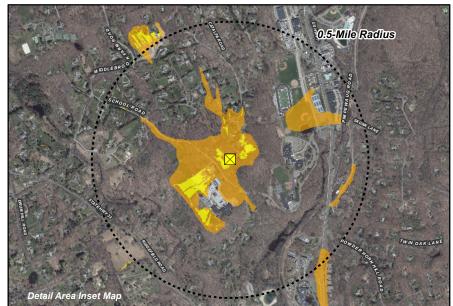












# **Viewshed Analysis Map**

Proposed Wireless Telecommunications Facility Wilton South CT Town of Wilton 180 School Road Wilton, Connecticut

Proposed facility height is 123 feet AGL.
Forest canopy height is derived from LiDAR data.
Study area encompasses a two-mile radius and includes 8,042 acres.
Existing conditions field verified by APT on December 2, 2022
Base Map Source: 2019 Aerial Photograph (CTECO)
Map Date: January 2023

# Legend



## Data Sources:

## Physical Geography / Background Data

A digital surface model (DSM) was created from the State of Connecticut 2016 LiDAR LAS data points. The DSM captures the natural and built features on the Earth's surface.

Municipal Open Space, State Recreation Areas, Trails, County Recreation Areas, and Town Boundary data obtained from CT DEEP. Scenic Roads: CTDOT State Scenic Highways (2015); Municipal Scenic Roads (compiled by APT)

# Dedicated Open Space & Recreation Areas

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP): DEEP Property (May 2007; Federal Open Space (1997); Municipal and Private Open Space (1997); DEEP Boat Launches (1994)

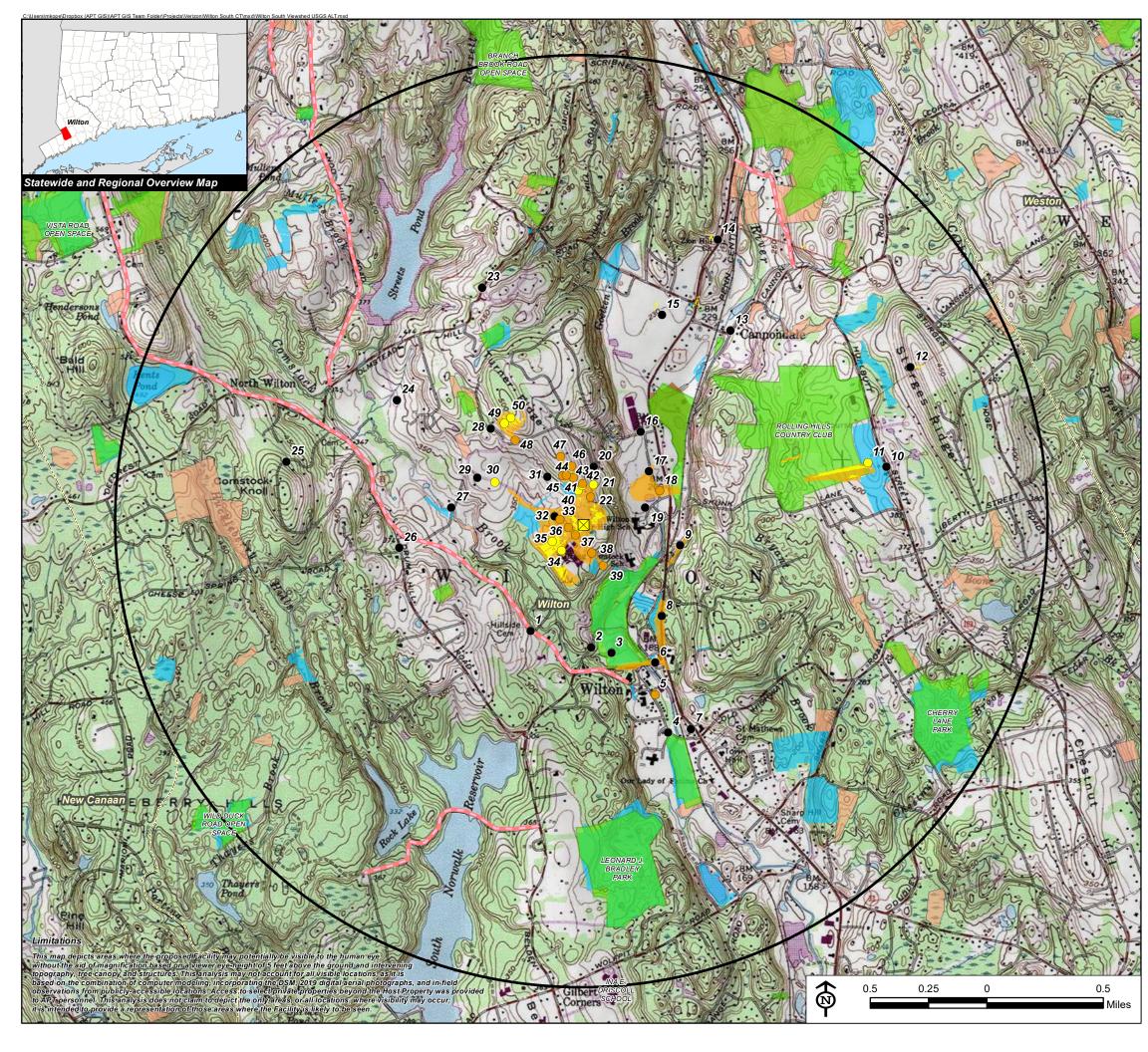
Connecticut Forest & Parks Association, Connecticut Walk Books East & West

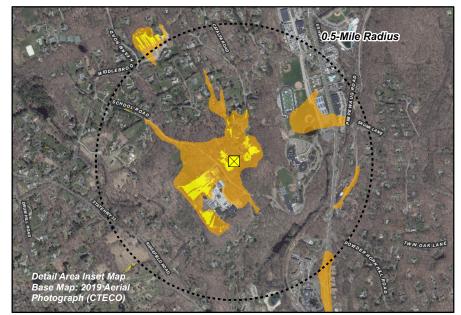
<u>Other</u> CTDOT Scenic Strips (based on Department of Transportation data)

\*\*Not all the sources listed above appear on the Viewshed Maps. Only those features within the









# **Viewshed Analysis Map**

Proposed Wireless Telecommunications Facility Wilton South CT Town of Wilton 180 School Road Wilton, Connecticut

Proposed facility height is 123 feet AGL. Forest canopy height is derived from LiDAR data. Study area encompasses a two-mile radius and includes 8,042 acres. Existing conditions field verified by APT on December 2, 2022 Base Map Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Topographic Quadrangle Map, Norwalk North, CT (1975) Map Date: January 2023

## Legend



# Data Sources:

## Physical Geography / Background Data

A digital surface model (DSM) was created from the State of Connecticut 2016 LiDAR LAS data points. The DSM captures the natural and built features on the Earth's surface.

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