

Site Search Process and Selection

Section 16-50j-74(j) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies requires the applicant to submit a statement that describes “the narrowing process by which other possible sites were considered and eliminated.” In accordance with this requirement, the description of the general site search process, the identification of the target search area and the alternative locations considered for development of the proposed Manchester telecommunications facility are provided below.

As a tower developer, Optasite bases its decision to seek out a site in an area on its knowledge and understanding of existing weaknesses in the systems of the several wireless carriers operating in the area and/or consultation with individual carriers. A target area is chosen central to the area in which the coverage and/or capacity needs have been identified. The area targeted is the geographical location where the installation of a site would, based on general radio frequency engineering and system design standards, be likely to address the identified problem. Optasite’s goal is to locate sites that will provide for orderly integration into the existing wireless systems of multiple carriers. In this case, T-Mobile had previously initiated a search for a site in this area and identified the proposed location. Subsequently, T-Mobile agreed to pursue development of a site through Optasite, and Verizon Wireless has also subsequently identified a need for a site in the area and expressed interest in the proposed location.

Optasite is sensitive to State and local desires to minimize the construction of new towers, and does not initiate searches in areas with known acceptable structures. In the area of Manchester that is the subject of this site search, there are no existing towers, transmission line structures or other suitable structures with the exception of a nearby water tower that the Town of Manchester has indicated would not be acceptable for co-location. Any existing towers are too far from the target area to provide coverage specifically to the target area.

In general, Optasite first studies the area to determine whether industrial or commercial areas or areas which have appropriate environmental and land use characteristics are present. Potential locations are studied by radio frequency engineers to determine whether the locations will meet the technical requirements for a site in the area. The list of potential locations is further refined based on the willingness of property owners to make their property available. Analysis of potential environmental effects and benefits may further narrow the alternatives. In each site search, the weight afforded to relevant factors may vary depending on the nature of the area and the availability of potential sites.

There are no large areas of commercial or industrial use in or next to the target area. The surrounding area is generally residential. In addition, there are several churches in the surrounding area.

Optasite investigated numerous properties in the area of the Urban Realty company property at 1027 Middle Turnpike East. Optasite investigated several parcels of land owned by the Town of Manchester. These included parcels located at 1052 Middle Turnpike East, 550 Lydall Street, 199 New Bolton Road and 226 Lake Street. All four of these properties are used in connection with the Lydall Street Reservoir, have land use restrictions in place and therefore cannot be utilized for a tower. Optasite also investigated property located at 784 Middle Turnpike East owned by Rieg Realty LLC. This property is located directly next to a subdivision and provides little to no natural screening. Property investigated at 990 Middle Turnpike East is part of this subdivision and, again, is in close proximity to residences and would provide little natural screening. Finally, Optasite investigated property located at 175 New Bolton Road owned by Capstone Builders, Inc. The developer who owns that property is seeking to develop that property and therefore was not interested in developing a tower on that property.

The Urban Realty Company property at 1027 Middle Turnpike East (the "Property") is superior to other properties in the area. The Property is an approximately 9 acre parcel, significantly larger than others in the area. Large portions of the property remain undeveloped and wooded. Topographical features and vegetation afford significant screening of the proposed site. In addition, Optasite will utilize an existing dirt driveway to access the site so that all of the natural screening provided by the trees in the front of the Property on New Bolton Road will remain.

