

SECTION 2

Site Search Process

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 descriptions of the general site search process, the identification of the target search area and the alternative locations considered for development of the proposed Old Lyme telecommunications facility are provided below.

As a tower developer, SBA bases its decision to seek out a site in an area based on its knowledge and understanding of existing weaknesses in the systems of the 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. SBA's goal is to locate sites that will provide for orderly integration into the existing wireless systems of multiple carriers. In this case, SBA was aware of general need for coverage in this area, including AT&T's need, and conducted the site search. AT&T conducted its own site search in this area, which has resulted in its desire to locate on SBA's proposed site.

SBA 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 Old Lyme, there are no existing tall structures or transmission line structures. All of the existing towers in the general area are too far away to provide adequate coverage to the target coverage area.

In proceeding to examine an area for a suitable location for a new facility, SBA 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.

The search for a site in this area of Old Lyme was limited by the largely residential nature of the search area. There are no large areas of commercial or industrial development within the site search area. Therefore, due to the size and use of the town parcel at 14 Cross Lane, SBA began discussions with the Town regarding the use of that property as a potential site for the proposed telecommunications facility.