

Proposed Wireless  
Telecommunications Facility

Site Name: Tallman (NY-161)  
350 Haverstraw Road  
Village of Montebello, NY

VISUAL RESOURCE  
ASSESSMENT

Prepared for:



9 Harmony Street, 2nd Floor  
Danbury, CT 06810

October 14, 2025

## INTRODUCTION

Homeland Towers seeks approval from the Village of Montebello, NY to construct a wireless telecommunications facility (the "Facility") at 350 Haverstraw Road, Montebello, NY ("host property"). To address issues of potential visual impact, Saratoga Associates, Landscape Architects, Architects, Engineers, and Planners, P.C. was retained to conduct a Visual Resource Assessment ("VRA") of the proposed Project.

The study area for this VRA extends to a two-mile radius from the Facility (hereafter referred to as the "2-mile study area").

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Facility will be located at 41° 08' 07.0" N, 74° 07' 52.4" W. ("Facility site"). The 1.3± acre host property is identified as Rockland County tax parcel # 48.10-1-8. The existing ground elevation at the Facility site is approximately 374± feet above mean sea level (AMSL). The Facility is located on Haverstraw Road (Route 202) Road, approximately 450 feet north of the intersection at Mayer Drive.

The Facility involves the construction of a wireless telecommunications structure consisting of a 110-foot-tall stealth monopine tower with an antenna mounted at a centerline height of 97 feet above finished grade. The tower is designed to support up to four antenna levels.

The stealth monopine tower design will include a dense non-uniform branching pattern with branches ranging in length from approximately 6 feet to 10 feet and in sufficient density to substantially conceal the antenna arrays and associated equipment, and help blend the structure with the visual characteristics of the surrounding woodland landscape. Antenna arrays will be covered in an earth tone green textured sleeve to further camouflage equipment. Monopine branching will extend to the 115-foot± elevation for aesthetic purposes.

Associated ground equipment will be located within a 50-foot by 50-foot (2,500 square foot) rectangular fenced compound at the base of the tower. The ground level equipment will be approximately 10 feet tall. The compound fence will be an eight-foot tall chain link fence with privacy slats to screen ground level equipment. Access to the Facility site will be from the Village of Montebello Community Center and Justice Court parking lot. The fenced compound, parking area and access drive will be a gravel surface. Grading and tree removal will be required to facilitate the proposed access road and compound.

## LANDSCAPE SETTING

The Facility is in the Village of Montebello, NY (2020 estimated population 4,507<sup>1</sup>). The 1.3± acre host property is zoned Open Space-Recreation Residential as defined by the Village of Montebello<sup>2</sup>.

The host property is accessed from the Village of Montebello Community Center and Justice Court parking lot (connected to Haverstraw Road). The Facility will be partially bordered by deciduous woodland vegetation to the northeast and southwest, by a gas right-of-way and deciduous woodland to

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<sup>1</sup>[https://data.census.gov/profile/Montebello\\_village,\\_New\\_York?g=160XX00US3648090](https://data.census.gov/profile/Montebello_village,_New_York?g=160XX00US3648090)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.villageofmontebello.org/wp-content/uploads/LOCAL-LAW-6-OF-2019.pdf>

the northwest, and by the Village of Montebello Community Center and Justice Court parking lot to the southeast.

Land use within two miles of the Facility is generally comprised of moderate density (1/2 to 2.5+ acre) single family residential properties to the east and south with structures typically one- and two-story homes within organized subdivisions or individual homes set back from local roads. Residential neighborhoods are commonly wooded, often with well landscaped understory areas that generally limit views to the immediate foreground. Along roadways mature trees commonly extend to road edges preventing long distance vistas. Harriman State Park to the north and west constitutes a large part of the approximately 4,400 acres of woodland within the study area. Land use in the southeastern portion of the 2-mile study area is more intensely developed with higher density residential, commercial, industrial, and warehousing/distribution uses along the Interstate 87 and State Route 59 corridors, near the villages of Suffern and Airmont.

The nearest residential structure to the Facility Site is approximately 220 feet east of the Facility (356 Haverstraw Road).

Table 1 summarizes land cover within the 2-mile study area.

**Table 1 - Land Cover Summary (NLCD 2021)**

Type	Land Cover Type in VSA (Acres)	Percent Coverage
Woodland	4,399	55%
Developed	3,558	44%
Open Water	32	0.4%
Agriculture (Active/Inactive/Scrub)	37	0.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,026</b>	<b>100%</b>

The local topography is generally characterized as mountainous in the northwest portion of the study area and moderately hilly in the southeast portion of the study. The topographic high point (elevation 1,213± feet AMSL) is a wooded unnamed hill within Harriman State Park on the northern edge of the 2-mile study area. The topographic low point (elevation 264 ± feet AMSL) is along the Ramapo River near the Village of Suffern in the Town of Ramapo on the southwestern edge of the 2-mile study area. Waterbodies include Antrim Lake (9 acres±), the Mahwah River and the Ramapo River.

#### **VIEWSHED ANALYSIS**

Viewshed mapping identifies the geographic area within which there is a relatively high probability that some portion of the Facility could be visible above intervening landform, buildings and vegetation.

Global Mapper 25.0 GIS software was used to generate viewshed areas based on publicly available LiDAR data. A digital surface model (DSM) created from the State of New York 2018 LiDAR LAS data points. The DSM captures the natural and built features of the earth's surface. Using Global Mapper's viewshed analysis tool, the proposed Facility location and height were input and a conservative offset of

6 feet was applied to account for the observer's eye level. The resulting viewshed identifies grid cells with a theoretical line-of-sight to the Facility high point (i.e., 110 feet above ground level).

By themselves, the viewshed maps do not determine how much of the proposed Facility would be visible above intervening landform, structures or vegetation (e.g., 100%, 50%, 10% etc. of total tower height), but rather the geographic area within which some portion of the Facility would theoretically be visible. Their primary purpose is to provide a general understanding of a Facility's potential visibility and identify areas to be visited during field reconnaissance.

Figure A1 identifies areas of potential project visibility at a macro scale within the 2-mile study area. Figure A2 shows potential visibility within ½ mile of the Facility. Figures A1, A2 are provided in Appendix A.

Of the 8,040 acres within the 2-mile study area, a view of the proposed telecommunications tower is theoretically possible from approximately 3.6 acres (less than 0.1%). Of the 501 acres within a half mile of the Facility, a view of the proposed tower is likely from approximately 1 acre (2%). This limited degree of visibility is due to the presence of substantial woodland vegetation throughout the 2-mile study area.

## **VISUALLY SENSITIVE RESOURCES**

### **Residential Neighborhoods**

Within ½ mile of the Facility residential development is largely clustered in planned single-family residential neighborhoods and road frontage properties. Dense woodland and well landscaped understory areas commonly limit views from residential properties to the immediate foreground. From most residential properties, views of the Facility will be substantially or fully screened by intervening mature woodland vegetation – even during winter leaf-off-season.

Residential streets immediately adjacent to the host property include Haverstraw Road, Regis Court, Victory Road and Henry Court. Views from most residential properties are substantially or completely screened by existing woodland vegetation. Viewshed analysis identifies several small areas where a portion of the Facility may be visible above intervening vegetation. Such views are not common.

Limited seasonal views though existing deciduous branches and stems may occur from residential properties generally within 1,000 feet of the Facility. Such views will be substantially or completely screened by intervening deciduous vegetation during the summer leaf-on season.

### **Public Roadways**

Approximately 85 miles of public roadways are within the 2-mile study area. The Facility property is bordered on the southeast by Haverstraw Road (Route 202) which has an AADT count of 4,497 vehicles per day. According to the viewshed analysis the Facility will be visible from approximately 50 linear feet of Haverstraw Road, adjacent to the property.

Approximately 4 miles of public roadways are within ½-mile of the Facility. Viewshed analysis identified intermittent theoretical views of the Facility above intervening vegetation cumulatively totaling approximately 150 linear feet (less than 0.1%) of roadway within this ½-mile radius. When visible, views from roadways will be brief and intermittent through roadside vegetation or between structures.

Visibility during summer leaf-on season will be substantially or completely screened by roadside deciduous vegetation.

Given the complex visual stimuli encountered by motorists travelling in a moving vehicle, even if the Facility is visible, it is likely viewer recognition of the Facility would be limited. As the tendency of motorists is to focus down the road peripheral views of the Facility may largely go unnoticed by most travelers.

### **Municipal Parks**

Kakiat Park – Kakiat Park, owned by the County of Rockland, is situated approximately one mile northeast of the Facility. The park is minimally developed, mostly wooded, with several hiking trails. Although viewshed analysis indicates there will be minimal visibility from trails, there will likely be visibility of the Facility from a trail overlook in Kakiat Park. The overlook location is shown on Figure A1

Suffern Baseball Fields – Situated adjacent to a light industrial area in the Village of Suffern, the ball fields are located approximately 1.8 miles southeast of the Facility. The complex consists of four ball fields and several associated structures. Viewshed analysis indicates the Facility will not be visible from the baseball complex.

The location of municipal parks is shown on Figure A1.

### **State Parks**

Harriman State Park – Harriman State Park is situated adjacent to the Facility property to the north and west, separated from the Facility property by an existing gas right-of-way. Approximately 2,800 acres at the southern tip of the park's 47,500+ acres, lies within the 2-mile study area. Viewshed analysis indicates of the 2,800 acres of Park within the study area, approximately 0.6 acres will likely have some visibility of the Facility. Views from most of the park will be substantially or completely screened by existing dense woodland vegetation. Visibility during summer leaf-on season will be substantially or completely screened. Several park trails are within the study area, but will not have visibility of the Facility, according to viewshed analysis. Several designated scenic overlooks are situated within the 2-mile study area; three of these are documented in the photo log (figures B23-B25). Viewshed and/or field reconnaissance confirms that state park scenic overlooks within the 2-mile study area will be screened from views of the tower by intervening topography.

The location of Harriman State Park is shown in Figure A1.

### **Historic Resources**

National Register of Historic Places – Three National Register-listed properties are within the 2-mile study area. The Torne Brook Farm and Torne Valley Vineyard property is located approximately 1.6 miles west-northwest of the Facility. The Suffern Main Post office is located approximately 1.7 miles southwest of the Facility in the Village of Suffern. Washington Avenue Soldiers' Monument and Triangle in the Village of Suffern is situated approximately 1.7 miles southwest of the Facility. Viewshed analysis indicates the Facility will not be visible from these properties.

Other Historic Resources – Bayard Lane Cooperative Historic District is a National Register-eligible historic district located approximately 1,120 feet from the Facility; based on field observation during the balloon test, tower views are unlikely from this district. 27 individual National Register-eligible

properties are within the 2-mile study area, between ¼ mile and two miles from the Facility; viewshed analysis indicates there will be no tower visibility from any of these properties.

The location of historic resources is shown on Figure A1.

### STUDY AREA RECONNAISSANCE

A balloon visibility test was conducted on December 15, 2024, to allow the public and local decision-makers an opportunity to observe the location and potential visibility of the Project.

One 4-foot± diameter red balloon was raised to the approximate top elevation of the previously proposed tower height (110 feet). The balloon was raised at approximately 9:00am and remained aloft until 12:00pm. The weather was fair to generally clear for the duration of the test. The wind speed was approximately 5mph at the time of launch with the balloon flying at or near the intended altitude. Winds increased from approximately 5 to 6 mph by between 9 and 10am and generally remained at or under 6mph for the duration of the test<sup>3</sup>.

While the balloon was in the air a visual analyst drove public roads and walked local trails to inventory areas where viewshed mapping identified potential Project visibility. Photographs were taken from key observation points that were identified and mapped in advance of the balloon test in consultation with the Village of Montebello. Additional photographs were also taken from other places where balloon visibility was found as well as from locations where the balloon was not visible to balance the photo record and document visual conditions representative of less affected areas.

Photographs were taken using a high resolution digital single lens reflex ("DSLR") camera with a lens setting of approximately 50mm (full frame sensor) lens to minimize optical distortion. The precise coordinates of each photo location were recorded in the field using a handheld global positioning system (GPS) unit. Prior to field reconnaissance the coordinates of the proposed telecommunications tower were programmed into a handheld GPS unit as a "waypoint." The "waypoint indicator" function of the GPS (arrow pointing along a calculated bearing) was used to assist the visual analyst determine the direction of the tower site from each photo location.

Photographs taken during the visibility test are provided in Appendix B. The location of these photographs is identified on the viewshed maps included as Figures A1 and A2 in Appendix A. Photographs are summarized in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 – Photo Locations**

Map ID/ Picture # (Appendix B)	Location Description	Distance to Facility	Likely View Indicated by Land Cover Viewshed - (See Figures A1/A2)	Tower Visibility Based on 3D Modeling *	Photo/ Simulation Provided as:
01	South corner of the Montebello Community Center parking area	270	YES	FILTERED	Figure C1-C2
02	Entrance road to the Montebello Community Center parking area	270	YES	YES	

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wunderground.com/history/daily/KTEB/date/2024-12-15>

03	Harverstraw Rd at entrance to the Montebello Community Center	400	YES	YES	Figure C3-C4
04	Entrance walkway to Suffern High School	6,040	NO	FILTERED	
05	Western entrance to Suffern High School	5,640	NO	YES	
06	Sousa Ln, 90 feet north of Grist Mill Ct	5,120	NO	NO	
07	Babbling Brook Ln, 310 feet west of Copeland Dr	3,220	NO	NO	
08	Adjacent property, Haverstraw Rd	300	NO	FILTERED	Figure C5-C6
09	Intersection of Harverstraw and Westgate Rds	1,710	NO	NO	
10	Near 19 Bayard Ln S	1,690	NO	NO	
11	Regis Ct, cul-de-sac	660	NO	NO	Figure C7-C8
12	Haverstraw Rd at Regis Ct, south	1,050	NO	NO	
13	Haverstraw Rd at Regis Ct, north	1,140	NO	NO	
14	Zeck Ct, 210 feet east of Henry Ct	1,280	YES	YES	Figure C9-C10
15	E Mayer Dr, 400 feet west of Mile Rd	4,820	NO	NO	
16	Near 48 Mayer Dr	2,070	NO	NO	
17	River Rd at Rocklyn Dr	3,110	NO	NO	
18	River Rd, 220 feet north of Rocklyn Dr	2,750	NO	NO	
19	Town of Ramapo Senior Center parking area, Mayer Dr	640	NO	FILTERED	Figure C9-C10
20	Haverstraw Rd, 310 feet north of Village boundary	4,010	NO	NO	
21	Haverstraw Rd, 400 feet south of Mayer Dr	800	NO	NO	
22	Kakiat Park, Mountain Trail photo location/scenic overlook	6,300	NO	NO	
23	Mountain Trail, Harriman State Park	6,890	NO	NO	
24	Suffern - Bear Mountain Trail, Harriman State Park	8,340	NO	NO	
25	Suffern - Bear Mountain Trail, Harriman State Park	8,640	NO	NO	
<b>Terminology</b>					
* "Tower Visible Based on 3D Modeling" differs from "Likely View Indicated by Land Cover Viewshed" due to the use of LIDAR data which underestimates tree height in viewshed calculation.					

### PHOTO SIMULATIONS

To illustrate how the Facility will appear photo simulations were prepared from six (6) affected photo locations. Photo simulations were developed by superimposing a rendering of a three-dimensional computer model of the proposed Facility into the base photograph taken from each corresponding visual receptor. The three-dimensional computer model was developed using *3D Studio Max Design®* software (3D Studio Max).

Simulated perspectives (camera views) were matched to the corresponding base photograph for each simulated view by replicating the precise coordinates of the field camera position (as recorded by handheld GPS) and the focal length of the camera lens used (e.g., 50mm). Precisely matching these parameters assures scale accuracy between the base photograph and the subsequent simulated view. The camera's elevation (Z) value is derived from digital elevation model (DEM) data plus the camera's height above ground level. The camera's target position was set to match the bearing of the corresponding existing condition photograph as recorded in the field. With the existing conditions photograph displayed as a "viewport background," and the viewport properties set to match the photograph's pixel dimensions, minor camera adjustments were made (horizontal and vertical

positioning, and camera roll) to align the horizon in the background photograph with the corresponding features of the 3D model.

To verify the camera alignment, elements visible within the photograph (e.g., existing buildings, utility poles, topography, etc.) were identified and digitized from digital orthophotos as needed. Each element was assigned a Z value based on DEM data and then imported to 3D Studio Max. A 3D terrain model was also created (using DEM data) to replicate the existing local topography. The digitized elements were then aligned with corresponding elements in the photograph by adjusting the camera target. If necessary, slight camera adjustments were made for accurate alignment.

A daylight system was created matching the exact date and time of each baseline photograph to assure proper shading and shadowing of modeled elements.

Once the camera alignment was verified, a to-scale 3D model of the proposed 110-foot-tall monopine telecommunications tower was merged into the model space. The 3D model of Facility was constructed in sufficient detail to accurately convey visual character and reveal impacts. The scale, alignment, elevations and location of the visible elements of the proposed tower are true to the conceptual design. Post production editing (i.e., mask out portion of tower that falls below or behind foreground topography and vegetation) was completed using Adobe Photoshop software. The methodology accurately represents the location, height and visual character of the proposed tower.

Photo simulations are provided in Appendix C.

#### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The Facility involves the construction of a wireless telecommunications structure consisting of a 110-foot-tall monopine tower (115 ± feet to the top of branches) designed to support up to four antenna levels.

The Facility is located within a wooded area off Haverstraw Road in the Village of Montebello, Town of Ramapo, NY. The Facility will be partially bordered by deciduous woodland vegetation to the northeast and southwest, and by a gas right-of-way and deciduous woodland to the northwest. The surrounding mature woodland which partially borders the Facility provides substantial visual screening from most off-site vantage points.

The northwest portion of the study area is mountainous with large areas of undeveloped woodland. The southeast portion of the study area is characterized by a moderately hilly landscape with medium density (1/2 to 2.5+ acre) single family residential development and small pockets of undeveloped woodland. Residential neighborhoods are commonly wooded, often with well landscaped understory areas that generally limit views to the immediate foreground. Along roadways, mature trees commonly extend to road edges preventing long distance vistas.

Viewshed Analysis Summary - Of the 8,040 acres within the 2-mile study area, a view of the proposed telecommunications tower is theoretically possible from approximately 3.6 acres (less than 0.1%). Of the 501 acres within a half mile of the Facility, a view of the proposed tower is likely from approximately 1 acre (2%). 0.3 acres of theoretically visible area within ½ mile is from the Facility site.

Visibility from Residential Neighborhoods and Local Roads - Residential development is generally clustered in planned single-family residential neighborhoods or road frontage properties. Residential properties are often well landscaped with mature deciduous and evergreen trees and understory vegetation which limit views to the immediate foreground. From most residential properties, Facility views will be filtered through intervening deciduous stems and branches during winter leaf-off season. Such views will be substantially or completely screened during the summer leaf-on season.

5 miles of public roadways are within ½-mile of the Facility. Viewshed analysis identified intermittent theoretical views of the Facility above intervening vegetation cumulatively totaling approximately 300 linear feet (less than 0.1%). Affected areas are brief road segments with intermittent glimpses views between existing roadside trees.

Conclusion - Viewshed analysis, the balloon visibility test and subsequent photo simulations demonstrate the Facility will be fully screened from a large majority of the surrounding landscape by intervening vegetation.

From most affected vantage points Facility views will be filtered through intervening deciduous stems and branches during winter leaf-off season. Such views will be substantially or completely screened during the summer leaf-on season. In the limited areas where the Facility is visible above existing vegetation the tower remains low to the tree line and generally indistinct.

Visual impact is defined by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation as follows:

“Aesthetic impact occurs when there is a detrimental effect on the perceived beauty of a place or structure. Mere visibility of a project should not be a threshold for decision making. Instead a project, by virtue of its visibility, must clearly interfere with or reduce the public’s enjoyment or appreciation of the appearance of a significant place or structure”<sup>4</sup> ...“Significant aesthetic impacts are those that may cause a diminishment of the public enjoyment and appreciation of an inventoried resource, or one that impairs the character or quality of such a place” ...“the fact that a project is large, by itself, should not be a trigger for positive declaration under SEQRA”.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, the DEC Visual Policy recognizes that not everything that is visible rises to the level of an Aesthetic Impact, and not all Aesthetic Impacts rise to the level of a Significant Aesthetic Impact that may diminish public enjoyment of the resource.

Based on the degree of Facility visibility and proposed monopole design, it is clear that any remaining project visibility is not of a size or extent that it would constitute an unacceptable magnitude. Nor does the Facility affect large number of public viewers or geographic area where the Facility can reasonably be deemed to be visually important as defined by SEQRA.

Furthermore, when considered within the framework of the DEC Visual Policy’s definition of “significant adverse visual impact”, it is clear the Facility will not cause a diminishment of the public enjoyment and

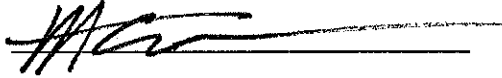
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<sup>4</sup> NYSDEC Visual Policy (DEP-00-2), p15.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* p.9.

appreciation of any scenic or historic resource, or one that impairs the character or quality of such a place. As such the proposed Project will not result in an adverse visual impact.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Allen', is written over a horizontal line.

Matthew W. Allen, RLA