

Willington Conservation Commission
40 Old Farms Road
Willington, CT 06279

October 1, 2012

Connecticut Siting Council
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

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RE: **Docket No. 429** - New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC (AT&T) application for construction, maintenance and operation of telecommunication facility located at one of two sites in Willington: Willington Tax Assessor Parcel ID #M23-P62 Tolland Turnpike, Willington, Connecticut; or Willington Tax Assessor Parcel ID #M18-19 Old South Willington Road, Willington, Connecticut

The Willington Conservation Commission is concerned that the view of and from the Willington Common/Town Green (located on Tolland Turnpike) will be significantly compromised if the 160-foot communications tower is constructed at the proposed site on Tolland Turnpike (Tax Assessor Parcel ID # M23-P62). As the applicant's submission packet notes, the Common and many of the structures surrounding it are listed on State and National Registers of Historic Places (SHPO Site Number: NR #90001911). When residents in Willington reflect on their town's historic and rural character, this district and the Old Town Hall figure prominently in their consideration and goals.

The Vision Statement in the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) states: "**The Town of Willington is a community that seeks to preserve its rural character and open space and protect its natural, historic and agricultural resources.**"

More specifically, Objective B in the POCD chapter on Historic and Cultural Resources states: "**Conserve the Town Green and its surroundings as a unique component of the town's culture and character.**"

Furthermore, the chapter on Historic, Aesthetic and Recreational Resources in A Natural Resource Inventory and Open Space Conservation Plan, produced by the Willington Conservation Commission and made part of the POCD in 2007, states: "**Maintaining and preserving Willington's architectural heritage and scenic beauty are key to preserving the town's rural New England character.**"

The proposed tower on Tolland Turnpike would be a significant, disruptive feature in the otherwise attractive view from the upper end of the

Willington Common/Town Green. The Old Town Hall and war memorials are located at the high, east end of the green where many residents and visitors gather to take photographs and gaze at the open and western-sloping expanse of the green and its surrounding view shed. From this view point, the proposed tower on Tolland Turnpike would be easily visible, detract from the historic view of the green and be detrimental to everyone's appreciation of this important heritage site.

We also contend that the applicant's Visual Analysis Report (3.0) which states the view of the proposed monopole will be seasonal from the Willington Historic District, does not address the temporary nature of the trees and their associated tree line. As you are aware, tree health and the corresponding tree line height and view shed can be altered at any time by natural events such as hurricanes, ice storms, insect infestations, and the normal course of tree aging and death. Trees can also be cut and harvested by landowners without any consideration of how view sheds will be impacted. Consequently, the monopole's visibility over time can and will be altered by the whim of nature and/or hand of man.

In today's world, we recognize there may be a need for additional communication poles and towers in Tolland County, but would generally advise intelligent siting which does not impact Willington's or the region's natural or cultural resources. With that in mind, we offer additional recommendations:

- 1) Avoid sites that can impact wetlands, watercourses, wildlife corridors, protected open space or historic resources;
- 2) Communication equipment at any site should be kept as short as possible and be camouflaged to blend into existing tree lines and natural view sheds.
- 3) Approval of any application should be conditioned with an ultimate, maximum height restriction, so that no additional tower height can be added at a later date.

With thoughtful effort, we should be able to accommodate equipment and facilities which provide for the ease of communication that we expect in our lives today while also preserving important natural resources, cultural sites and historic connections to the past for the benefit of our residents as well as future generations. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Kathleen Demers

Vice Chairman

Cc: Willington Board of Selectmen