

CASE STUDY:

Bringing Service to the Molly Stark Scenic Byway

The problem.

Winding through lowland valleys, historic villages, and the spectacular Green Mountain National Forest, Vermont Route 9 is part of the Molly Stark Scenic Byway. But Route 9, which extends between Brattleboro and Bennington in southern Vermont, has been recognized by the Vermont Telecommunications Authority as a “target corridor” for the general absence of reliable cellular and wireless broadband internet service. Our client sought to expand its existing wireless communications network and introduce new reliable coverage along that portion of Vermont Route 9 in Marlboro. We were retained to secure the approvals necessary to construct a 140’ telecommunications tower that would ensure sufficient coverage while also providing an opportunity for co-location by other carriers in the future.



Our approach.

Despite the undeniable need to provide wireless coverage to the area, we recognized the sensitivity associated with developing a new telecommunications tower along the Molly Stark Scenic Byway. Based on our experience on these types of projects, it was clear that site selection was key. Working with a team of site acquisition agents, we encouraged the use of existing structures and other infrastructure to minimize the overall potential impact of the project, and to avoid sensitive natural resources like wetlands and necessary wildlife habitat. After working through issues with executing a lease with a landowner residing overseas, we worked with the Town of Marlboro to identify and address concerns, with the ultimate goal of petitioning the Vermont Public Service Board for approval to construct a telecommunications facility that was supported by the Town of Marlboro and its residents. It was our team’s ability to balance our client’s objective against the concerns of the Town that resulted in this creative solution.

The outcome.

The project was designed to minimize disruption by upgrading an existing woods road for access and locating the facility along the edge of a forested area that remained screened from the road. After presenting the project to Marlboro officials at a well-attended public meeting, we ultimately proposed to the Public Service Board a 120’ telecommunications tower that could be extended up to 140’ in the future. This design minimized aesthetic impacts while also allowing for future co-location when other carriers inevitably sought to provide coverage to this underserved area. With a recommendation in support of the modified project from the Town of Marlboro, and no significant environmental issues associated with the site, we obtained a Certificate of Public Good from the Public Service Board within 45 days of filing the Petition.