

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Harrison Cell Tower
Proposed Implementation Date:	July 2024
Proponent:	The Towers, LLC
Location:	Township 1S Range 2W Section 24
County:	Madison
Trust:	Capitol Buildings

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Towers, LLC proposes building a 199' tower on a 75' by 75' gravel pad to provide cellular service to their subscribers in the greater Harrison area and increase rural cellular service.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS, OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Feb 1, 2023 – Letter sent to lessee, including Madison County Commissioners.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Cellular service towers are subject to federal communication standards which are not addressed in this EA.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Action: Process the proposal for Commercial Lease to access, install and maintain a cellular service tower. A road serving an existing gravel pit will be partially utilized to access this site.

No Action: Do not process the proposal for Commercial Lease.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable, or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

This area has an access road and a gravel pit adjacent to the proposed cell tower. Soils appear to be clay loam with a rolling hill topography.

Action: A short-term soil disturbance will occur with the action alternative due to construction operations. Long term adverse effects would be expected to be minimal with annual maintenance and site inspections using existing road access.

No Action: No impacts are anticipated.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

Action: The proposed commercial lease area is adjacent to an existing unpaved road on the tract, and highway to the west and railway corridor. Runoff could carry some sediment prior to revegetation. No long-term adverse effect to run off or water quality would be expected.

No Action: No impacts are anticipated.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

Action: An increase in vehicle and/or heavy equipment use may occur in the area while construction operations occur. No long-term adverse effects would be expected.

No Action: No impacts are anticipated.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The vegetation is dominated by native grass and forbs.

Action: Both short term and long-term disturbance will occur. To mitigate the disturbance to vegetation, the Department will require the proponent to seed a native grass and forbs mix plus submit a weed management plan to manage invasive and noxious vegetation species after any disturbance of the land during construction or maintenance activities occurring on the property. The long-term disturbance would occur due to the proposed gravel pad directly maintained under the tower.

No Action: No impacts are anticipated.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

Action: Vehicle and human activity may increase in the area while construction operations occur. No long-term adverse effects to fish and wildlife would be expected under either alternative.

No Action: No impacts are anticipated.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists the Spotted Bat, Little Brown Myotis, Fringed Myotis, Golden Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Clark's Nutcracker, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, and Wolverine as species of concern in the area.

Action No impacts are anticipated.

No Action: No impacts are anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

There are no recorded historical or archeological sites observed or recorded for the land where the proposed activities may be located.

No Action: No impacts are anticipated.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

Action: A short-term visual change will occur while work is in process. A long-time visual change will be present with the installation of the tower and lights located on the tower.

No Action: No impacts are anticipated.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

The environmental resources of land water, air or energy are not limited in this area. Farming and grazing are the predominate uses of this land.

Action: The implementation of the action will not add to the demands of environmental resources of the land, water, or air. Electricity will be required to power the cell tower.

No Action: No impacts are anticipated.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

The Department is not aware of additional environmental documents for this area.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.• Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.• Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

Action: The cell phone tower will provide cell phone coverage to an area where consistent coverage has not been present. There may be improved access to emergency services for individuals with increased cellular service access.

No Action: Cell phone coverage may not be consistent into the future. No effect under either alternative.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Action: Improved data transmission infrastructure would be available.

No Action: Data capacity infrastructure would not be improved.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

Action: A limited number of jobs will be provided by constructing and maintaining the cell phone tower.

No action: No effect under either alternative.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Action: State and county tax revenues will increase along with State Trust revenues.

No Action: there will not be an increase in tax revenues or trust land revenues.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

Action: The action alternative will not increase demand for government services.

No Action: No impact is anticipated.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

The proposed area is not within a zoning district in Madison County, nor any other jurisdictional planning or regulation zone.

Action: No impact anticipated.

No Action: No impact anticipated.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

This tract may be used by recreational users although current use appears minimal to non-existent.

Action: No impact anticipated.

No Action: No impact anticipated.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

Action: No impact anticipated.

No Action: No impact anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Action: No impact anticipated.

No Action: No impact anticipated.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Action: No impact anticipated.

No Action: No impact anticipated.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The determined annual value for the proposed Commercial Lease begins at \$12,00000 per year.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Kara Huyser	Date: 06/06/2024
	Title: Bozeman Unit Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Action: Process the applications for utility Right of Way Easements

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:


I have determined that none of the anticipated environmental impacts outlined in the EA are significant according to the criteria outlined in *ARM 36.2.524*. I find that no impacts are regarded as severe, enduring, geographically widespread, or frequent. Further, I find that the quantity and quality of various resources, including any that may be considered unique or fragile, will not be adversely affected to a significant degree. I find no precedent for future actions that would cause significant impacts, and I find no conflict with local, State, or Federal laws, requirements, or formal plans. In summary, I find that the identified adverse impacts will be avoided, controlled, or mitigated by the design of the project to the extent that the impacts are not significant.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: J. Andrew Burgoyne
	Title: Central Land Office Trust Land Program Manager
Signature: 	Date: June 11, 2024