

From: [Melissa Schumaier](#)
To: [Chace Pedersen](#)
Subject: ACU-23-00003 Atlas cell tower appeal letter
Date: Tuesday, August 22, 2023 8:07:33 PM
Attachments: [Cell Tower.docx](#)

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Attached is our strong opposition to the cell tower proposed on Manastash Road.

If there are any questions please let me know.

Regards,

Melissa Schumaier

Anthony and Melissa Schumaier
155 Greenvale Drive
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Chace Pedersen, Senior Planner
Community Development Services
411 N Ruby Street. #2
Ellensburg, WA 98926

Re: Strong Opposition to the Atlas Cellular Tower -ACU-23-00003 Atlas

Dear Community Development Services,

I learned about the construction of the cellular tower from friends in our neighborhood. We are a close community that looks out for the health and safety of each other. I was very disturbed to find that actual mailing of notifications are not sent unless you are 500 feet from the proposed project. In the country, this is not attainable, because we all have a minimum of 3-acre parcels. (This is a conversation for another time.) I am writing my firm opposition to this proposed cell tower on Manastash Road. This tower is a little over a half of a mile from my property. The beauty of this area is why so many of us moved to this area of the county, to escape the city. This tower will do irreparable harm to the visual appearances of this part of the valley. In our 2021 Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan, the county commissioners touch on the very things in their plan: RR-P1:” The County shall promote the retention of its overall character by establishing zoning classifications that preserve rural character identified to Kittitas County.” Allowing construction of a cellular tower in this location is not consistent with the intent, goals or policies in the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan. In fact, they are the exact opposite by catering to the financial gain of one individual landowner, at the expense of the rural landscape, character and safety of the neighborhoods and the families that live there.

I know the county has designated this as a utility which then gives it an administrative zoning code, which makes it not mandatory to educate the surrounding properties or those who are visually impacted by this. I wanted to point something out, that utility is a broad scope that is used for many different terms. Utility also touches on landlines, not the luxury of a cellular device. In the Kittitas County Comprehensive plan, Utilities are defined as, “...utilities element shall, at minimum, consist of the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all existing and proposed utilities, including but limited to, electrical lines, water bank, telecommunication lines and natural gas lines.” This line also outlines critical services for telephones as “landlines”. Not cell towers or cellular phones. All properties are served by landlines in this area. There are services that are already in use in this location. If an area is under served with city sewer, they would then be required to install their own septic system. If there is a sewer hookup in the area, they would be required to use this utility and not allowed to install their own septic system. If there is a service that is already there it should be put to use. This can easily be comparable to cell coverage. There are many cell services in this location where service is attainable. The application by Atlas is false that this is a community that is underserved and to “alleviate current mobile network voice, data, and first responder issues in an area that severely lacks reliable network coverage and capacity.” These are claims made by a company from Colorado that knows nothing of the area it is proposing. This area of the county is very much served with telecommunications. You can easily make phone calls, have internet connection, have satellite TV, and any other technology devices out there on the market. Using a false narrative to illustrate is a scare and false tactic. The further you drive up into

the Manastash Canyon, the cell coverage dies off because of the hills and mountains that are surrounding you. There is no signal that will reach through the hills and surrounding mountains. This signal will not improve with this added tower and is another erroneous statement. The Emergency Management Council of Kittitas County has looked at mobile towers in the past to increase the strength of their connections when down in the Vantage area fighting wildland fire but they mentioned that the hills are the constant interruption of their cell signals. Bringing extra equipment for communications during fire season or wildland firefighting isn't beneficial because of said hills and mountains. It clearly will not help any communication efforts. Another erroneous claim is emergency services telecommunications are going to be more available. The hills and mountains are in the way, interrupting any signal. All emergency calls are transferred to a satellite signal not cell tower. Again, mountains and hills are in the way of signals to and from cellular phones, not the lack of cell towers.

An introduction paragraph to the 2021 Comprehensive plan states that, "One of the main attractions of the rural residential lifestyle is the low intensity of development and the corresponding sense of a slower pace of living. Part of what creates that attraction is the rural-level facilities and services. This Comprehensive Plan supports and preserves this rural lifestyle by limiting service levels to those historically provided in the County's rural areas. Residents should expect County services, such as road maintenance and emergency responses to be limited and to decrease as the distance from a rural activity center or urban area increases." Those that moved into this area have not been underserved by emergency services or cell services but are aware if there is any interruption of any services, it is something that people don't get worked up over. We have come to know even if there is an interruption of any services it is short lived and life in the country can be slower.

The construction of a cell tower on 4140 Manastash Rd directly works against the statements made in the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan. A few examples of this are:

RR-G7: The County should consistently work to preserve and maintain the rural character of Kittitas County for the benefit of its residents.

RR-P16: Land use development within the Rural area that is not compatible with Kittitas County rural character or agricultural activities as defined in RCW 90.58.065(2)(a) will not be allowed.

RR-G12: Permit residential development in rural areas which enhance and protect rural character

U-P6: Community input should be solicited prior to county approval of utility facilities, which may significantly impact the surrounding community.

As required, the Atlas company filed a SEPA review to give an overall environmental checklist for the parcel they are constructing on. Under section 3 they failed to mention there being any surface water, or the Manastash ditch on the north side of the road, and that under taxsifter it is classified as being a part of the 100 year floodplain. Under section 4 they failed to classify any animals that are found in this area, any migration routes, and state that it will have no impact to wildlife. How can they know if there is any impact to wildlife if they don't know what animals or what kinds of wildlife are on or around the property? Under section 8 Land and Shoreline, the Atlas company stated "it will not affect adjacent properties" when in fact it visually will direct all properties in the surrounding area. A 100 foot tower with a 4 foot lightening pole at the top will affect the surrounding parcels. Under Section 10, under a and

b they fail to mention that the tower interrupts anyone's view of the surrounding hills and mountains. A 100 foot silver structure is not aesthetically appealing nor does it fit into this rural setting.

In the next section the company fails to mention that the proposal will not omit any production, storage, or release any toxic or hazardous substances or production of noise. They stated the proposal will not increase any of the items mentioned. This statement cannot be accurately made because the actual impact of cell towers on human health has not been concluded, and as with new technology the data isn't available because it is still too new to know. There have been documented cases of people being sensitive to the waves emitted but stating it has no human or animal health impacts cannot be supported because it is not known that it is 100% safe. It would be negligent to assume human and animal health is immune to this type of communication.

When deciding on whether or not to allow such construction of this tower, I urge you to please look at the plan of the county in keeping with the rural landscape. The financial gain of one individual on his own property at the detriment of many other families in the area should never be given preference. Under the project narrative number 12, there are two things that this plan works directly against. Those are item A: that the proposed use is essential or desirable to the public convenience and not detrimental or injurious to the public health, peace or safety or to the character of the surrounding neighborhood. This tower is not essential, is not desirable, and is detrimental to the public health, peace safety and character of the neighborhood. Again, it doesn't fit into the rural landscape as defined in our Comprehensive plan. The proposed site (under F.) is NOT consistent with the intent and character of the zoning district in which it is located. The site is NOT consistent with G: with the goals and objectives set forth in the comprehensive plan. It doesn't preserve rural character and does compromise the land for the duration of the next 30 years.

Please reject this proposal as it is evident that this is a nuisance on private land, disguised as something beneficial to the public. This is not a needed service in the area and will not give any more emergency services than is already provided. With so many areas of this county that are away from people, away from neighborhoods, schools, and children, I urge you to reject this location on this parcel and have them relocate to another area will less impact on our landscape. It is clear, that this doesn't fit into the model set forth by our County Commissioners to preserve the rural landscape for our families and our future.

Regards,

Melissa and Anthony Schumaier