

**DRAFT SCOPE  
FOR  
DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT STATEMENT  
CAYUGA COUNTY  
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT**

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Draft Scoping Document  
**Cayuga County Emergency Communications Project**  
**Environmental Review Pursuant to SEQRA**

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**Table of Contents**

<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACTS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>ALTERNATIVES</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>RELEVANT INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>4</b>

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Cayuga County Legislature (the “County”) is acting as lead agency for the proposed Cayuga County Emergency Communications Project (the “Project”) pursuant to ECL Article 8, the State Environmental Quality Review Act, and in compliance with all applicable Federal, State and Local laws and regulations. The Project has been designated a Type I Action which may have one or more potentially significant adverse impacts. The Project involves a proposal by Cayuga County to develop an Emergency Radio Communications System for voice and data radio communications services to enable public safety and public service entities operating within Cayuga County to better respond to and protect its citizens.

The Project would include development of a state-of-the-art digital trunked land mobile radio system. The proposed Project is fundamentally an infrastructure, a collection of radio sites located throughout the County interconnected by a network, monitored and controlled by a pair of redundant operations centers.

The network would consist of a number of antennas collocated on existing telecommunications towers and/or sited on new towers constructed at locations yet to be determined. Additionally, one or more operations centers will be constructed and/or sited in existing facilities. The radio sites and network design will have very high reliability and will provide for continuous communications even in the face of equipment failure, natural or man-made incidents. The project will be located throughout Cayuga County, New York.

The County has elected to conduct scoping in accordance with 6 NYCRR 617.8. The primary goals of scoping are to focus the DGEIS on potentially significant adverse impacts and to eliminate consideration of those impacts that are irrelevant or non-significant. Accordingly, this draft scoping document will identify potentially significant adverse impacts in addition to briefly listing other areas to be considered. In addition, proposed initial mitigation measures and additional analysis pursuant to 6 NYCRR 617.8(f)(1)-(5) is included.

The SEQRA process contemplates involved agency and public comment throughout the review process, including during the scoping stage. Accordingly, written comments will be accepted on this document through Tuesday, September 7, 2010. Please direct comments to: Fred Westphal, 160 Genesee St., Auburn NY 13021. Additionally, a public hearing will be held on August 16, 2010 at 2 pm at the County Office Building, 6th floor chambers at 160 Genesee St., Auburn NY 13021, where attendees are invited to provide oral comments.

## **2.0 Potentially Significant Adverse Impacts**

Based on a preliminary evaluation of the proposed project, the following potentially significant adverse impacts have been identified:

- Water Resources – sediment discharge to surface water bodies during construction, release of petroleum oils and lubricants in a primary aquifer recharge area
- Terrestrial and Aquatic Ecology – bird/bat collision mortality, loss of critical habitat for threatened or endangered species
- Land-Use and Zoning – change of visual character in recreational ways, greenways, coastal zone, trails or other sensitive landscape zones
- Visual Resources – adding viewshed features that may be incompatible with the existing setting, or public use of open space
- Noise Impacts – construction and operation phase noise in sensitive receptor areas
- Historical and Archeological Resources – change of visual character in the vicinity of designated sites, excavation in archeologically significant areas
- Public Health and Safety – potential exposure to radio frequency and microwave magnetic radiation
- Other areas of inquiry include: Geology; Topography; Floodplains; Wetlands; Critical Environmental Areas, Coastal Areas, Emissions of Air Pollutants; Agricultural Resources; Transportation; Community Services; Demography; Environmental Justice and Public Utilities.

## **3.0 Proposed Mitigation Measures**

The following section discusses proposed mitigation measures that may be implemented during construction or operation of the proposed Project. A siting guideline will be developed to assist with the selection of sites in order to minimize or avoid impacts to environmental resources to the maximum extent practicable, with top priority given to the use of existing County facilities. The following items are expected to be included as potential mitigation measures and/or as part of the siting guideline:

- Geology Resources – grading plans consistent with surrounding topography; avoidance of significant geological features.
- Water Resources – erosion and sediment control/stormwater management in accordance with NYSDEC General Permit as needed; Spill Management Plan.
- Terrestrial and Aquatic Resources– avoiding encroachment on State and Federal Wetland Areas and Critical Environmental Areas and threatened and endangered species habitats; limited tower height; encouraging collocation on existing towers, and other measures to minimize avian impacts.
- Agricultural Resources – compliance with Agricultural and Markets Law requirements if necessary; site layouts that avoid bisecting active agricultural fields.
- Land-Use and Zoning – compliance with State Open Space Plans, Watershed Management Plans and other applicable land use plans, to the extent practicable.
- Environmental Justice – compliance with NYSDEC Environmental Justice Policy (CP-29) for potential Environmental Justice Areas.
- Visual Resource – impacts will be mitigated by the site selection process; placing equipment on existing County facilities; collocating on existing towers where practicable; limiting tower height; minimizing illumination as permitted by the FAA; screening the towers; equipment layout, architectural design and minimizing direct line of sight views to the extent practicable.
- Noise - limiting the hours of operation during construction; noise reduction features on construction, power and cooling equipment.
- Historic and Archeological - impacts will be mitigated by the site selection process including seeking opportunities to locate facilities away from historic and archeological resources.
- Public Health and Safety – compliance with FCC Requirements for electromagnetic and radio frequency emissions; grounding protection systems; appropriate warning signs.

#### **4.0 Alternatives**

The County proposes to include the following alternatives in the DGEIS.

- No Action: This alternative is the option to not build the Proposed Project which would likely result in segmented regional or local responder based deployment by emergency service providers.
- Alternative Scale or Magnitude: This alternative will consider whether the functional capability of the Proposed Project would allow for a reduction in the number of sites or physical size of infrastructure
- Alternative Timing or Phasing: This alternative will discuss the effects of delaying or phasing the proposed action over a longer period of time than currently proposed.
- Alternative Technologies: This alternative will discuss use of other technologies. Alternative technologies will be evaluated with respect to their capability to meet the Project objectives, impact on natural and human resources, and economic impact.

## **5.0 Relevant Information**

A number of data sources are expected to be utilized to address each impact previously identified. These databases include information such as Parcel Data including Zoning and Land Use; 2006 Orthoimagery; Census Blocks; County/Town/City/Village Municipal Boundaries; Contour Lines; Road Center Line Files; DEC Lakes, Streams, Shoreline, Land, and Wetlands; Flood Zones; Geology; Soils; Registered Historical Sites; ; Bridges; DOT Facilities; DOW Dams; Emergency Operation Center; DOT Towers; Fire Stations; Agricultural Land; Ecological Zones.

Additional State and Federal Databases are available to provide information needed to address various impacts. These databases include NY Aquifers; New York State Interactive Mapping Gateway; NYSDEC State Recreation Lands Mapping Gateway; EPA Internet Resources; NYSDEC Watershed Map Information and Priority Water Bodies List; and NYSDEC Environmental Mapper. Additional information may be obtained through other resources including phone inquiries/ interviews and desktop research.