

Milestone Monopole Project at The Madeira School

June 30th Community Meeting Summary

Milestone Towers (Milestone) hosted a community meeting at 6:30 pm on June 30th, 2025, at the McLean Community Center to discuss its proposed monopole at The Madeira School. Milestone sent notices of the meeting on May 30 and June 4 to 294 Fairfax County property owners within an approximately 0.5-mile radius of the proposed location. 13 people signed in at the meeting, three of which were Madeira School employees and one was a planner with Fairfax County, and six to eight other people attended the meeting. The project team included Matt Penning, Director of Development with Milestone; Andrew Petersohn, Radio Frequency Consulting Engineer with DBM Engineering; and Aaron Frank, Senior Land Use Planner with Cooley.

A list of the topics discussed and the responses provided by the project team are provided below:

- Notice – An attendee asked how this meeting had been noticed.

A letter and postcard were sent for the balloon fly and the community meeting to Fairfax County property owners living within 0.5 miles of the property. These notices were first sent in May for the meeting that was then cancelled, and again in advance of this meeting. Notices will be required to be sent to the twenty-five nearest residents in advance of any formal hearings for the Special Exception or 2232 review. Milestone will maintain a website during the life of the application and by signing the sign-in sheet we will include attendees on any email updates for the project.

- Need – Attendees asked about the need for the monopole.

The propagation maps were reviewed with attention to the inadequate performance of the existing small cell / Distributed Antenna System (DAS) facilities and the distance and range of existing towers in the nearby vicinity. Andrew Petersohn reviewed the typical range and ability of small cell vs. monopole facilities to provide coverage in vehicles and in buildings and need for a monopole to accomplish this.

Madeira representatives spoke about past power outages and the inability to communicate during those, and the critical need to improve its communications for safety purposes.

- Service Area – Attendees asked about the service area that will be covered by the monopole.

The service area includes Madeira, motorists on Georgetown Pike, nearby residents and businesses. The propagation maps were shown to illustrate the areas with poor coverage both immediately surrounding The Madeira School and in areas further in each direction.

- Use of Existing Towers – An attendee asked whether improving existing cell towers would achieve the same objective in lieu of constructing a new tower.

Existing towers are too far away in order to provide service improvement in the service area. A map was shown that identified the location of surrounding towers, all of which are approximately 2 miles from the proposed site and exceed the coverage area for a monopole. Re-orienting panels on an existing cell tower would also not provide an improvement for this reason as well.

- Property Values - An attendee expressed concern that this would depreciate property values.

This concern was acknowledged although adequate cell coverage also is a factor in property values, and as most households no longer have landlines, the ability to communicate for safety or general purposes is increasingly important and something that prospective residents seek, as we have heard from elected officials, the general public, and industry professionals. The balloon fly demonstrated that the monopole would not be visible from residentially-used properties.

- Appearance – An attendee asked what techniques would mitigate the appearance, both the equipment compound and monopole itself.

The monopole is located within a forest such that it is screened by changes in topography and existing tall trees, so it will not be visible from the roadway or nearby residence. Milestone, Madeira, and Verizon worked collaboratively to minimize visibility to the extent feasible, including reducing the height of the tower by 20' (from 195' to 175') as well as siting it further south / west along the existing access road to provide additional tree buffer between the residential development to the east. Milestone agreed to explore options that can further blend the site in with the surrounding area.

- Location – An attendee asked about how the location of the monopole was selected.

The monopole location was selected to meet the coverage need (Madeira, motorists on Georgetown Pike, nearby residents and businesses), to maximize compatibility with surrounding neighbors, and to minimize environmental disturbance. The proposed location is >890' from adjacent properties, greatly exceeding County

setbacks, is located adjacent to an existing access road and is separated by forest and favorable changes in topography to limit visibility.

- Shorter Tower – An attendee asked if the tower height could be lowered.

The tower height is required by Verizon to provide adequate service improvements to achieve the coverage objective (Madeira, motorists on Georgetown Pike, nearby residents and businesses). Lowering the pole would create interference due to the surrounding forest; relocating a lower pole elsewhere on the property would increase its visibility.

- Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) – An attendee asked why LCPS has sued Milestone Towers and why Milestone develops sites on school sites.

Milestone clarified that LCPS is not suing Milestone but rather LCPS still has a partnership with Milestone to develop towers on their real estate. Milestone partners with several school systems in the area, including Prince William County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, and Manassas City (to name a few), to help improve access to reliable wireless coverage for their schools and communities. One of the benefits of partnering with municipal property owners is that their properties are typically some of the largest in the community which is ideal to offer siting options to minimize the visual impact to surrounding area while providing the necessary coverage improvement.

- Tree Removal – Attendees asked and expressed concern about the extent of tree removal.

While the site of the proposed tower location has not been surveyed and the plans shared are conceptual, the expectation is there will be minimal tree removal associated with this development because of the location next to an existing access road and power transformer. Nevertheless, County staff will review the application for compliance with County regulations and Milestone will work to site the facility to minimize tree clearing to the extent possible.

- Existing service – Some attendees noted that existing service is poor while others noted that existing service varies.

Existing services levels are not uniform throughout the coverage area and are affected by topography and vegetation, or whether users are in a house or vehicle or outside. Service levels are generally best immediately surrounding the existing small cell facilities although decline shortly thereafter, as evidenced in the propagation maps.

- Radiofrequency Emissions – An attendee asked about the radiofrequency (RF) emission from the monopole.

Andrew Petersohn explained how the monopole is well below the established FCC regulations for allowable RF emissions and that jurisdiction for this review is with the FCC. A copy of the anticipated RF emissions for the report completed by DBM Engineering is available on the project website. In addition, once its towers are constructed Milestone hires a third-party monitoring company to ensure compliance with federal regulatory standards. This monitoring routinely shows measured values around tower sites to be hundreds to thousands of times below the FCC exposure limits for general exposure.

- Airspace – Attendees asked if the tower would need to be illuminated and expressed concern about impact to the airspace.

Based on initial analysis by a third-party consultant, no marking or lighting is expected to be required by the FAA. Ultimately the FAA will review the application once it's filed to verify this.

- Revenue – An attendee asked about the revenue that Madeira would receive from the proposal.

While a Madeira representative acknowledged it would generate a minimal dollar amount (less than half of one tuition payment), they stressed that this project is about student safety, not revenue.

- Repeat Balloon Fly – An attendee asked if a repeat balloon fly could be performed when there is no foliage on the trees.

Milestone agreed to schedule another balloon fly during the late autumn/winter months.