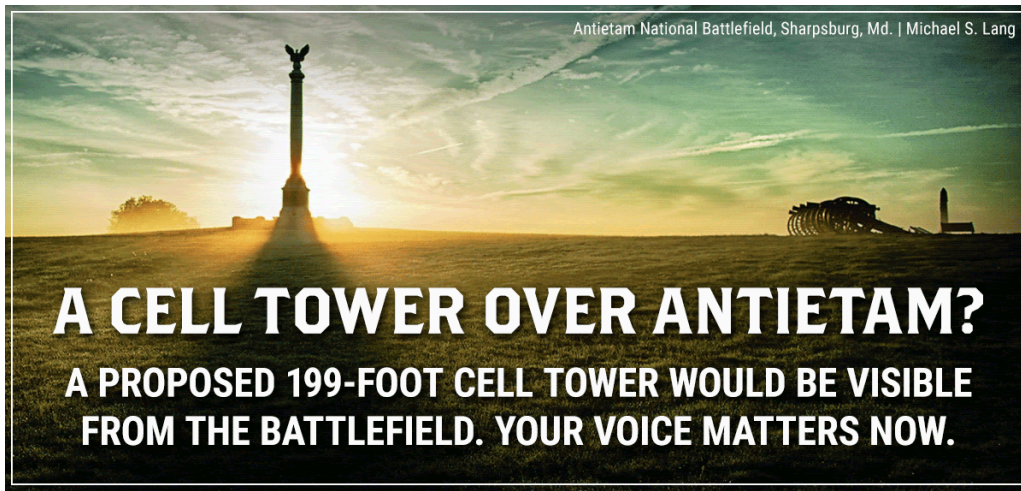




AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★



While most of us see the holidays as a season for spending quality time with family and friends, developers and development interests often have less agreeable plans in mind. They frequently use the holidays to quietly secure government approvals when they suspect no one will be paying attention.

Fortunately, we have learned over the years that one of the most effective methods for protecting America's battlefields is eternal vigilance. Thanks to a warning from our good friends at Save Historic Antietam Foundation, we have learned of an immense cell tower planned for just ½ mile from the Antietam National Battlefield – and we need your help immediately.

URGENT ACTION NEEDED:

- **Submit written comments by COB Monday, January 5** to Katie Rathvon at krathvon@washco-md.net.
- **Attend the public hearing on Wednesday, January 7, at 6:00 p.m.** at the Washington County Administrative Building, 100 W. Washington St., Hagerstown (Room 2000).
- **Reference case # AP2025-031** in your comments.

The Threat

The proposed tower would be 199 feet tall – the equivalent of an 18-20 story building. For comparison, the Statue of Liberty (without its pedestal) is just 151 feet tall, from toes to the tip of the torch. If approved by the Washington County Board of Zoning Appeals, this massive structure would be located on Mondell Road, just north of Sharpsburg. While incomplete, the viewshed analysis confirms the tower will be visible from the Sunken Road and other parts of the battlefield.

Antietam represents one of the most significant moments in American history. On September 17, 1862, nearly 23,000 soldiers were killed, wounded, missing, or captured during the bloodiest single day in American military history. This battle also gave President Abraham Lincoln the confidence to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation at a moment of strength rather than desperation. The viewshed is essential to understanding and honoring the sacrifice made on this hallowed ground.

Key Points for Your Comments

As a passionate champion for battlefield preservation, you can powerfully articulate how important it is to protect the Antietam National Battlefield and its crucial viewshed. For your verbal or written comments, please also consider noting:

- **The project is case # AP2025-031.** The applicant, The Towers LLC of Boca Raton, Florida, is seeking a special exception to build in an area currently zoned for rural and residential development. Granting this exception would set a troubling precedent for future commercial intrusions near the battlefield. [The application can be found here \(see pages 47 to 100\).](#)
- **The 199-foot tower is too tall to be concealed** and will be visible from several places on Antietam National Battlefield, including the famous Sunken Road. The structure will intrude upon the historic landscape and severely compromise the visitor experience.
- **The land surrounding the tower site is a mix of farmland and residential properties**, and if this exception is granted it opens to the door for future exceptions near the battlefield.
- **Better alternatives exist.** The water tower in Sharpsburg already hosts several antennas and could be a more suitable alternative to the proposed cell tower. The need for modern telecommunications infrastructure can be met without sacrificing irreplaceable historic resources as less damaging options are available.
- **The cell tower will not only impact the historic Antietam National Battlefield**, but it is very close to the Washington County Overlay Zone, which was implemented to discourage commercial activity close to the battlefield. Approving this tower would directly undermine the protective intent of these zoning safeguards.
- In addition to Antietam National Battlefield, **the proposed cell tower will impact the Sharpsburg National Register District and other historic properties nearby.**
- **The heritage tourism economy will be impacted.** Once compromised, the authentic historic landscape that draws visitors cannot be restored.

Thank you for considering our request, and for joining the American Battlefield Trust, Save Historic Antietam Foundation, and other concerned citizens in opposing this towering threat to one of our nation's most sacred battlefields. Your involvement will demonstrate that even when we prefer to spend the holidays enjoying home and hearth, we won't hesitate to stand up for protection of hallowed ground.

Happy New Year to you and your family!

Best wishes,



Jim Campi

Chief Policy and Communications Officer
American Battlefield Trust



Help Hold the Line Against Emerging Battlefield Threats

Your gift to support the Trust's advocacy work allows us to protect battlefields against inappropriate development – just as we did when a casino was proposed for Gettysburg, a Walmart at the Wilderness or townhouses at Princeton.

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