

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

J. Mann

NCPC File No. 6451



LITTLE FALLS PUMPING STATION AND INTERCONNECTION #3 INSTALLATION OF WATER SYSTEMS COMMUNICATION ANTENNAS Montgomery County, MD

Submission by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

September 2, 2004

Abstract

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington Aqueduct Division, has submitted plans for the installation of antennas at the Little Falls Pumping Station and the Interconnection #3, located in Montgomery County, Maryland. One transmitting and receiving antenna will be installed at each location.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary and final building plans pursuant to Section 5 of the National Capital Planning Act (40 U.S.C. § (b)(1)).

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves preliminary and final building plans for the installation of one antenna at the Little Falls Pumping Station and one antenna at Interconnection #3 in Montgomery County, Maryland, for a period not to exceed five years.

* * *

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

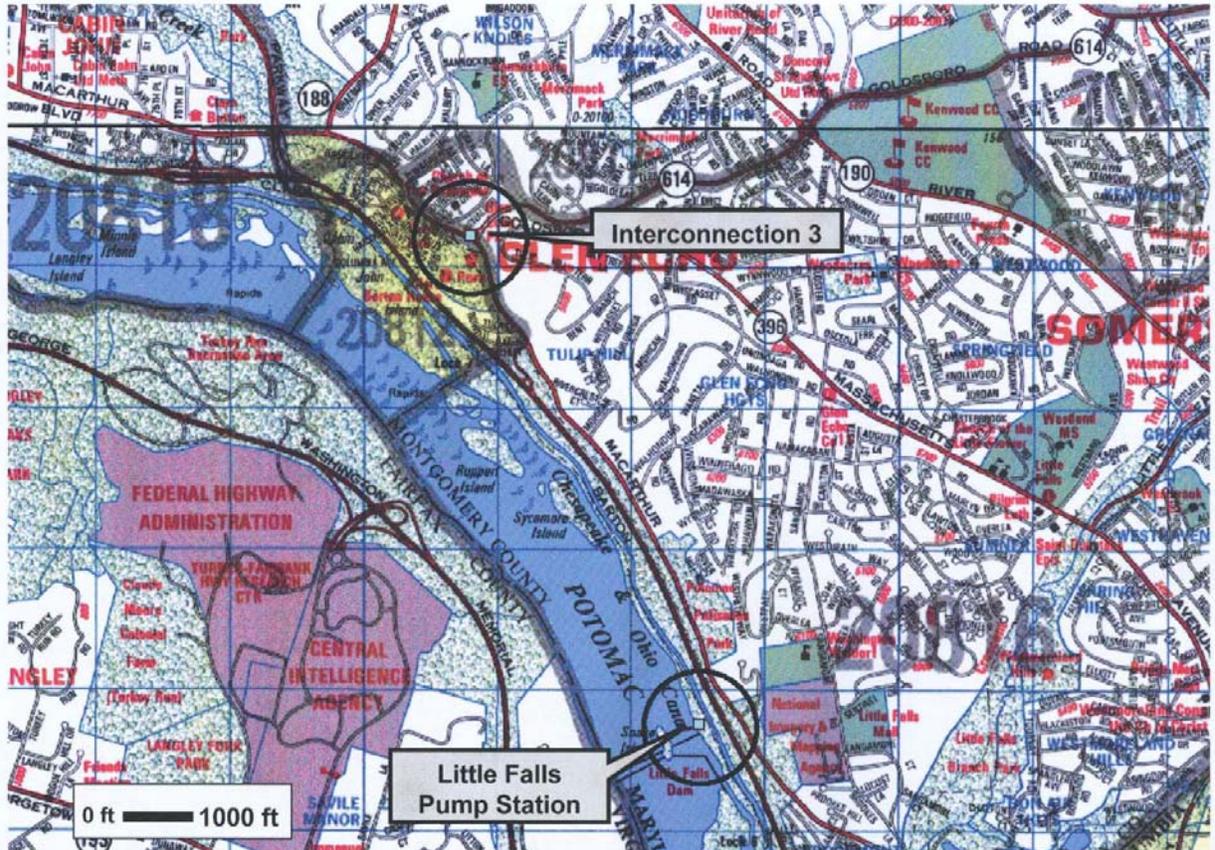
Site

Antennas will be installed at two locations in Montgomery County, Maryland.

- The Little Falls Pumping Station, located at Little Falls Dam west of the Clara Barton Parkway and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

- Interconnection #3, located at the intersection of MacArthur Boulevard and Goldsboro Road in Glen Echo.

Proposed Maryland Antenna Locations - Overview



Background

The Washington Aqueduct Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers collects water from the Potomac River, treats it to safe drinking water standards and supplies it to distribution systems that are owned and operated by local jurisdictions. To ensure optimal and secure water delivery, operators at the water treatment plants need to have accurate information about the quantity of water entering the distribution systems. The existing telephone lines used currently are vulnerable to severe weather and human intrusion and are proposed to be replaced with a wireless communication system to transmit data from its remote facilities to the Dalecarlia Water Treatment Plant in Northwest Washington, D.C. The data will be transmitted using frequency hopping spread spectrum radios.

Proposal

- Install a 10-foot tall free-standing stainless steel pole on the roof of the existing 40-foot tall main building at the Little Falls Pump Station. A high-strength aluminum antenna will be attached to the pole. The facility is gated and locked, and access to the antenna will be available only to authorized personnel.

- Install a 30-foot tall free-standing wooden pole at grade at Interconnection #3. A high-strength aluminum antenna will be attached to the pole. The facility is gated and locked, and access to the antenna will be available only to authorized personnel.



View of Little Falls Pumping Station from the Parkway

Proposed new utility pole
and antenna



View from north of Interconnection #3

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Executive Summary

The staff recommends that the proposal be approved. The size and location of the antennas are not out of character with their surroundings, and the proposal is consistent with the Commission's Antenna Guidelines.

Radiofrequency Radiation

Operation of these antennas is in compliance with radiofrequency exposure guidelines for Maximum Permissible Exposure; they are unlikely to cause exposure in excess of FCC guidelines. The proposed antennas are low power radiators and would not impact any surrounding communities or wildlife habitats.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements

Staff has determined that the antenna installation would not have an effect on other federal facilities and will be consistent with the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

National Environmental Policy Act

Pursuant to the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has determined that the proposed project qualifies for a categorical exclusion from the requirement to prepare further environmental analysis. Staff review of the conclusion finds the determination supportable.

National Historic Preservation Act

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has determined that the installation of the antennas would not affect any historic properties. The Maryland State Historic Preservation Office has concurred with this determination.

CONSULTATION

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

On August 27, NCPC received the following comments in writing from M-NCPPC:

Staff approves the Little Falls Pumping Station project without any comments. However, staff approves the Interconnection #3 project and transmits the following comments:

- Provide landscaping to screen the 35-foot-tall pole (including the 30-foot wooden utility pole and 5-foot stainless steel pole mounted on top). Landscaping could include a double row of trees, Nellie B. Stevens Holly and Willow Oak, around the gated area.
- Consider providing poles that can accommodate future antennas.
- Consider using locally sourced sustainable or renewable materials, recommended by the U.S. Green Building Council standards for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), in the construction of the poles.

Staff has consulted with the Corps of Engineers regarding these comments and provides the following information:

- It is not possible to provide landscaping in the area of Interconnection #3 because of the network of pipes directly below the surface of the ground.
- Although there are no additional antennas anticipated at this time, the proposed poles can accommodate additional antennas in the future.
- The pole to be installed is made of timber and is therefore sustainable.