



United States Department of the Interior



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Communication Site Lease Plan of Development Amendment to Global Towers for the Fort Richardson GPT System, JBER

Environmental Assessment, DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2014-0008-DNA

Case File, AA-82261

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Background

The BLM Anchorage Field Office has received a request from Global Tower Partners (GTP) to amend an existing communication system authorized by BLM that is operational year-round on Fort Richardson Army Base on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) for the addition of a Kohler generator and a 220 gallon fuel tank.

This existing communication site was authorized by BLM August 11, 2000. The communication facility was previously authorized by the Department of Army. Due to the current location of the system next to the Glenn Highway, GTP felt that an emergency backup power system needed to be installed to insure that customer service was not interrupted when the main power grid was offline.

GTP is requesting to install this new system to the existing communication lease that consists of a 10- by 24-foot equipment shelter within the fenced authorized lease footprint of 35' X 35'. The tower and equipment shelter cabin and associated cellphone equipment have been constructed; no additional construction is necessary. The site is accessible by existing frontage road known as Power-line Road off of the Glenn Highway.

The BLM Anchorage Field Office will accept the amended plan of development to the existing lease to GTP so that they may maintain and operate an existing communication system and to install a Kohler generator and 220 fuel tank at the existing cellphone system on the Fort Richardson Army Base, JBER.

Finding of No Significant Impact

This action and its effects have been evaluated consistent with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for determining *significance*. Per 40 CFR § 1508.27, a determination of *significance* requires consideration of both context and intensity. The former refers to the

relative context in which the action would occur such as society as a whole, affected region, affected interests, etc. The latter refers to the severity of the impact.

Context

The Proposed Action would occur in existing developed areas on an active military base. The scope of the action, the installation of a generator and fuel tank, is therefore limited in context.

Intensity

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) discloses both adverse and beneficial impacts for the alternatives analyzed. Overall, the ability to construct and install a generator with fuel tank limits adverse impacts. All communication sites are located in existing developed areas on JBER and are accessible via existing roads. The total footprint of the area affected is within the authorized lease to GTP Towers.

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety.

Public health and safety was not identified as an issue for consideration (EA, p. 6). The proposed action was analyzed within the EA and is consistent with or identical to existing communication sites currently present on JBER.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity of historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

No park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas are present at the individual communication site locations. The proposed authorizations would not create adverse visual impacts on the Fort Richardson Historic District (EA, pp. 11-12). Furthermore, project-related ground disturbance is limited and would occur in areas previously disturbed (EA, pp. 15-16). The Proposed Action would not have direct impacts on cultural resources (EA, pp. 15-16).

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The EA was made available for public review prior to this Finding of No Significant Impact and the Decision Record. No public comments were received. No known controversy exists concerning the proposed installation and operation of a generator and fuel tank at this authorized communication system.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The installation and/or construction of communication sites is a common practice at JBER, across the State of Alaska, as well as nationally (EA, p. 2). There is no uncertainty or unknown risks associated with communication sites at this scale, i.e., individual communication sites that contain generators

and fuel tanks on existing facilities in developed areas. Additionally, similar to the response for intensity factor #4, no public comments were received concerning uncertain, unique, or unknown risks.

6. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

Similar to the response for intensity factor #5, the installation and/or construction of communication sites is a common practice at JBER (EA, p. 2). Therefore, this Proposed Action does not establish precedent nor represent a decision in principle for future authorizations.

7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

Overall, the potential cumulative effects resulting from the Proposed Action is limited. The total disturbance footprint is less than a half-acre (0.5-acre). At this scale, and with the implementation of best management practices, the Proposed Action would not contribute any measurable increment to cumulative effects resources at JBER (EA, pp. 15-19).

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.*

As stated for intensity factor #3, the proposed authorizations would not create adverse visual impacts on the Fort Richardson Historic District (EA, pp. 12-12). Furthermore, ground disturbance is limited and occurs in areas previously disturbed (EA, pp. 15-16). The Proposed Action would not have direct impacts on cultural resources as this is a communication system authorized by the BLM (EA, pp. 15-16).

9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

Based on currently available information, the Proposed Action would not affect any threatened or endangered species or their habitats (EA, p. 6).

10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

The Proposed Action does not threaten to violate Federal, State, or local law or requirements.

Conclusion

Therefore, on the basis of the information contained in the DNA (DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2014-0008-DNA), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that:

1. None of the environmental effects identified meet the definition of significance as defined by context and intensity considerations at 40 CFR § 1508.27;

2. The alternatives are in conformance with Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (2008); and
3. The Proposed Action and alternatives do not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment.

Therefore, neither an Environmental Impact Statement nor a supplement to the existing EA is necessary and neither will be prepared.

/s/ Alan Bittner

July 10, 2014

Alan Bittner
Anchorage Field Manager

Date

Attachments

Joint Base Elmendorf – Richardson Communication Site Authorizations Environmental Assessment,
DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2012-0013-EA