



# TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON

159 Pantigo Road  
East Hampton, New York 11937

**PETER VAN SCOYOC**  
Supervisor

(631) 324-4140  
pvanscoyoc@eamptonny.gov

August 14, 2020

## **East Hampton Town Responds to Community Frustration, Concern Over Insufficient Service by Wireless Communications Companies**

*Town will work with a communications consultant to develop comprehensive coverage strategy, and work with cell companies for better service*

Steady increases in cell phone and data usage have taxed the wireless communications infrastructure in East Hampton, outpacing expansion and improvement by the various cellular companies that provide service. In addition, due to the pandemic, there has been both a dramatic increase in our full-time population, and in cell and internet usage. As a result, the current systems are overloaded.

In response to the dramatic increase in demand, the town board recently granted approval for two new cell site antenna towers on town property – one on Old Northwest Road, and the other at Stephen Hand's Path in Wainscott, to serve the Route 27 corridor.

The Stephen Hand's Path site will allow for the use of temporary equipment to fill the coverage gap in the area while the cellular company completes plans and pursues final approvals for a permanent facility at that location.

However, "The town is not a cell phone service provider," Town Supervisor Peter Van Scoyoc said. "While we do have limited authority over the siting of cell tower applications through our land use regulations and review boards, each service provider has their own coverage areas based on a system of antennas that they own /lease and maintain. Because there are numerous cell service providers, and, to date, no coordinated plan to insure coverage, the existing system is piecemeal at best."

To address this, the town board recently passed a resolution to hire a communications consultant to help develop a comprehensive coverage strategy.

Additionally the board will be updating the cellular communications town code to reflect changes in Federal Communications Commission regulations that regulate wireless communications companies. With FCC regulations overriding local town codes in many areas

regarding communications companies, the Town has limited ability to regulate or compel action by cellular service companies.

In recognition, however, of the need for improved service, the town will continue its efforts to work with cellular companies on improving coverage.

“I understand the frustration of dropped calls and the potential harm of not having service in an emergency. We will continue to press forward to resolve these issues,” Supervisor Van Scoyoc said.

“The challenge will be to balance the demand for better service, which will require more wireless towers or antennas throughout the town, with the need to protect our rural character and landscapes and other concerns often raised by East Hampton residents when new towers are proposed,” the Supervisor said.