

CITYSWITCH
NEWPORT NEWS CASE STUDY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hampton Roads area of the Commonwealth of Virginia is known for the beauty of its harbors where the Elizabeth River, Nansemond River and James River all empty into the Chesapeake Bay. The area is also well-known among site development professionals as one of the East Coast's most difficult places to locate, permit and construct towers in support of wireless telecommunication technologies. The combination of historic designation sites, low-lying land, miles of waterfront and challenging zoning ordinances all contribute to the siting challenge.

With a population of over 1.5 million people in the Hampton Roads metropolitan area, the demand for wireless service continues to grow and providers like AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile and Sprint have been forced to meet coverage and capacity requirements through technological advancements in the face of siting challenges. Enter CitySwitch, a wireless network infrastructure company with access to railroad properties and rights of way spanning over 40,000 linear miles through some of the most-dense urban and difficult to develop areas east of the Mississippi River.

NEWPORT NEWS SEARCH AREA

For years, Verizon Wireless and other wireless service providers have attempted to locate a tower site in the City of Newport News, just west of downtown, along the James River and near the Newport News Shipbuilding yards. The area is a mix of single-family and multi-family residential, commercial business and industrial uses, with the shipyard controlling much of the available property in the area. There is an existing communications tower and available parcels in the shipyard that might accommodate wireless carrier needs, but to date, no firm has been able to execute an agreement with Huntington Ingalls, the owner of the shipyards.

Site Name: VAC018 Newport News

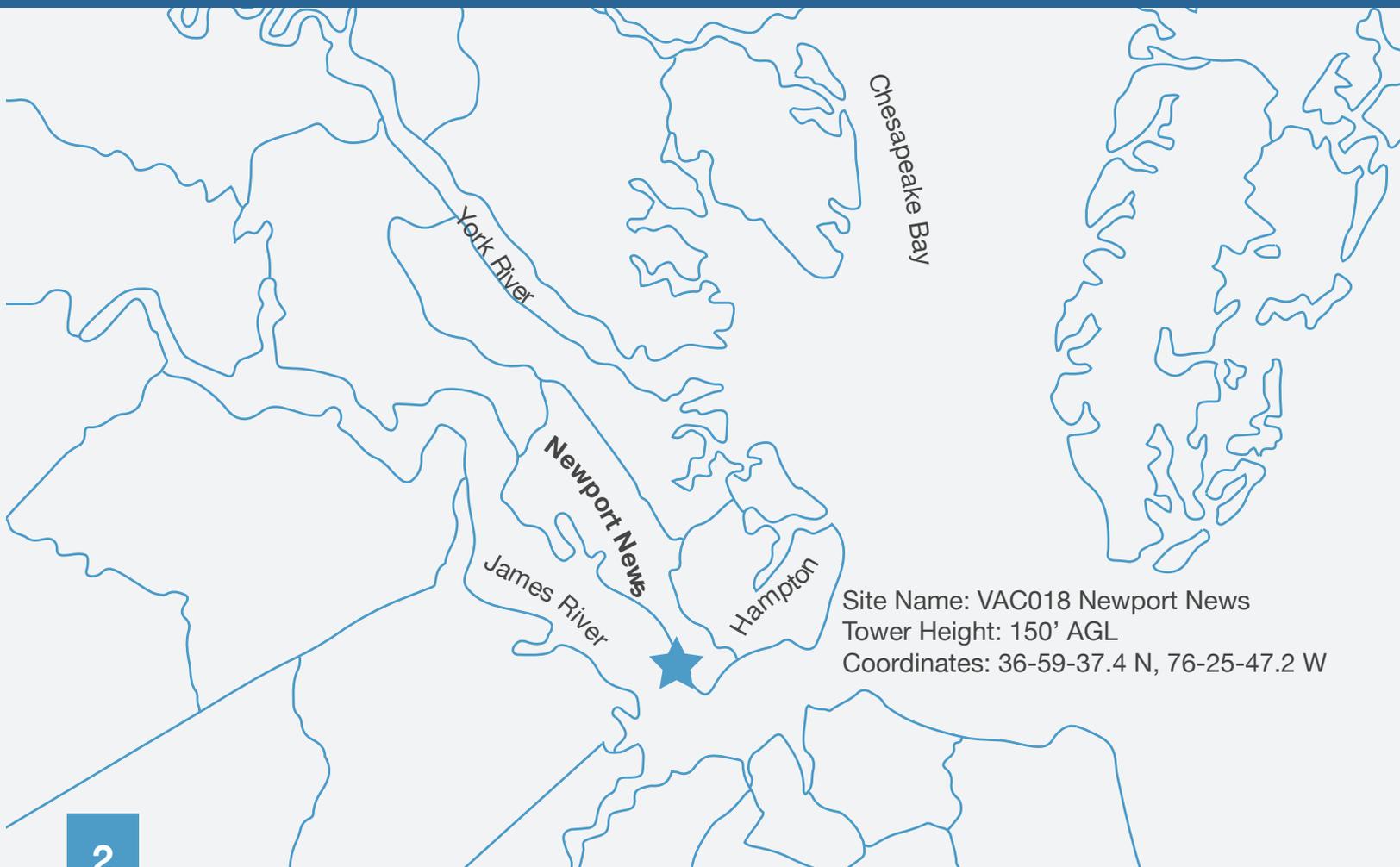
Tower Height: 150' AGL

Site Coordinates: 36-59-37.4 N, 76-25-47.2 W

Address: 4424 Hines Avenue

City: Newport News

State: Virginia



CITYSWITCH SOLUTION

Verizon Wireless contacted CitySwitch, who used its railroad database to identify properties within the search area. The query generated two potential parcels, both possessing good characteristics for a tower site. The CitySwitch team, working closely with Network Building + Consulting site development professionals performed a field audit and decided on a .34 acre parcel owned by CSX and located at 4424 Hines Avenue in Newport News. The site had good access with enough land to accommodate multiple tenants on the tower and in the compound.

This location is considered a non-operating, right of way by CSX and while the parcel is owned by CSX, it had no railroad activity and was the preferred location for a tower by CSX.



RAILROAD APPROVAL PROCESS

CSX Approval Process



CitySwitch has worked closely with CSX to streamline the entire development process as noted in the diagram below. CitySwitch can get a proposed macro tower site qualified by the railroad in less than 5 days and execute the ground lease in less than 90 days. The typical development process from site identification to construction complete is approximately 8-12 months, which is generally faster than most tower development cycles. In the case of the Newport News tower, the entire development cycle took 10 months in a notoriously difficult area to site towers.

ZONING



“ The ability to site this tower on CSX property made the entire development process go from very difficult to construction complete in 10 months. ”

Drew Patterson, Project Manager

The subject property is zoned M-1 (Industrial District) and located within 300 feet of a residential zoning district. The process for obtaining zoning and permitting approval for a new tower with these characteristics would normally include a Conditional Use Permit (approximately 4 months), followed by a site plan review (2 months) and then building permit (1 month). However, given the siting on railroad property, a multi-carrier design and CSX’s desire to locate its equipment on the tower, the City determined that neither the CUP, site plan nor the building permit would be required.

CONSTRUCTION



“Verizon has been pursuing a tower location in the City of Newport News near the shipyards for over a decade with no success. The professionalism of the CitySwitch team, speed and ease of the entire development process was impressive”

Verizon System Development Manager



Madison Communications of GA Inc. was engaged by CitySwitch to complete the 30-day construction process. In many cases, CitySwitch can accommodate anchor tenant requests to utilize their preferred local general contractors and other vendors as part of the development process. Construction at this site was monitored by AE Comm on behalf of CSX to ensure all railroad safety standards were upheld.

SUMMARY



Verizon Wireless is the anchor tenant on the Newport News site with additional tenants currently filing applications to locate on the tower. Some of the reasons this site was a success for all parties involved, include:

- Fast candidate approval and ground lease execution process by CSX
- Access to fiber and power
- Pre-set terms and conditions with CSX
- Zoning/permitting approval efficiencies
- Use of a Verizon master lease agreement
- Provides critical wireless coverage in a previously underserved area

ABOUT CITYSWITCH

Founded in 2004, CitySwitch is a wireless network infrastructure company with strategic development agreements with CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads. Combined, these railroads possess available properties and rights of way through 72 of the top 100 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) in the United States, covering over 40,000 linear miles. CitySwitch has successfully developed over 80 towers and works directly with wireless carriers to identify railroad properties that meet their radiofrequency coverage needs and coordinates the entire infrastructure development process for both macro tower locations and small cells.

CONTACT

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