



List Local or Federal Permits and Approvals:

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: 404 Permit**

**Local Orders of Conditions: Towns of Fairhaven, Falmouth, & Tisbury**

Which ENF or EIR review threshold(s) does the project meet or exceed (see 301 CMR 11.03):

- |                                 |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land   | <input type="checkbox"/> Rare Species | <input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands, Waterways, & Tidelands      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water  | <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater   | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Air          | <input type="checkbox"/> Solid & Hazardous Waste               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ACEC   | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulations  | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical & Archaeological Resources |

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Existing	Change	Total	State Permits & Approvals
<b>LAND</b>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Order of Conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Superseding Order of Conditions (if required) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chapter 91 License <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 401 Water Quality Certification <input type="checkbox"/> MHD or MDC Access Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Water Management Act Permit <input type="checkbox"/> New Source Approval <input type="checkbox"/> DEP or MWRA Sewer Connection/ Extension Permit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Permits (including Legislative Approvals) – Specify:  CZM Federal Consistency MHC State Archeologist Permit BUAR Special Use Permit
Total site acreage				
New acres of land altered				
Acres of impervious area	0	0	0	
Square feet of new bordering vegetated wetlands alteration		0		
Square feet of new other wetland alteration		383,979 SF (8.81 ac.) Temporary		
Acres of new non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways		0		
<b>STRUCTURES</b>				
Gross square footage	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Number of housing units	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Maximum height (in feet)	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>				
Vehicle trips per day	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Parking spaces	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<b>WATER/WASTEWATER</b>				
Gallons/day (GPD) of water use	N/A	N/A	N/A	
GPD water withdrawal	N/A	N/A	N/A	
GPD wastewater generation/ treatment	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Length of water/sewer mains (in miles)	N/A	N/A	N/A	

**CONSERVATION LAND:** Will the project involve the conversion of public parkland or other Article 97 public natural resources to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97?

- Yes (Specify \_\_\_\_\_ )  No

Will it involve the release of any conservation restriction, preservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction, or watershed preservation restriction?

Yes (Specify \_\_\_\_\_ )  No

**RARE SPECIES:** Does the project site include Estimated Habitat of Rare Species, Vernal Pools, Priority Sites of Rare Species, or Exemplary Natural Communities?

Yes (Specify: **EH-79, PH-15, PH-1065**)  No

**HISTORICAL /ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES:** Does the project site include any structure, site or district listed in the State Register of Historic Place or the inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth?

Yes (Specify \_\_\_\_\_ )  No

If yes, does the project involve any demolition or destruction of any listed or inventoried historic or archaeological resources?

Yes (Specify \_\_\_\_\_ )  No

**AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN:** Is the project in or adjacent to an Area of Critical Environmental Concern?

Yes (Specify \_\_\_\_\_ )  No

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The project description should include **(a)** a description of the project site, **(b)** a description of both on-site and off-site alternatives and the impacts associated with each alternative, and **(c)** potential on-site and off-site mitigation measures for each alternative (*You may attach one additional page, if necessary.*) **See Attached**

## **Project Description**

GPCS Fiber Communications, Inc., (GPCSFC) is a Massachusetts domestic public utility corporation certified by the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable to provide facilities-based interexchange services throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. GPCSFC's proposed project will install an Alcatel URC-2, 24-strand submarine fiber optic feeder cable from Fairhaven to Martha's Vineyard by way of Woods Hole in Falmouth.

Martha's Vineyard voice and data needs are currently served by three Verizon T3 Microwave circuits out of Falmouth (just over 144 Mbps of bandwidth), which are inadequate for current and future demand. The problem is compounded in that the same microwave link also serves the island of Nantucket, and there is limited data and voice capacity from Cape Cod to regional, national, and international communications networks, creating a "choke point" coming off Cape Cod. With the project's land routes in Fairhaven and Falmouth, the project will provide expanded broadband services to residential, research, educational, and commercial customers in Woods Hole, other Cape Cod communities, and the Sciticut Neck area of Fairhaven.

As shown on Attachments 1 (Project Overview), 3, and 3a-3c, the cable will begin at 200 Mill Road, Fairhaven, the location of the proposed GPCSFC head end and network operations center (NOC), which will be co-located with the AT&T point of presence (POP), this region's connection point to the World Wide Web. The cable will be located below grade (land portions) or below the seafloor (marine portions) for its entire length. Existing underground conduits will be used within state highway rights-of-way in Fairhaven; for all other land portions of the project, the cable will be laid using directional drilling under existing roadway and bike path rights-of-way, except for the transition areas from land to water.

The cable will run from the NOC in Fairhaven along State Highway 240 to State Route 6 and then follow Bridge Street and Sciticut Neck Road until it enters Buzzards Bay at Wilbur Point. At Wilbur Point, the cable will enter Buzzards Bay by directional drilling for a distance of just under a mile and half. The cable will make landfall on the north shore of Woods Hole in the Town of Falmouth. The cable will then cross over land within the rights-of-way of existing streets and a bike trail to Nobska Point, Falmouth, and enter Vineyard Sound. The cable will have a short spur segment on Albatross Street, so that connectivity can be provided directly to the Marine Biological Lab. From Nobska Point, the cable will cross Vineyard Sound running underground below the barrier beach to a vault in Herring Creek Road at Tashmoo.

## **General Description of Alternatives**

The project considered alternatives for providing high speed connectivity from Fairhaven to Woods Hole in Falmouth, and Martha's Vineyard. Options included no build, microwave (both upgrading existing infrastructure and installing new facilities), and cable (again, both upgrading existing facilities and installing new facilities). The new cable option required a further evaluation of overland or underwater routes from Fairhaven to Woods Hole; landing locations in each of the three municipalities; potential underwater routes; and cable placement installation methods. The evaluation criteria included the following: the public benefit associated with improved communication capacity and bandwidth; minimization of marine impacts, including

those that affect coastal wetlands, habitat, species, and underwater archeological resource sites; minimization of terrestrial impacts, including those that affect inland wetlands, habitat, species, and historic sites; minimization of public inconvenience during construction and/or maintenance; ease of installation, mobilization, maintenance, and service; construction schedule, based on permitting and time of year restrictions; and cost. The most viable alternative is a predominantly submerged marine fiber feeder cable originating at 200 Mill Street in Fairhaven, to ensure sufficient voice/data connections through the AT&T POP facility at that location, connecting with Martha's Vineyard through Woods Hole. This routing addresses issues of data and voice capacity limitations caused by the "choke point" mentioned above and improves service delivery to Martha's Vineyard.

### **Request for a Phase 1 Waiver Request**

In accordance with the requirements of 301 CMR 11.11, the proponent requests a Phase 1 waiver for the portion of the project from 200 Mill Road, Fairhaven, the location of the proposed GPCSFC head end and NOC that will be co-located with the AT&T POP, to the end of Sciticut Neck Road. The limits of Phase 1 are shown on Attachment 2, Project Phasing. Allowing the project to install high speed fiber optic cable within existing conduit on the first stretch of the project immediately will enable GPCSFC to offer enhanced service to approximately 2500 consumers in this section of Fairhaven. This segment of the project is a stand alone phase with insignificant environmental impacts and is not only a viable business opportunity for the proponent but also an enhanced service option to consumers south of Mill Road, Fairhaven. The Secretary's granting of this request will ease the hardship caused by the need of the state's Ocean Team to review the project within the new standards set forth in the Ocean Management Plan, particularly the route survey, despite the project falling under EIR thresholds.

### **Request for an Expanded ENF and a Single EIR**

In accordance with the requirements of 301 CMR 11.05(7), the proponent has submitted an Expanded ENF and is requesting the Secretary grant a Single EIR despite falling under mandatory EIR review thresholds. The proponent understands that this is the first project to be reviewed by the Ocean Team under the new Ocean Management Plan. The proponent agrees that the need for a route survey is important to gather information on the ocean bottom, to verify the location of Special, Sensitive, or Unique areas as defined in the Ocean Management Plan, and to ensure that there are no permanent impacts to this resource. Additionally, the Single EIR offers the Ocean Team the opportunity to take public comment as it pertains to the Ocean Management Plan for this project, the first such opportunity under the Ocean Management Plan.

### **Cape Cod Commission Moratorium**

The Cape Cod Commission voted in April of this year to extend its moratorium on cable crossings within its ocean bottom jurisdiction. Although the project does not need to request a Special Review Procedure to coordinate review with the Cape Cod Commission (the project does not exceed an EIR threshold), the project will need to file for a Hardship Exemption with the Cape Cod Commission in order to receive permission to complete the project before the Moratorium is lifted.