

## BOE Appeal Review for 125 Cornelius Rd



To: 2026 Board of Equalization  
From: Michael C. Renfro, Assessor  
Martins Onskulis, Assessor  
Re: 125 Cornelius Rd

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### Purpose of Report

- Validation of the 2026 assessed value of the subject property as determined through the mass appraisal process and supported by sales ratio studies, in compliance with Alaska Statutes requiring assessment at full and true value.
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### Introduction

- The subject property is located at 125 Cornelius Rd
- Land Size: 15,000 SF
- Building Size: 2,741 SF with 700 SF attached garage
- Land Value: \$62,600
- Building Value: \$245,600
- Total Assessed Value: \$308,200
- Valuation is based on comparable property sales, lot size, and location.

This report provides a comprehensive review of the assessed value and addresses concerns raised by the property owner.

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## **Legal and Assessment Standard**

Under Alaska law (AS 29.45.110), property must be assessed at its full and true value, defined as the estimated market value as of January 1.

- Market value is based on a willing buyer and willing seller
  - It reflects actual market behavior, not hypothetical or speculative impacts
  - Assessments must be applied uniformly and equitably across similar properties
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## **Overview of Valuation Process**

Property valuations in Petersburg are developed using a mass appraisal approach that considers:

- Property characteristics
- Location and neighborhood influences
- Market trends
- Verified comparable sales

This methodology follows accepted appraisal standards and ensures consistency across similarly situated properties.

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## **Utilization of Sales Data**

Sales of comparable properties within the local market are the primary basis for valuation.

- Sales reflect actual buyer and seller behavior
- Adjustments are made for differences in size, location, and characteristics
- Market evidence must be local and relevant

This ensures assessed values reflect real-world transactions rather than theoretical assumptions.

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## **Validation Through Sales Ratio Studies**

All assessed values are tested using sales ratio studies to ensure accuracy and equity.

- Current ratios are in the low 80% range of market value
- This indicates assessments are conservative relative to market
- The State of Alaska expects assessments to be near 100% of market value

This confirms that assessed values are not excessive and, if anything, are below full market value.

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## **Burden of Proof for Adjustments**

For an adjustment to be warranted, there must be:

- Credible, market-supported evidence
- Comparable sales demonstrating a measurable impact

General concerns, opinions, or studies from other regions do not meet this standard unless supported by local market data.

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## **Concern Raised by Property Owner**

- The property owner asserts that the construction of a new cell tower has reduced property value.
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## **Analysis of Cell Tower Impact**

### 1. Lack of Local Market Evidence

The property owner provided studies from outside Alaska suggesting potential impacts. However:

- No known studies exist specific to Alaska markets
- No verified sales in Petersburg indicate reduced values due to tower proximity

### 2. Existing Towers in Petersburg

Petersburg already has multiple towers:

- Airport Subdivision
- Behind the school
- Hungerford Hill Road

There have been numerous sales and listings near these locations without evidence of value reduction. In many cases, development continues in these areas.

### 3. Market Behavior Near Towers

Recent sales and listings include:

- 109 Odin St (listed): \$45,000 (assessed at \$26,700)
- 119 Mill Rd (sold): \$80,000 (assessed at \$63,600)
- 121 Arness Heights (sold): \$120,000 (assessed at \$94,000)

These transactions demonstrate that properties near towers:

- Continue to sell

- Sell at prices consistent with the broader market
- Do not show measurable discounts attributable to tower proximity

#### 4. Broader Market Experience

Across multiple Alaska communities where we perform assessments, we have:

- Not observed consistent value impacts from cell towers
- Consulted with appraisers and real estate professionals
- Found no market-supported basis for adjustments

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#### **Market Trends and Subject Property**

- Purchase price (1/29/2021): \$275,000
- Current assessed value: \$308,200

#### **Market appreciation trends indicate:**

- ~6% annually → approx. \$368,000
- ~8% annually → approx. \$404,000

This suggests the current assessment is well below estimated market value.

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#### **Assessment Level and Hypothetical Impact**

With assessments at approximately 80% of market value:

- There is already a built-in 20% margin below market

Even if one assumes a theoretical reduction (e.g., 10–20% as cited in external studies):

- The assessed value would still fall within a reasonable market range

This further supports that the current assessment is not excessive.

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#### **Timing of the Tower Construction**

- The tower was completed in late November
- No post-construction sales data exists to measure any potential impact

Without sales occurring after completion:

- There is no measurable evidence of any change in value
  - Any claimed impact remains speculative
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## **Mass Appraisal Consistency**

It is important to note:

- All properties are valued using the same methodology
  - No adjustments are made for factors unless supported by market data
  - Making unsupported adjustments for one property would create inequity across the tax roll
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## **Conclusion**

While concerns regarding cell towers are acknowledged, there is:

- No verified local market evidence of value reduction
- No sales indicating buyer resistance or price discounts
- Strong evidence that properties near towers sell at typical market levels
- Clear indication that assessed values are already below market

The subject property's assessed value is:

- Supported by market data
- Consistent with similar properties
- Below estimated market value

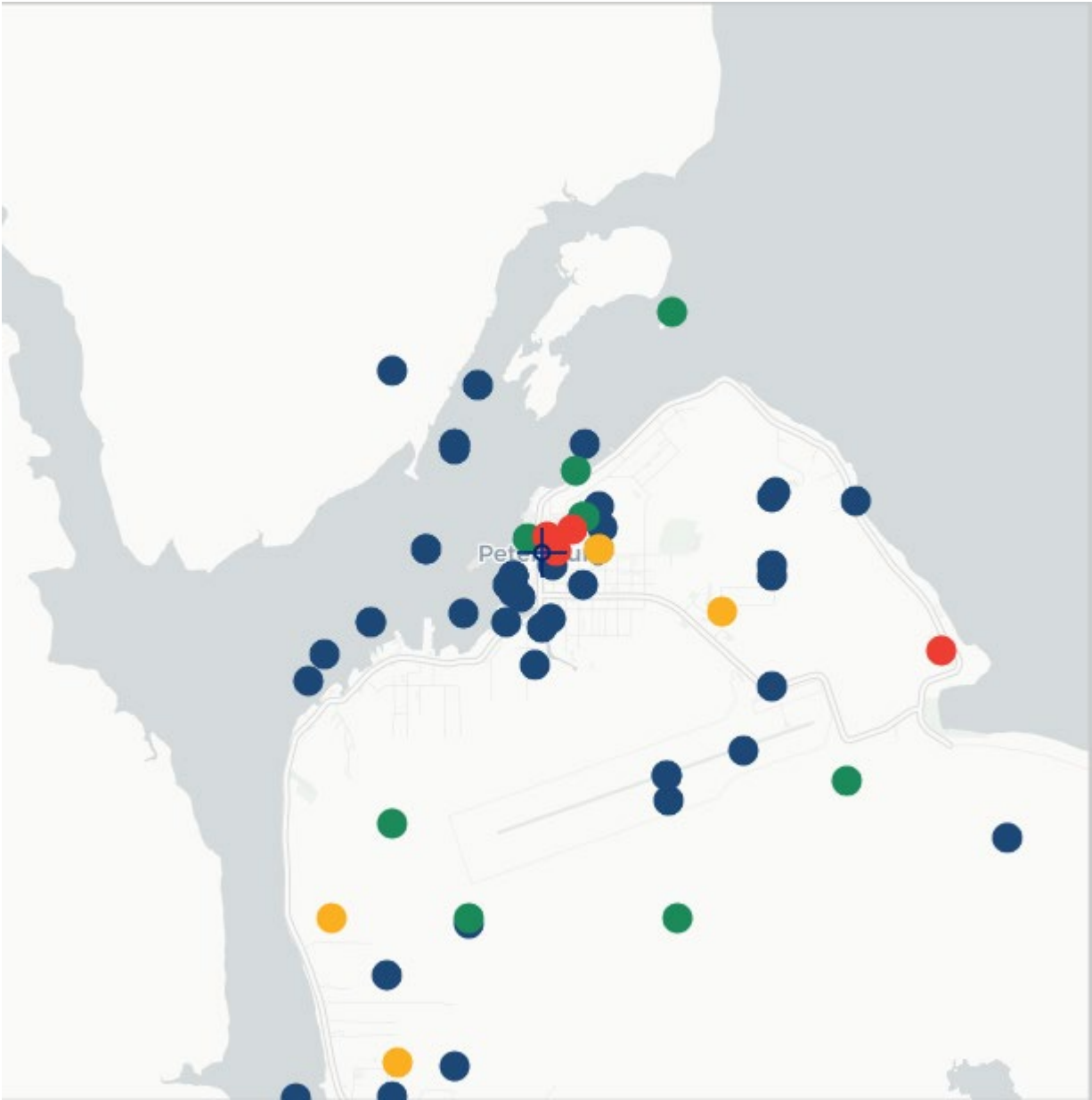
Valuation decisions must be based on demonstrated market behavior, not speculation or studies from dissimilar markets.

**Recommendation: No change to the assessed value.**

**Subject Property**



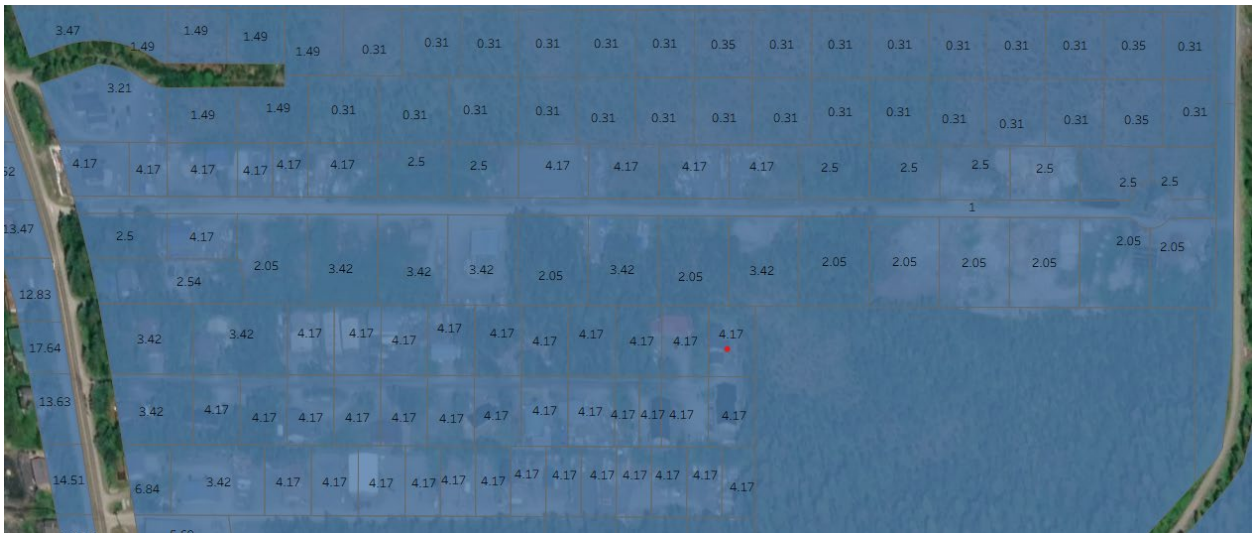
**Cell Tower Location**



## Sales Location



## Valuation Map



Listings



### **Assumptions and Limiting Conditions**

This mass appraisal is subject to the following extraordinary assumptions (EA) and general assumptions and limiting conditions as follows:

EA-1 it is assumed that the properties ownership valued is correctly identified and held in fee simple interest unless stated otherwise.

EA-2 it is assumed that the land areas and dimensions are as stated in the records.

EA-3 it is assumed that the conditions of the properties areas as described in the various records based on the limitations of the inspections and observable features.

General Assumptions and Limiting Conditions:

1. It is assumed the data, maps, and descriptive data are accurate and correct. Photos, sketches, maps, and drawings in this appraisal report are for visualizing the property only and are not to be relied upon for any other use. They may not be to scale.
2. The valuation is based on information and data from sources believed reliable, correct and accurately reported. No responsibility is assumed for false data provided by others.
3. No responsibility is assumed for building permits, zone changes, engineering or any other services or duty connected with legally utilizing the subject property.
4. This appraisal was made on the premise that there are no encumbrances prohibiting utilization of the property under the appraiser's estimate of the highest and best use.
5. It is assumed the title to the property is marketable. No investigation to this fact has been made by the appraiser.
6. No responsibility is assumed for matters of law or legal interpretation.
7. It is assumed no conditions existed that were undiscoverable through normal diligent investigation which would affect the use and value of the property.
8. Unless otherwise stated in this report, the existence of hazardous material, which may or may not be present on the property, was not observed by the appraiser. The appraiser is not qualified to detect such substances. The presence of substances such as asbestos, urea-formaldehyde foam insulation or other potentially hazardous materials may affect the value of the property. The value estimate is predicated on the assumption that there is no such material on or in the property that would cause a loss in value beyond what is estimated herein. No responsibility is assumed for any such conditions, or for any expertise or engineering knowledge required to discover them. The client is urged to retain an expert in this field, if desired.
9. The value estimate is made subject to the purpose, date and definition of value.
10. The appraisal is to be considered in its entirety, the use of only a portion thereof will render the appraisal invalid.

### **Extraordinary Assumption**

An assumption, directly related to a specific assignment, which, if found to be false, could alter the appraiser's opinions or conclusions. Extraordinary assumptions presume as fact otherwise uncertain information about physical, legal, or economic characteristics of the subject property; or about conditions external to the property such as market conditions or trends; or about the integrity of data used in an analysis.



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## Petersburg Appeal Review

16 messages

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**Martins Onskulis** <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
To: kowalsketom@gmail.com

Wed, Mar 18, 2026 at 9:13 AM

Thomas,

Thank you for discussing your appeal with me. From an assessment standpoint, our analysis must be based on market data. In this case, while I understand your concern regarding the proximity of a cell tower, we have not identified sufficient market evidence to support an adjustment to the assessed value. Specifically, we have not seen any verified sales indicating that properties sell for less due to the presence of a nearby cell tower. In Petersburg - there are properties near existing towers—such as in the Airport Subdivision and behind the high school—that are in close proximity to residential homes. We have not received any indication through sales or appeals that buyers paid less due to those towers.

Across the communities we work in, we have not observed a consistent impact on property values related to nearby towers. For example, in Unalaska, the Haystack Hill subdivision includes some of the most expensive homes in the community, despite having multiple cell tower leases located on the hill (approximately seven). In other communities such as Yakutat and Cordova, additional towers are often viewed positively due to limited cell coverage. I also know of situations in Haines where property owners have been interested in towers companies building towers on their land to improve service/and pay them a lease on the land.

We have seen increasing public discussion and, in some cases, opposition to new towers. For example, in Wrangell, a tower constructed near mile 3 in proximity to residential homes was approved without much issue (at least I am not aware that they had any issues), while a later proposal near mile 12.8 faced more public opposition due to concerns about visual impact, light, and potential effects on property values, and was ultimately not approved. Similar discussions are occurring in other communities as well. However, these concerns are not necessarily reflected in actual market transactions. A key factor is that many property owners now rely on alternatives such as Starlink or other internet-based services, which reduces reliance on traditional cell infrastructure. In some areas where towers are proposed, existing service are good enough or people simply do not need cell service. From an appraisal perspective, value must be supported by market evidence. While it is possible that a tower located immediately adjacent to a property or significantly impacting a view could influence value, we have not observed sufficient data to quantify such an impact in this case.

In summary, we have not identified market-supported evidence indicating that the nearby cell tower has resulted in a reduction in value for your property. If additional data becomes available demonstrating a measurable impact, we would certainly consider it. At this time, however, no adjustment is supported. If you would like to pursue the matter further, you may wish to present your concerns to the Board of Equalization. The Board may consider the issue from a broader perspective, and it can also be a good opportunity to communicate your concerns to the Assembly regarding the presence and placement of cell towers.

I do understand your concern. If I were in a similar situation, I would feel the same way. In assessment work, we are required to rely on market data when making adjustments, and at this time, we do not have data that supports a value change due to the presence of the cell tower.

Thank you,  
Martins

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Martins Onskulis, MBA  
Appraisal Company of Alaska

405 W. 27<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Anchorage, AK 99503

907.334.6312 (Office)  
907.793.7713 (c)

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**Tom Kowalske** <kowalsketom@gmail.com>  
To: Martins Onskulis <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>

Wed, Mar 25, 2026 at 11:45 AM

Thanks, Martins. If there is nothing further we can do here, then I'll take this up with the board of equalization.

Tom

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**From:** Martins Onskulis <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 18, 2026 9:13 AM  
**To:** kowalsketom@gmail.com <kowalsketom@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Petersburg Appeal Review

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**Martins Onskulis** <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
To: Tom Kowalske <kowalsketom@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 25, 2026 at 11:59 AM

Tom,

Thank you for your reply. Unfortunately, I don't have any data to support an adjustment, I think the BOE would be the appropriate next step.

I have another appeal from Mill Rd, and I'll be recommending the same approach.

Thank you,  
Martins

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**Tom Kowalske** <kowalsketom@gmail.com>  
To: Martins Onskulis <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>

Wed, Mar 25, 2026 at 1:17 PM

I have some supporting documents if you are interested. There are about a dozen letters from realtors and one from an appraisal company showing property value reductions in sales and studies.

Do I need to submit these before the Board of Equalization? Or can I just bring copies with me? Thanks!

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**Martins Onskulis** <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
To: Tom Kowalske <kowalsketom@gmail.com>

Wed, Mar 25, 2026 at 2:34 PM

Tom,

That would be great if you could send that information. I may be missing something, and it would be helpful to review it.

Thank you,  
Martins

Martins Onskulis, MBA  
Appraisal Company of Alaska

405 W. 27<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Anchorage, AK 99503

907.334.6312 (Office)  
907.793.7713 (c)

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**Tom Kowalske** <kowalsketom@gmail.com>  
To: Martins Onskulis <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>

Wed, Mar 25, 2026 at 5:12 PM

Here you go. Thanks, Martins!


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**From:** Martins Onskulis <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 25, 2026 2:34 PM  
**To:** Tom Kowalske <kowalsketom@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Petersburg Appeal Review

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**3 attachments**

 **Exhibit 62c.pdf**  
532K

 **Real Estate Leters on Property Value 2.pdf**  
1672K

 **Real Estate Leters on Property Value 3.pdf**  
1014K

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**Martins Onskulis** <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
To: Tom Kowalske <kowalsketom@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 26, 2026 at 8:28 AM

Tom,

Thank you for sending these. Have you had a chance to speak with any local realtors to get their perspective?

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**Tom Kowalske** <kowalsketom@gmail.com>  
To: Martins Onskulis <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>

Fri, Mar 27, 2026 at 1:09 PM

Hi Martins,

I am trying to get their perspective, but one local relator said on record during two public meetings that towers will reduce property values, but I cant remember how much. I am waiting for them to call me back to get specifics.

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**From:** Martins Onskulis <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 26, 2026 8:28 AM

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**Martins Onskulis** <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
To: Tom Kowalske <kowalsketom@gmail.com>

Fri, Mar 27, 2026 at 1:13 PM

Tom,

I also left a voicemail yesterday. And also reached out to the appraiser that does some work in town. Will let you know when I hear back from them.

Have a great weekend.

- Martins

Martins Onskulis, MBA  
Appraisal Company of Alaska

405 W. 27<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Anchorage, AK 99503

907.334.6312 (Office)

907.793.7713 (c)

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**Tom Kowalske** <kowalsketom@gmail.com>  
To: Martins Onskulis <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>

Fri, Mar 27, 2026 at 1:16 PM

Sounds good, and I'll share what I find out as well. Thank you for your attention on this, Martins. Have a great weekend as well.

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**From:** Martins Onskulis <[monskulis@appraisalalaska.com](mailto:monskulis@appraisalalaska.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, March 27, 2026 1:13 PM

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**Martins Onskulis** <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
To: Tom Kowalske <kowalsketom@gmail.com>

Thu, Apr 2, 2026 at 8:11 AM

Tom,

I spoke with a local realtor and an appraiser who regularly works in Petersburg. They both confirmed what I mentioned earlier—that we would need market data to demonstrate any measurable impact.

They also noted that most buyers are not particularly concerned with cell towers or similar infrastructure. Buyers tend to focus primarily on the home itself—if they like the house, they are generally willing to proceed.

If you would like to move forward with the Board of Equalization hearing, please let me know and I can notify the city.

Thank you,  
Martins

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**Tom Kowalske** <kowalsketom@gmail.com>  
To: Martins Onskulis <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>

Fri, Apr 3, 2026 at 6:30 AM

Thanks, Martins. I have testimony from a local realtor that said there will be a devaluation of nearby property when a new tower is put up. The other realtor told me that a tower will decrease the number of people that would buy a house near a tower. So I would like to take this matter to the BOE. Thanks for your help.

Tom

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**Martins Onskulis** <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
To: Tom Kowalske <kowalsketom@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 3, 2026 at 7:06 AM

Tom,

Thank you for the update. Have a good weekend.

- Martins  
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**Martins Onskulis** <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
To: Tom Kowalske <kowalsketom@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 3, 2026 at 9:23 AM

Tom,

Do you mind sharing which realtors you spoke with? I'd like to see what information they are using and whether there may be any sales I'm missing.

Thanks very much,  
Martins

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**Tom Kowalske** <kowalsketom@gmail.com>  
To: Martins Onskulis <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>

Fri, Apr 3, 2026 at 11:27 AM

Hi, Martins. Sara with Petersburg Properties made multiple public statements, once in the local paper and the second time was during a public assembly meeting in December, and a third time during a planning meeting shortly after. I was there in person for both meetings. Then on March, 27, at approximately 2:30 pm, Bennett with Anchore Properties told me via phone conversation: "although there are no figures to suggest that property sales are effected by proximity to towers in Petersburg, the pool of people interested in buying a house next to a tower would be smaller than it would if there were no tower."

Also, the tower by my house is unusual due to the fact that the owner: Tlingit & Haida (TH), does not have insurance and claims sovereign immunity. If it were built by a normal telecommunications company, they would be insured and held responsible for any damages. A normal company would have also been very hesitant in building a tower in this location based on the public push back as well. So, this is not a typical situation. Treating this situation as typical falls short of reality.

Additionally, aesthetic value ranks very high for folks that live in the breathtaking viewsheds in Petersburg, especially for folks that live outside the business area of downtown. Anything that takes away from this value, decreases property value and is justification for a higher decrease in property tax for folks with interrupted viewsheds.

We need to wrap this query up. Asking for responses through email more than twice is borderline harassment. I'm more than happy to prove my case at the BOE at this point. In fact, I feel that it is time to move this conversation to a new audience. Thank you for understanding.  
Tom

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**Martins Onskulis** <monskulis@appraisalalaska.com>  
To: Tom Kowalske <kowalsketom@gmail.com>

Fri, Apr 3, 2026 at 1:19 PM

Tom,

Thanks for your reply. Have a good weekend.

- Martins  
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## 109 Odin Lane, Petersburg, AK 99833 (MLS # 25-10636)



Sarah Holmgrain  
Petersburg Properties LLC  
Office: 907-518-0639  
[spholmgrain@gmail.com](mailto:spholmgrain@gmail.com)

**\$45,000**  
**0 Beds, 0 Bath**  
**Home size: n/a**  
**Lot size: 17,860 sqft**  
**Year Built: 0**

Garage Spaces: n/a  
Tract: n/a

Community: 2G - Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area  
County: n/a  
Total Parking: n/a  
Last updated: 8/16/2025

Listing Office: Petersburg Properties, LLC

Great residential lot up on a sunny plateau close to town. Over 17,000 s/f flat lot ready for your build. Rough in roadway to the corner of the lot.

### Property Details

Lot: 0.41 acre(s)	Area: 2G - Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area
Utilities: Water Available, Electricity Available	View Description: Mountain(s)
Water: Public	Zoning: RES - Residential (Unofficial)
Lot Dimensions: 17905.0	

### Additional Features

Lot Description / Level, Many Trees	View / Yes
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Date printed: 4/3/2026

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