

(A) Prince George County, Virginia Tower and Antenna Siting Policy Guidelines:

The intent of these provisions is to guide the placement of new and replacement towers within Prince George County, VA. These provisions provide tower applicants, property owners, and county residents clear guidance on the official policies and standards of the county. These policies and standards shall be used by applicants as a guide when they are selecting alternative tower sites and tower designs within the county. In addition, the County Staff, Commission and Board shall use these policies and standards as a guide for evaluating future tower requests.

It is the official policy of the Planning Division to encourage and promote the co-location of antennas on existing public and private structures within the county. To achieve this end, the county encourages all wireless communication providers to locate new antennas on existing, tall structures. Zoning approval for new towers shall only be requested when no other reasonable alternative exists for locating needed antennas. When new towers are proposed as a last alternative, the requested tower location, height and design shall be chosen to protect and enhance the scenic and natural beauty of the county. The use of stealth designs and use of small cell technology shall be considered for any new tower.

It is the intent of the county to fully comply with all of the applicable provisions of the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 and other applicable federal and state law and to preserve the county's local zoning authority and provide to the communication industry the rights and responsibility to provide communication services within their service areas.

(B) Definitions and Applicability

Antenna – A communication device that transmits or receives electromagnetic signals. Antennas may be directional, including panels and microwave dishes, or omni-directional including satellite dishes, whips, dipoles and parabolic types. Note: An antenna does not include the tower or other supporting structure to which it is attached.

Tower – Any structure that is designed and constructed primarily for the purpose of supporting one or more antennas. The term includes, but need not be limited to, radio and television transmission towers, microwave towers, and cellular phone and wireless communication towers.

Tower, Amateur Radio – A structure on which an antenna is installed for the purpose of transmitting and receiving amateur radio signals erected and operated by amateur radio operators licensed by the FCC. Note: These guidelines do not apply to this tower type.

1. Antennas may be installed on any existing structure within the county, without the necessity of obtaining a Special Exception Permit, provided said antenna does not meet the definition of a tower above, does not increase the height of the existing structure more than ten (10) feet, and does not result in the structure and antenna exceeding the maximum structure height for said zoning district.
2. Small cell antenna technology may be installed on existing structures within the County provided that a memorandum of agreement is recorded between property owners and service providers. Small cells may be installed in such a fashion so that they blend into the surrounding landscape and infrastructure and they are strategically positioned to provide an enhanced service quality and network interoperability. A Zoning Permit and applicable building permits shall be applied for and approved prior to erecting any new antennas and equipment.
3. These provisions shall not apply to any temporary tower erected for the purpose of system design or testing provided the temporary tower is erected for a period not to exceed twenty-one (21) days. In addition, in declared local emergency situations, the county administrator shall be authorized to allow the temporary installation of a tower for the duration of the local emergency. A zoning permit and applicable building permits shall be applied for and approved prior to erecting any temporary or emergency tower.

(C) Application requirements

1. All potential applicants for towers shall meet with county planning staff at least thirty (30) days prior to submitting an application for a proposed tower use. The applicant shall present information to the staff on the system objectives, proposed coverage areas, and alternative sites considered and rejected during this meeting. The county planning staff shall provide the potential applicant information on all Prince George County policies and standards for towers and shall discuss with the applicant possible alternatives to tower construction during this meeting.
2. In addition, all applicants for towers shall provide the following information:
  - a. The location of all other proposed tower sites considered and rejected, and the specific technical, legal or other reasons for the rejection of those tower sites.
  - b. The location of all other possible co-location sites considered and rejected, and the specific technical, legal or other reasons for the rejection of those tower sites.

- c. Photographic simulations showing the relationship of the proposed tower and associated antenna to the surroundings. Photographic simulations shall also be prepared showing the relationship of any new or modified road, access or utility corridors constructed or modified to serve the proposed tower site.
  - d. Information on how the proposed tower site relates to the applicant's existing tower communication system, including the number of other sites within the county or the surrounding area and the location of the antennas at each site.
  - e. All tower applicants shall be required, at their expense, to conduct an on-site "balloon" or comparable test prior to the required public hearings on the Special Exception request. The purpose of this test shall be to demonstrate the potential visual impact of the proposed tower. The dates and periods of these tests shall be established with the applicant at the pre-application consultation meeting.
  - f. Written verification that all required submittals to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have been submitted on the proposed tower site.
3. The applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with the filing of the application including the reasonable cost of any independent analysis deemed necessary by the county to verify the need for the new tower.

(D) General standards

1. The maximum height of any proposed tower and associated antennas shall be made as a condition of the Special Exception request. It is recommended that the tower and/or antennas not exceed one hundred ninety-nine (199) feet in height.
2. The setback for any proposed tower shall conform to the height requirements for principal structures for the proposed zoning district. However, in no case shall the minimum setback from the base of the tower to any residential structure on an adjoining lot be less than forty (40) percent of the height of the tower, measured from the closest structural member of the tower, excluding guy lines.
3. Towers shall not be illuminated with any type of lighting apparatus, unless such lighting is a requirement of either the FAA or FCC. When lighting is proposed to conform to federal requirements, the county shall contact the federal agency to verify the necessity of lighting and to determine the minimal amount and type of lighting necessary to comply with the federal guidelines. Low level security lighting may be installed on buildings and structures associated with a tower.

4. Any tower approved shall be structurally designed to carry sufficient loading and the site approved shall be sized to accommodate the additional antenna equipment necessary for at least three (3) providers of communications services in order to minimize the proliferation of new towers in the vicinity of the requested site. In addition, by applying and being granted the Special Exception request, the applicant and the owner of the land shall agree to make the tower and tower site available for additional leases within the structural capacity of the tower and at reasonable costs adequate to recover the capital, operating and maintenance costs of the tower location required for the additional capacity.
5. A monopole tower design is recommended. The Board may approve an alternative tower design if it finds that an alternative type of structure has less of a visual impact on the surrounding community and Prince George County and/or based upon accepted technical and engineering data a monopole design is not technically feasible. Cost shall not be a criterion for determining tower design.
6. By applying and being granted the Special Exception request, the applicant and the owner of the land agree to dismantle and remove the tower and associated facilities from the site within ninety (90) days of the tower no longer being used for wireless communications. Dismantling and removal from the tower shall only be required after notice by the County. If the antennas on any approved tower are relocated to a lower elevation, the tower shall be shortened to the height of the highest antenna.
7. All tower structures and associated hardware, antennas, and facilities shall be a flat matted finish so as to reduce visibility and light reflection unless otherwise required by the FCC or FAA.
8. No business signs shall be allowed on the property identifying the name of, or services offered by, any business associated with the tower.

(E) General review policies

All Special Exception requests for new towers, including the replacement or modification of existing towers shall be reviewed by the County planning staff, the Commission and the Board on the basis of the following criteria:

1. The extent to which the tower proposal conforms to the general Special Exception criteria contained in the zoning ordinance, and the intent, the application requirements, and general standards for towers found within this policy.

2. The demonstrated willingness of the applicant to evaluate possible co-location opportunities within the proposed communication service area for coverage.
3. Tower locations already served by existing roads and utilities are preferred due to the potential detrimental environmental and visual impacts resulting from the construction of new road and utility corridors.
4. Within the needed service area, the availability of other existing structures that are, based upon independent analysis, of suitable height, design, and location for the needed antenna.
5. The visibility of the tower from the surrounding community and neighborhood, compatibility of the tower as determined by the submitted computer simulations and balloon test or a comparable test.
6. The degree to which the proposed tower location, the site design and facilities, including fencing, and other ground mounted equipment and new or modified road, access or utility corridors are all located, designed and will be constructed to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood that the tower proposes to serve with proper coverage. – Revised 11/15.

Please contact the Prince George County Community Development and Code Compliance Department – Planning Division at 804.722.8678 with any further questions or please visit us at [www.princegeorgecountyva.gov](http://www.princegeorgecountyva.gov)