

**Department of Community Development
Staff Report**

PROPERTY OWNERS: Mary Jo Pohzehl

APPLICANT(S): Calvert Crossland and Verizon Wireless

LOCATION: 5348 Casanova Road, Warrenton, VA

DISTRICT: Cedar Run District

PIN: 7902-23-8746-000

ACREAGE: 40 Acres

ZONING: Agriculture (RA)

LAND USE: Rural

MEETING DATE: October 20, 2016

REQUEST: SPEX-16-005832: The applicants are seeking approval of a Category 20 Special Exception to construct a 140 foot monopole telecommunications tower and equipment compound, in accordance with Section 5-006 and Article 11 of the Zoning Ordinance.

OUTSTANDING ISSUES: There are two outstanding items that would require a Zoning Ordinance text amendment and a finding from the Board of Supervisors, should the Board wish to approve the application. These items are summarized below with additional information and staff evaluation included within the report.

1. Section 11-102.3.b(6) of the Zoning Ordinance requires that any telecommunication facility located in a zoning district permitting residences shall be at a height that is equal to or less than the distance from the base of the tower to the closest property line, a one (1) foot setback for one (1) foot of facility height. The tower is proposed on a parcel zoned Agriculture (RA), which permits residences. The distance from the proposed tower site to the nearest property line is approximately 65 feet. With the adoption of a Zoning Ordinance text amendment, which is to be heard at the October 20, 2016 Planning Commission meeting, the tower location would meet the setback requirement.
2. Section 11-103.3 of the Zoning Ordinance allows the Board of Supervisors to determine that the natural growth

surrounding the property perimeter may be sufficient as the required landscape buffer. The applicants do not propose to install landscaping around the tower compound. A finding that the natural growth provides a sufficient landscaping buffer is needed.

The Planning Commission should consider and evaluate these items when making its recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff advises the Planning Commission to recommend approval of Special Exception SPEX-16-005832, subject to the approval of a Zoning Ordinance text amendment and the conditions included in this report. The application satisfies the standards of Section 5-006 and Article 11 of the Zoning Ordinance, should the Zoning Ordinance text amendment be approved.

STAFF RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS:

Staff recommends approval of the application subject to the following conditions, should the Planning Commission wish to recommend approval to the Board of Supervisors:

1. This Special Exception is granted only for the purpose(s), structure(s) and/or uses indicated on the Special Exception Plat “Verizon Wireless Casanova Road Special Exception Plat” dated September 15, 2016, and received in the Planning Office on September 15, 2016, as approved with this application and as modified by the associated conditions below.
2. The installation of one security light, no more than 100 watts or equivalent, is permitted within the compound. The applicants shall be required to provide the details of the light fixture and a photometric plan with the Site Plan application, along with an explanation of how the light meets the requirement of Article 9 of the Zoning Ordinance, Performance Standards for glare.
3. Any equipment shelter or canopied pad to be constructed within the compound shall not contain more than 500 square feet of total gross floor area per telecommunications provider and shall not exceed 12 feet in height.
4. All telecommunications equipment, including ground equipment, shall be installed within the fenced compound.
5. The applicant shall install an eight (8) foot high board-on-board fence around the compound.
6. The applicant shall utilize break-point technology to construct the tower in order to reduce the fall zone setback requirement. Prior to construction, the applicants shall provide a certification of the fall zone by a registered professional engineer in Virginia.
7. Should the Board of Supervisors make a finding that the existing natural vegetation on the perimeter of the subject property is sufficient as the landscape buffer, the applicant shall not be required to provide landscaping around the facility. Existing trees within 200 feet

of the telecommunications tower shall not be removed, except as may be authorized to permit construction of the facility and installation of vehicular access.

Topic Description:

The applicants are requesting a Special Exception to construct a 140 foot telecommunications monopole tower and an associated equipment compound. All tower requests exceeding 80 feet in height require a Special Exception. In addition, a new telecommunications facility, not concealed as a silo, must be surrounded by wooded areas for at least 100 feet on all sides. The area surrounding the proposed facility does not meet the definition of a wooded area, further necessitating the Special Exception.

Calvert Crossland proposes to install a 60 foot by 60 foot telecommunications compound, including the support structure and equipment, on the west side of the subject property within an area of trees and scrub vegetation. The compound would be located approximately 1,320 feet from Casanova Road (Route 616). The Special Exception plat shows that the applicants intend to surround the compound with an eight foot high chain link fence. Although landscaping—approximately 20 evergreen trees—are shown on the plat along the south side of the compound, the applicants request that the Board of Supervisors make a finding that the natural growth along the property perimeter is sufficient as the required landscape buffer. Calvert Crossland estimates disturbing approximately 8,200 square feet of land to construct the project.

The compound would be accessed from Casanova Road (Route 616) by an existing graveled drive leading past the property owner’s residence, then along an existing dirt road through a field and ending at a turnaround beside the compound. The applicants estimate one or two monthly maintenance visits to the facility per carrier.

Verizon Wireless proposes to install up to 12 antennas on the monopole at a rad center of 136 feet above ground level (AGL). The monopole could accommodate the collocation of up to three additional wireless providers with antenna platforms installed at 126 feet, 116 feet, and 106 feet above ground level.

The area to be served by the proposed telecommunications use is depicted on Verizon’s attached radio frequency (RF) propagation maps. The statement provided by Verizon’s RF engineer states that the site was selected by Verizon Wireless to provide and improve wireless 4G LTE coverage along Meetze Road (Route 643) to Warrenton and to the community of Casanova. The engineer goes on to say that the proposed site will enhance in-building coverage in the surrounding area, ensure adequate overlapping coverage between and among Verizon sites, and allow residents and commuters to experience better quality service.

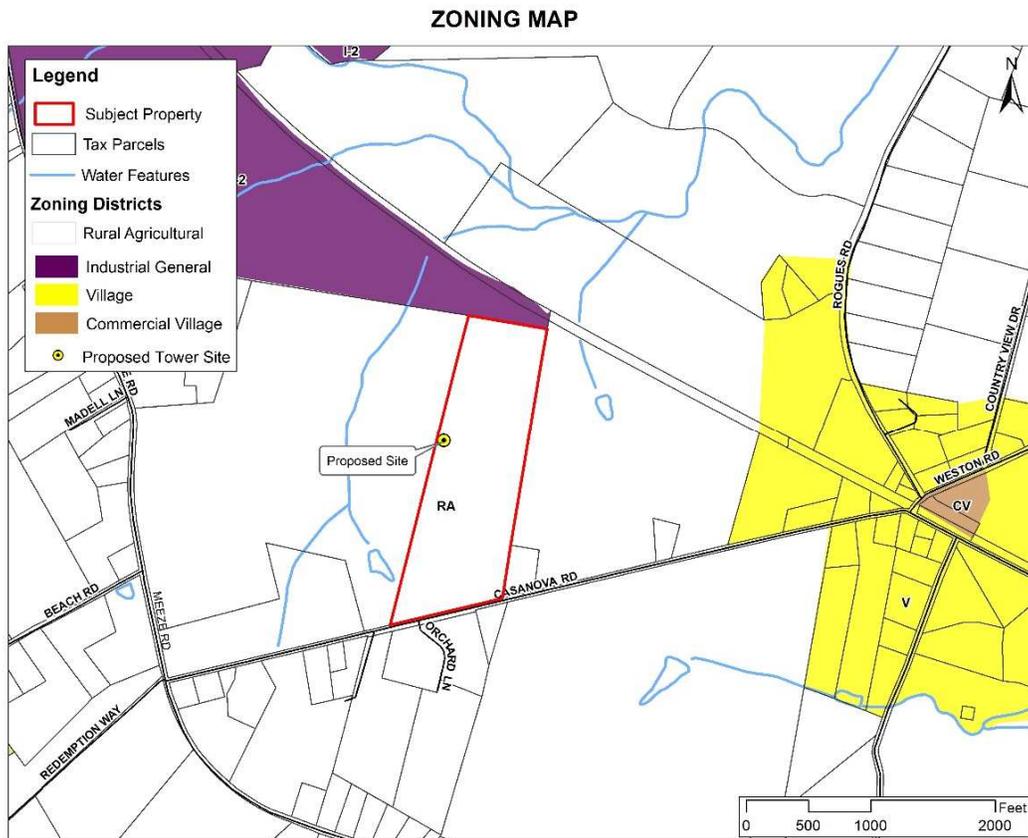
Background:

In October 2014, Verizon Wireless submitted a Special Exception application (SPEX-14-001998) for a 154 foot monopole telecommunications tower and an associated equipment compound at 5348 Casanova Road. In May 2015, the Board of Supervisors conducted a public hearing for this item but postponed action up to 90 days to allow the applicant time to explore an alternative location for the site, with the expectation that the applicant was considering filing a new Special Exception application to locate the proposed site on a different parcel. In June 2015, the Board of

Supervisors adopted a resolution permitting a waiver of the allowable fees for a new Special Exception application. In July 2015, the applicant postponed the application (SPEX-14-001998) indefinitely. In September 2016, Calvert Crossland and Verizon Wireless submitted a Special Exception application for a 140 foot monopole telecommunications tower and an associated equipment compound on the adjacent property to the west at 5348 Casanova Road.

Current Location, Zoning and Land Use:

The subject property is located at 5348 Casanova Road (Route 616) in Cedar Run District. The parcel is zoned Agriculture (RA) and consists of 40 acres. It is used for residential and agricultural purposes.



Neighboring Zoning and Current Land Use:

Neighboring properties are zoned Agriculture (RA), Industrial General (I-2), Village Residential (V) and Commercial Village (CV) and are used primarily for residential, agricultural, and industrial purposes. The adjacent property to the north of the subject property is used as a quarry. The 116-acre property adjacent to the west, the closest parcel to the proposed facility, appears to be vacant and is currently used for agricultural purposes.

AERIAL MAP



AERIAL MAP OF SUBJECT PROPERTY



Comprehensive Plan:

The property is designated for rural uses. Chapter 8 of the Comprehensive Plan, the Rural Land Use Plan, recognizes the importance of the County's traditional agricultural and rural character and encourages agricultural uses and open spaces in the rural areas. This chapter includes policies that promote the protection of scenic viewsheds and vistas, as well as significant historic areas.

Chapter 9 Addendum of the Comprehensive Plan provides goals, objectives, and policies regarding telecommunications facilities. They are intended to address infrastructure needs of the telecommunications industry, while minimizing impacts on adjacent and surrounding land uses. The principal goals and objectives are included below:

- To encourage managed development of wireless communications infrastructures, while at the same time not unreasonably interfering with the development of the competitive communications marketplace.
- To ensure that wireless communications towers and related wireless communications facilities are compatible and as visually unobtrusive as possible with surrounding land uses.
- To minimize the adverse visual impacts of wireless communications towers and related facilities through careful design, siting, landscape screening and tower camouflaging techniques.
- To encourage the use of alternative support structures, collocation of new antennas on existing wireless communications towers, and camouflaged towers.
- To allow personal wireless facilities and telecommunication towers in excess of 80 feet when an application is technically justified due to unique environmental and terrain features and technological constraints, which preclude wireless communication service within the height standards.

According to this chapter, the most preferred sitings for wireless telecommunications facilities are on or within existing structures where the antennas would not be highly visible and within wooded areas with only the antenna arrays above the tree tops. The least preferred sitings are in open areas or on highly visible rooftops. If collocation is not possible, siting of towers is encouraged within wooded areas or remote sites away from residences. Stealth or camouflaged tower designs are strongly encouraged. Siting Policy 2.J states that no tower should be sited within 1,000 feet of a Virginia Scenic Byway, unless an acceptable stealth tower design is utilized.

While the applicants do not propose a site within a wooded area, a concealment tower design, or collocation on an existing support structure, and the proposed tower height is higher than the preferred height of 80 feet, they have attempted to site the facility on the subject property in a way that minimizes impacts on adjacent and surrounding land uses and viewsheds and have provided a sufficient technical justification for the excess height. The applicants propose a site more than 1,000 feet from Rogues Road, a Virginia Scenic Byway. For these reasons, the application complies with the Comprehensive Plan.

Historic Resource Analysis:

A number of historic resources have been identified within a one mile radius of the proposed facility, including several house sites and farms. Some of these resources have been evaluated and found to possess historic significance and a high level of integrity. Of note, are the Casanova Historic District; the Auburn II (Coffee Hill) Battlefield; Redwood/Riddell Farm, a Virginia Century Farm; Poplar Springs (ca. 1928 stone manor house); and Rogues Road, a Virginia Scenic

Byway. It is the opinion of the Historic Preservation Planner that the proposed location of the site on the northwest side of the subject property and the surrounding topographic features would mitigate the visual effect of the undertaking on historic resources within a one mile radius of the facility. The undertaking would not produce an adverse effect.¹

Balloon Test:

A balloon test was conducted at the proposed site on September 8, 2016. Photographs and photo simulations depicting views of the facility from different perspectives are attached to this application.

Special Exception Analysis:

5-006 General Standards for Special Permits and Special Exception Uses

In addition to the special standards set forth hereinafter for specific uses, all special permit and special exception uses shall also satisfy the following general standards:

1. The proposed use shall be such that it will not adversely affect the use or development of neighboring properties. It shall be in accordance with the applicable zoning district regulations and the applicable provisions of the adopted Comprehensive Plan. The location, size and height of buildings, structures, walls and fences, and the nature and extent of screening, buffering and landscaping shall be such that the use will not hinder or discourage the appropriate development and/or use of adjacent or nearby land and/or buildings or impair the value thereof.

The proposed use will not adversely affect the use or appropriate development of adjacent or neighboring properties or impair their value. The application is in accordance with Agriculture (RA) zoning district regulations, should the Special Exception be granted. The proposal is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

2. The proposed use shall be such that pedestrian and vehicular traffic generated will not be hazardous or conflict with the existing and anticipated traffic in the neighborhood and on the streets serving the site.

The applicants anticipate one or two monthly maintenance visits to the facility per wireless provider, which with four providers, would equate to a maximum of eight additional trips per month. The proposed project should not generate excessive traffic in the neighborhood or conflict with existing traffic patterns.

3. In addition to the standards which may be set forth in this Article for a particular category or use, the BZA and Board may require landscaping, screening, yard requirements or other limitations found to be necessary and appropriate to the proposed use and location.

¹ A historic property is adversely affected when an undertaking alters, directly or indirectly, any of the characteristics of the property (or district) that qualify it for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places in a manner that would diminish the integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association. Setting, which encompasses surrounding open spaces and landscape features, is one of the more important aspects to understanding historic integrity of a resource and is essential in determining the effect of a proposed tower.

The Zoning Ordinance requires the installation of evergreen trees and hedges along the exterior of the equipment compound for screening. The applicants request that the Board of Supervisors make a finding that the natural growth along the property perimeter is sufficient as the required landscaping buffer. Due to the probable visibility of the compound from the closest residence at 5314 Casanova Road and potential absence of a landscaping buffer, staff has prepared a condition for Planning Commission consideration that would require the applicants to install an eight foot high board-on-board fence, which would provide better screening of the equipment compound than the proposed chain link fence.

4. Open space shall be provided in an amount at least equal to that specified for the zoning district in which the proposed use is located.

Open space is not required for this application.

5. Adequate utility, drainage, parking, loading, and other necessary facilities to serve the proposed use shall be provided. Low impact development techniques are encouraged by the County and shall be incorporated into the site and facility design when deemed appropriate by the applicant after consultation with appropriate county officials. Parking and loading requirements shall be in accordance with the provisions of Article 7.

Site drainage and other necessary facilities for the proposed use will be addressed during the Site Plan application process. The applicants estimate disturbing approximately 8,200 square feet to construct the project, including the area for the compound, access road, and the turnaround at the terminus of the access road.

6. Signs shall be regulated by the provisions of Article 8, except as may be qualified in the Parts that follow for a particular category or use. However, the BZA and the Board, under the authority presented in Section 007 below, may impose more strict standards for a given use than those set forth in this Ordinance.

Typical public warning and FCC informational signs are required to be placed at a telecommunications facility. No other signs are being proposed.

7. The future impact of a proposed use will be considered and addressed in establishing a time limit on the permit, if deemed appropriate. Existing and recent development, current zoning and the Comprehensive Plan shall be among the factors used in assessing the future impact of the proposed use and whether reconsideration of the permit after a stated period of time would be necessary and appropriate for the protection of properties in the vicinity and to ensure implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

The applicants have requested no time limit be placed on the proposed use.

8. The proposed use shall be such that air quality, surface and groundwater quality and quantity, are not degraded or depleted to an extent that would hinder or discourage the appropriate development and/or use of adjacent or nearby land and/or buildings or impair the value thereof.

The proposed use should not affect air quality and surface or groundwater.

9. Except as provided in this Article, all uses shall comply with the lot size, bulk regulations, and performance standards of the zoning district in which located.

The applicants will be required to comply with all applicable zoning district regulations.

11-102.2 Personal Wireless Facilities.

These facilities are allowed in all zoning district categories by right, subject to meeting the following performance criteria. The applicant shall file a site plan with supporting documentation adequate to demonstrate that the following standards have been met:

1. **Location and Siting Requirements:**

- b. All Other Facilities.

1. The facility shall be 100 feet from the public highway, street or road, measured from the right-of-way line as shown within a State Highway Plat Book, subdivision plat, or 15 feet from the centerline of a prescriptive right-of-way.

The proposed facility is more than 100 feet from all public roadways. The nearest public road, Casanova Road (Route 616), is approximately 1,320 feet from the facility.

2. The facility shall be 5,000 feet from a Federal, State or County park or wildlife management area. For purposes of this section, the term “wildlife management area” shall mean the Chester Phelps Wildlife Management Area and the G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area, or any other geographical area within the County designated by the Commonwealth of Virginia as a wildlife management area.

The proposed facility is more than 5,000 feet from a federal, state, or county park or wildlife management area. The closest federal, state, or county park is the Weston Wildlife Refuge, approximately 1.5 miles east of the proposed tower site.

3. The facility shall be 300 feet or more from an adjoining property’s existing residential unit.

The facility would be more than 300 feet from a residential unit on an adjoining property. The closest residence on an adjoining parcel is approximately 1,225 feet to the southeast of the proposed facility at 5314 Casanova Road.

4. The facility shall be located downslope from ridgelines so that the top of the structure is below the ridgeline.

The top of the structure would not appear above a ridgeline.

5. The facility shall be surrounded by wooded areas for at least 100 feet on all sides. For all provisions of this article, the terms “woodland” and “wooded areas” shall mean growth of deciduous or conifer trees at a minimum density of 80 wooden stems per acre of trees that measure at least four inches in diameter breast high (DBH) or four and one half feet.

The facility would not be surrounded by wooded areas for at least 100 feet on all sides; therefore, a Special Exception is needed.

6. Existing trees within 200 feet of any facility shall not be removed, except as may be authorized to permit construction of the facility and installation of vehicular access.

After construction, the removal of trees within 200 feet of the facility by the applicants or the property owner shall not be permitted.

2. **Design Requirements.** All new facilities, including silos, shall meet the following design criteria:

- a. Constructed no higher than eighty (80) feet from ground level to the highest part of the personal wireless facility, including all antennas. In the case of silos, height shall be measured to the top of the silo.

The tower is designed to be 140 feet in height, thus necessitating the Special Exception.

- b. Equipped with dual-polarization or omni-directional antennas, or another antenna alternative identified at site plan, which would be more efficient at the proposed location, as determined by the Zoning Administrator;

The facility will be equipped with directional antennas.

- c. Surrounded by a six (6) foot or higher security barrier, including a locked gate, for a ground-mounted pole and/or base station. For camouflaged facilities (e.g., a silo, with all components located inside the structure), an applicant can request this requirement be waived by the Zoning Administrator in conjunction with site plan approval if all components are secured internally within the structure.

The applicants intend to install an eight foot high chain link fence with barbed wire. Staff has prepared a condition for Planning Commission consideration that would require the applicant to install an eight foot high board-on-board fence.

- d. Antennas: All antennas shall be of a material or color that matches the exterior of the building or structure.

All antennas shall be of a color that matches the exterior of the support structure.

- e. No commercial advertising shall be allowed on any portion of the facility.

There shall be no commercial advertising of any kind at the site.

- f. Signals or lights or illumination shall not be permitted on any portion of the facility, unless required by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), State or Federal

authorities, or the County, except for security lighting at the base station (100-watt).

According to the Federal Airways and Airspace (FAA) TOWAIR determination report included in the application, the tower will not require illumination. Staff has prepared a condition for Planning Commission consideration that would permit one light, no more than 100 watts or equivalent, within the compound, as needed for security purposes.

- g. Fall zone criteria contained herein shall be met.

The Special Exception plat indicates that the fall zone criteria will not be met. Section 11-102.3.b(6) of the Zoning Ordinance requires that any facility located in a zoning district permitting residences shall be at a height that is equal to or less than the distance from the base of the tower to the closest property line, a one foot setback for one foot of facility height. In this case, a 140 foot setback from the property line is required. The proposed setback is 65 feet from the tower to the property line on the west side. Zoning staff has prepared a Zoning Ordinance text amendment, which is on the Planning Commission's public hearing agenda for October 20, 2016 and will be presented in a public hearing at the Board of Supervisors meeting on November 3, 2016. The text amendment, if approved, would allow a reduced fall zone criteria based on tower design. This standard would be met if the text amendment is approved.

- h. Equipment shelters and cabinets:

- Shall be designed to be architecturally consistent, with respect to materials and appearance, to the buildings within the area of the facility;

The Special Exception plat shows that Verizon Wireless plans to install an equipment platform with a canopy, instead of a shelter. Staff has prepared a condition for Planning Commission consideration that if a shelter or equipment pad with a canopy is proposed within the compound, the applicants would be required to construct it no larger than 500 square feet and 12 feet high.

- If mounted on a rooftop, the equipment shall be concealed or camouflaged so that the shelter or cabinet either is not visible at grade or appears to be part of the structure.

The applicants are not proposing to mount equipment on a rooftop.

- i. Any personal wireless facility located on, within or near a historic site, shall not alter the character defining features, distinctive construction methods, or original materials of the site.

The installation of the facility should not alter the character defining features of historic sites identified within the vicinity. See the Historic Resource Analysis section above.

- 11-102.3** a. **Zoning Application Category.** New personal wireless facilities which cannot achieve the standards in Section 11-102.2 shall require special exception approval, subject to findings of fact based on the following criteria:

- **Siting:** A new personal wireless service facility may be a pole that is sited outside of existing trees, or in an area surrounded by less than 100 feet of trees in all directions, if the design is mitigated or camouflaged in such a way to be less visible than if it were in the trees;

The proposed facility site is surrounded by less than 100 feet of trees on all sides. However, the visual effect of the tower is mitigated by the existing topographic features and the placement of the facility more than 1,300 feet from the road.

- **Special Circumstances:** A telecommunication tower facility up to 145 feet in height is permissible upon technical demonstration that environmental and topographical constraints, as well as available technology used, cannot provide acceptable service at a lower height. Such a facility needs to be designed to accommodate co-location.

The applicants' RF engineer's report states that the height of the antenna installation at 136 feet above ground level (AGL) is necessary to improve service and provide better handoff between Verizon's (VZW) existing tower sites in the vicinity, identified as: "Leesview" (6546 Lovers Lane, VZW antennas installed at 160 feet AGL); "Calverton" (4202 Old Calverton Road, VZW antennas at 218 feet AGL); "Litchfield" (intersection of Opal Road and Route 29, VZW antennas at 178 feet AGL); and "Warrenton South" (9337 James Madison Highway, VZW antennas at 131 feet AGL), which are shown on the attached RF propagation maps. The engineer further states that a reduction of antenna installation height would reduce the amount of needed traffic off-loading from the existing sites. Space would be provided on the tower to accommodate the collocation of up to three additional wireless providers.

b. **General Performance Criteria.** All personal wireless or telecommunication facilities, whether permitted by right or permissible with the approval of a special exception or special permit application, shall be subject to the following submittal standards and criteria:

- (2) The proposed telecommunication tower or monopole, and associated uses and equipment shelters, shall be compatible with development in the vicinity with regards to the setting, color, lighting, topography, materials, and architecture. In addition, the facility should be located in the interior of the property, and areas of existing vegetation, if applicable, shall be used to screen the facility.

The proposed facility and its associated use should be compatible with development in the vicinity with regards to setting, color, lighting, topography, materials, and architecture. The visual effect of the tower is mitigated by the existing topographic features and the proposed placement of the facility more than 1,300 feet from the road. The facility is proposed within the interior of the property.

- (3) New telecommunication facilities greater than 80 feet in height shall be designed to accommodate collocation, complete with the engineering report attesting to that capacity, unless the Applicant is able to certify:
 - (a) Doing so would create an unnecessary visual impact on the surrounding area; or

- (b) No additional need is anticipated for any other potential user in the vicinity; or
- (c) There is some valid economic, technological or physical justification as to why collocation is not possible.

Space will be provided on the tower for the antenna collocation of three additional wireless providers.

- (4) The height of new towers shall be limited based on technological need, type of facility location, and/or required permit approval.

The applicants' Statement of Justification states that the height of the tower has been limited based on technological need and facility location. It further states that the proposed height is necessary to achieve the needed coverage in the area.

- (7) Unmanned equipment structure(s) shall not contain more than 500 square feet of total gross floor area per telecommunication provider on each site. Structures shall not exceed 12 feet in height.

Verizon proposes to install a 12 foot by 17 foot equipment platform with a canopy, rather than a shelter. Staff has prepared a condition for Planning Commission consideration that would require any equipment shelter or canopied platform within the compound be constructed no larger than 500 square feet and no taller than 12 feet in height.

c. **Additional Submission Requirements.** In addition to Section 5-011.II, the following additional information shall be submitted by applicants for towers or monopoles which require special exception or special permit approval:

- (1) A map showing the telecommunication system of which the proposed use will be an integral part, together with a written statement outlining the functional relationship of the proposed facility use to the utility system.

RF propagation maps depicting Verizon's existing and projected coverage and telecommunications system are attached.

- (2) A statement, prepared by a certified engineer, giving the basic reasons for selecting the particular site as the location of the proposed facility and certifying that the proposed use will meet the performance standards of the district in which located.

A statement from Verizon's certified engineer explaining the basic reasons for site selection and compliance with performance standards is attached.

- (3) Photo imagery or other visual simulation of the proposed telecommunication tower or monopole must be shown with the existing conditions of the site. This simulation shall be provided from a minimum of three (3) perspectives. The applicant shall address how the facility can

be designed to mitigate the visual impact on area residents, facilities, and roads. More specifically, a sight line presentation must be presented.

Site photographs and photo simulations are attached.

(4) Except for areas where permitted by right, an applicant for the proposed telecommunication facility must demonstrate that an antenna location on an existing facility is not feasible.

The County's objective is that no new tower/monopole shall be permitted unless the applicant demonstrates to the reasonable satisfaction of the Board of Supervisors that no existing tower, monopole, or structure can accommodate the applicant's proposed antenna.

Collocation may be determined not to be feasible in the following situations:

- (a) The planned equipment would exceed the structural capacity of existing and approved telecommunications facilities, considering existing planned use of those facilities cannot be reinforced to accommodate planned or equivalent equipment at a reasonable cost;
- (b) The planned equipment will cause interference with other existing or planned equipment for that telecommunication facility, and that interference cannot be prevented at a reasonable cost;
- (c) Existing or approved telecommunication facilities do not have space on which equipment can be placed so as to provide adequate service; and
- (d) Existing and approved telecommunication facilities will not provide adequate signal coverage.

The report produced by Verizon's engineer states that no existing structures of sufficient height were identified in the area that would support the facility and provide the desired coverage objective.

11-103 Landscaping and Buffer Requirements. The following landscaping and buffering requirements shall apply to all telecommunication facilities.

1. Security Fencing. Facilities shall be enclosed by security fencing not less than six (6) feet in height.

The applicant is proposing to enclose the equipment compound with an eight foot chain link fence with barbed wire. Staff has prepared a condition for Planning Commission consideration that would require the applicants to provide an eight (8) foot high board-on-board fence to provide better screening of the equipment compound, based on the applicants' request to exclude landscaping.

2. Landscaping. The telecommunication facility shall be landscaped with a mix of hedge and trees to screen internal communications buildings from adjacent properties. The standard buffer should consist of an area 10 feet in width outside

of the fenced area. Plantings will comply with Zoning Ordinance landscaping requirements.

In lieu of a landscaping buffer, the applicants request that the Board of Supervisors make a finding that the natural growth along the subject property perimeter is sufficient as the required landscape buffer.

3. Existing mature tree growth and natural land forms onsite shall be preserved to the maximum extent possible. In special exception applications, the Board of Supervisors may determine that the natural growth surrounding the property perimeter may be sufficient as the required buffer.

As noted above, the applicants request that the Board of Supervisors make a finding that the natural growth along the property perimeter is sufficient as the required landscape buffer.

4. Existing trees within 200 feet of the telecommunication tower or monopole shall not be removed, except as may be authorized to permit construction of the facility and installation of vehicular access.

The Special Exception plat does not indicate that trees will be removed to install the facility or access road. No trees within 200 feet of the facility shall be removed following the facility installation.

Staff and Agency Review Comments:

Staff and certain referral agencies have reviewed this application for conformance with the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, and other relevant policies and regulations. Findings, comments, and recommendations are summarized below. Following each comment is a staff note in italics stating how the comment has been addressed.

Zoning Considerations

The Zoning Office reviewed this Special Exception request and notes the following findings:

1. The subject property is zoned Agriculture District (RA).

Noted, no action required.

2. Section 3-320 Public Utilities (Category 20), use 8 (Telecommunications Facilities, Radio, Television, Microwave, Antenna and Transmitting Equipment) allows a telecommunications facility with subsequent site plan approval in the RA zoning district. The proposed Special Exception application is seeking to allow the telecommunications facility greater than 80 feet in height and to be surrounded by less than 100 feet of trees on all sides.

Noted, no action required.

3. Section 5-006 *General Standards for Special Permits and Special Exception Uses* applies to the subject property. Zoning staff defers to Planning staff in the compliance assessment of these standards.

Analysis provided within this report.

4. Section 5-2002 *Standards for All Category 20 Uses* applies to the subject property. Zoning staff defers to Planning staff in the compliance assessment of these standards.

Analysis provided within this report.

5. The applicant would be required to file a Major Site Plan application should the Special Exception request be approved by the Board of Supervisors.

The applicants have been notified of this requirement and are prepared to file a Major Site Plan application, if the Special Exception is granted by the Board of Supervisors.

6. The proposed monopole does not meet the required fall zone criteria found in Sections (11-102.2(2)(g) and 11-102.3(b)(6) of the Zoning Ordinance (ZO)). Any telecommunications facility located adjacent to a district permitting residences shall be located to a height that is equal to or less than the distance from the base of the tower to the closest property line, 1 foot setback for each 1 foot of facility height. In order to meet the fall zone criteria, the monopole should be setback at least 140 feet from all side and rear property lines. Staff is currently drafting a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment that may address this issue, should the amendment be approved.

Planning staff agrees with this assessment. The application would not meet Sections 11-102.2(2)(g) and 11-102.3(b)(6) of the Zoning Ordinance without a Zoning Ordinance text amendment. A draft of the text amendment is being prepared; it will be heard by the Planning Commission at the October 20, 2016 meeting.

7. Section 11-103.2 of the Zoning Ordinance requires the facility to be landscaped with a mix of hedge and trees to screen internal communications buildings from adjacent properties. The buffer should consist of an area 10 feet in width outside of the fenced area. Section 11-103.3 of the Zoning Ordinance gives the Board of Supervisors the ability to determine that the natural growth surrounding the property perimeter may be sufficient as the required buffer.

The applicants are requesting that the Board of Supervisors make a finding that the natural growth along the property perimeter is sufficient as the required landscape buffer.

Planning Considerations

See analysis provided within the staff report.

Technical Considerations

In 2014, when Verizon Wireless proposed a similar project on the adjacent parcel to the east of the subject property at 5272 Casanova Road, CityScape Consultants, Inc. conducted a review of the application. Staff did not send the current application, SPEX-16-005832, to CityScape for the

following reasons: Verizon's coverage objective did not change; the same search ring was used; and the propagation maps for both applications show roughly the same coverage.

In the CityScape report of 2014, the consultant concluded that:

- 1) the proposed facility was warranted;
- 2) a facility proposed within Verizon's search ring would provide more reliable LTE and AWS service;
- 3) the facility would assist in reducing the over-capacity issues of existing Verizon sites; and
- 4) the applicant had complied with all Federal guidelines.

There were issues regarding the consideration of alternative project locations and tower heights required at that time by the Zoning Ordinance. However, those issues are no longer valid due to a recent Zoning Ordinance text amendment. The 2014 CityScape report is attached.