



Staff Report

Author: Kimberly Barlett, Senior Planner
Department: Development Services
Subject: Conditional Use – 2nd Reading Zoning Map Amendment
Meeting Date: September 1, 2026
Application: CU-26-25

Existing Zoning: AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)

Map & Parcel: 226-5

Parcel Size: 196.00 acres

Applicant: Abby Porter
326 Tryon Road
Raleigh, NC 27603

Owner(s): David Rollins as Trustee
614 Holly Ave
Pooler, GA 31322

Commissioner District: Third District

Location: 2727 Riverside Drive
Guyton, GA 31312

Existing Land Use and Zoning:

The subject parcel is located at **2727 Riverside Drive** and contains mobile homes and accessory structures as identified in the Effingham County Tax Assessor’s database.

The parcel is zoned **AR-1 (Agricultural Residential)**, which requires a minimum lot size of five (5) acres. Surrounding properties are similarly zoned and developed in a rural residential pattern characterized by large lots, low-density housing, and agricultural land uses.



Surrounding Neighborhood	
• North:	AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
• South:	AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
• East:	AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)
• West:	AR-1 (Agricultural–Residential, 5 acres or more)



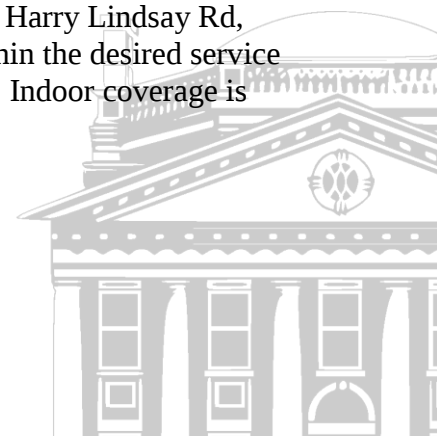
Project Summary/Proposed Request:

The applicant requests **Conditional Use** approval to construct a telecommunications tower in AR-1. The proposed 265-foot telecommunications facility at 2727 Riverside Drive is strategically located to enable Verizon to provide reliable voice and broadband data coverage to Effingham County.

The proposed facility will greatly improve wireless service to the nearby residential and commercial areas. The primary objective of this site is to provide significant high-speed voice and broadband coverage improvements along Riverside Dr, Old Louisville Rd, George Hurst Rd, Harry Lindsay Rd, Newton Rd, Lewis Rd, Old Flat Ford Rd, Old River Rd S, and other locations within the desired service area. Current coverage in this area is mostly limited to vehicular or outdoor usage. Indoor coverage is

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marginal. The proposed site will allow Verizon to improve service reliability for businesses and customers in these areas.

Proposed Telecommunications Tower and Site Improvements

The proposed telecommunications facility includes the following improvements:

- A **255-foot self-supporting lattice telecommunications tower**, with an additional **10-foot lightning rod** mounted at the top;
- Associated ground-mounted equipment;
- An 80-foot by 80-foot fenced compound;
- A 100-foot by 100-foot lease area;
- A **30-foot-wide access and utility easement**; and
- A proposed **10-foot landscape buffer**.

Proposed Setbacks

The proposed tower will be located approximately:

- **Front:** ±384 feet
- **East Side:** ±181 feet
- **West Side:** ±1,193 feet
- **Rear:** ±5,261 feet

Surrounding Towers and Residential Structures

No existing telecommunications towers or alternative tower structures are **within a 1,000-foot radius** of the proposed tower base.

Additionally, no off-site or adjacent residential structures are **located within 1,000 feet of the proposed tower base**. The only residential structure within the 1,000-foot radius is located on the parent parcel, approximately **415 feet northwest of the proposed tower base**. The existing residence on the subject property has been determined to be abandoned and is currently unoccupied.

Section 14-134, Development Standards

(2)Guyed and latticed towers shall be a minimum distance of 1,000 feet from any residential structure or public use, excluding street rights-of-way and public access easements.

(3)Guy wires with support anchors are required to meet all setback requirements. Support anchors for guy wires must be protected with a concrete abutment, two feet by two feet, at a height of two feet above the finished grade, and a depth of two feet below the ground surface, or similar, as approved by the county engineer.

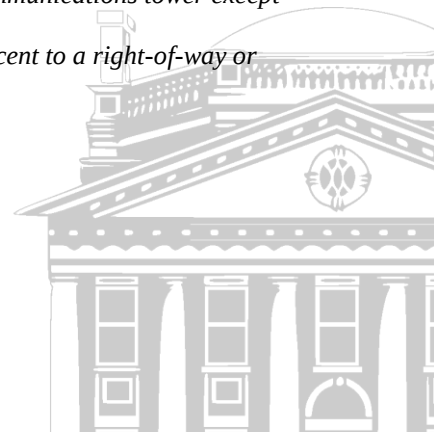
(4)Except as otherwise specified in this article, all telecommunications towers and accessory structures and uses shall comply with development setbacks as required by the zoning district in which the tower is to be located.

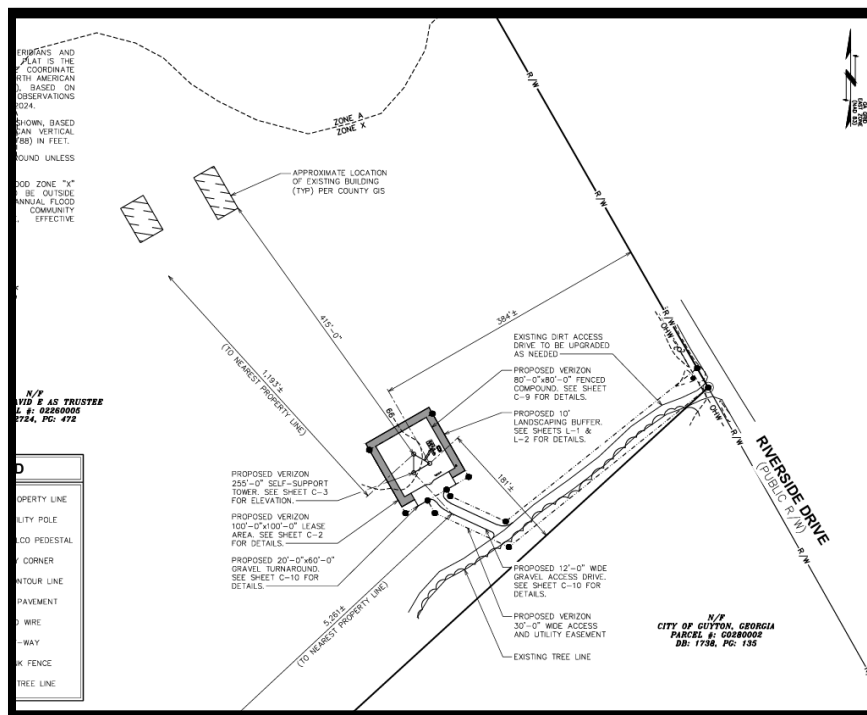
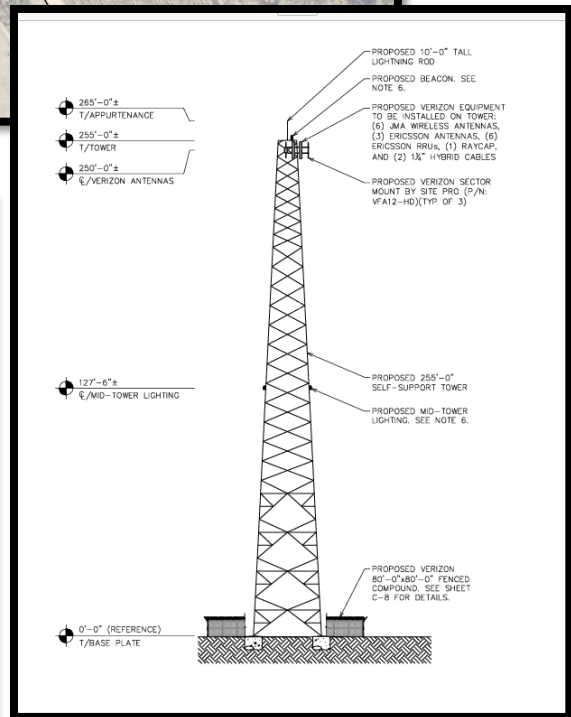
(5)Telecommunications towers shall not be permitted within a 1,000-foot radius of another telecommunications tower except within tower farms.

(6)Telecommunications towers shall be set back not less than 100 feet from any property line adjacent to a right-of-way or approved access easement.

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STAFF ANALYSIS

Zoning Compliance

Guy towers means a communication tower that is supported, in whole or in part, by guy wires and ground anchors.

Lattice or self-supporting tower refers to a communication tower that has open framed supports on three or four sides and is constructed without guy wires and ground anchors.

A guyed and lattice tower is an eligible conditional use within the AR-1 district under Sec. 14-133(a)(2). The subject parcel is surrounded by AR-1 zoning, reducing the likelihood of conflict with the setback of Sec. 14-134(b)(2).

Setback and Design Standards

At 196 acres, the parcel offers substantial area within which to site the tower and satisfy the required fall-zone setbacks and minimum distance setbacks. Staff recommends that any approval be conditioned on the applicant submitting a sealed site plan demonstrating the proposed tower's total height, fall-zone setback distance to all property lines, and distance to the nearest existing residence, consistent with Sec. 14-134(b)(1).

Compatibility with Surrounding Uses

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The parcel and surrounding properties are zoned AR-1 and exhibit a rural, low-density development pattern. The absence of a platted residential subdivision and the substantial size of the parent parcel reduce the potential for land-use conflicts; however, an existing residential structure is located approximately 415 feet northwest of the proposed tower base. Staff must therefore confirm compliance with the applicable residential separation standard before approval.

FACTS & FINDINGS

Staff has reviewed the proposed conditional use and makes the following findings:

1. A telecommunications tower is an eligible conditional use in the AR-1 district.

Sec. 14-133(a)(3) permits Guyed and lattice towers as a conditional use in the AR-1 zoning district. The subject parcel is zoned AR-1.

2. The parcel provides adequate area to accommodate the required fall-zone setback.

At 196 acres, the parcel offers flexibility in constructing the tower to meet the setback requirements under Sec. 14-134(b)(2), subject to verification of the final site plan.

3. The parcel is not located within a platted subdivision, and no houses currently exist on the lot.

The parcel is not located within a platted subdivision; however, an existing unoccupied residential structure is located approximately 415 feet from the proposed tower base.

4. The proposed use is compatible with the surrounding AR-1 zoning and rural character of the area.

The parcel is bordered on all sides by AR-1 zoning, consistent with the low-density, rural character typical of tower siting in agricultural-residential districts.

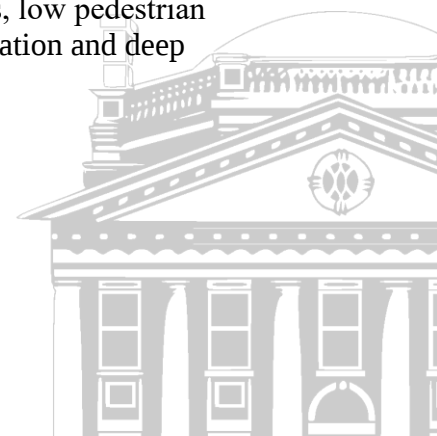
5. County GIS mapping indicates the presence of wetlands and identified flood hazard areas on portions of the property.

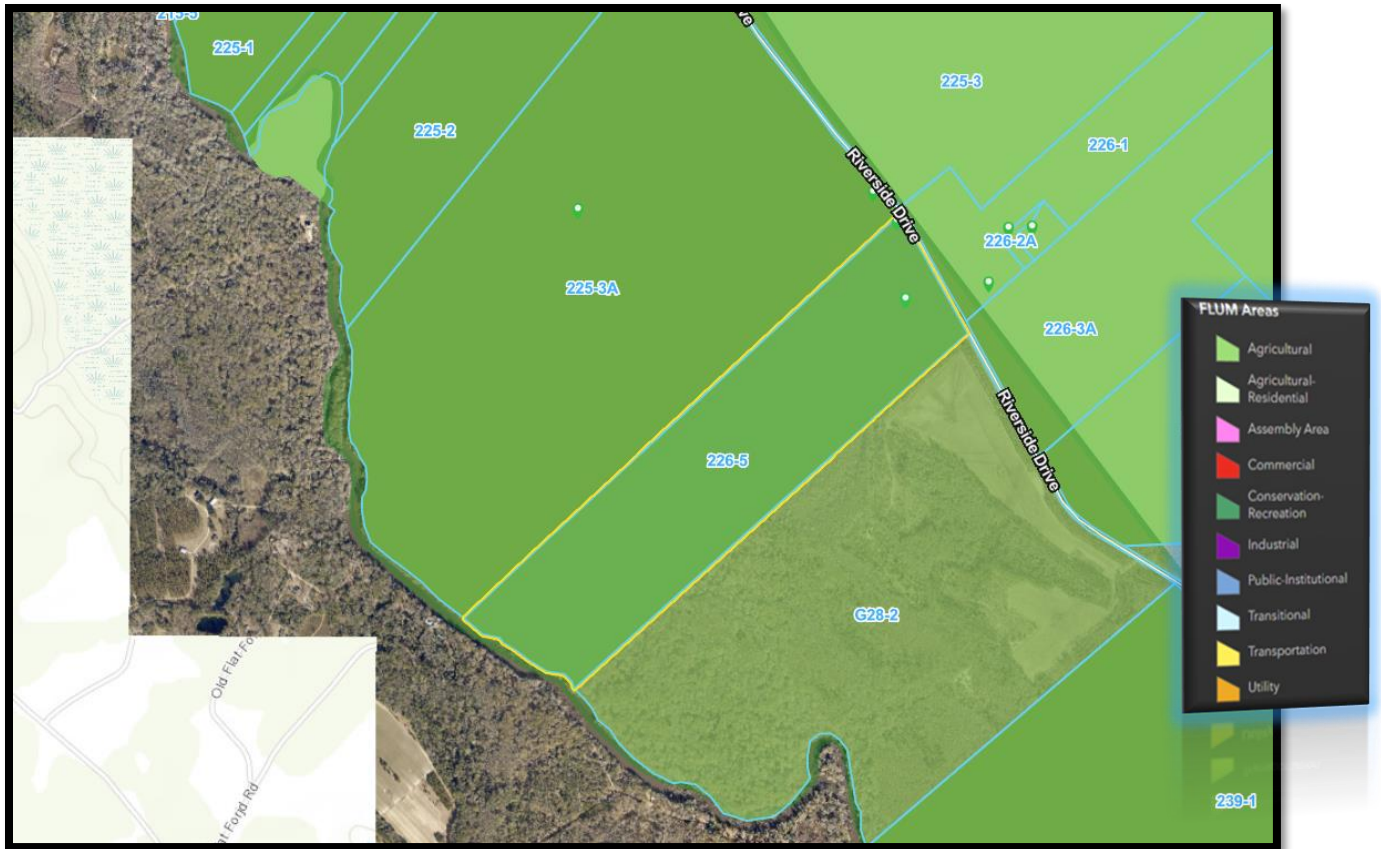
The proposed tower compound and access improvements will be required to comply with all applicable environmental, floodplain, and development requirements.



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Staff Recommendation

The proposal satisfies the conditional use standards for a telecommunication tower and complies with Article V, Telecommunication Regulations, of the Effingham County Ordinance. In addition, the site selection appropriately balances public service needs with preserving rural character.

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