



## ***County of Prince George, Virginia***

*“A global community where families thrive and businesses prosper”*

### **Memorandum**

**To:** Percy C. Ashcraft, County Administrator  
**From:** Douglas Miles, Planning Manager  
**Date:** February 1, 2016  
**Subject:** Design Standards Manual – Board of Supervisors  
Work Session on February 9, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Please find a copy of the Prince George County Design Standards Manual that will be utilized by developers and site plan consultants such as civil engineers, landscape architects and land surveyors in Prince George County. The Board of Supervisors adopted on October 28, 2014 new development requirements for administrative site plan review of proposed developments.

The required buffers, screening, landscaping, lighting and parking requirements were reviewed to lessen the potential, long term stormwater management development costs for larger sites like Lowe's and tax exempt properties such as churches and assembly halls with large paved parking lots. The new stormwater requirements helped us to reevaluate our design standards.

These new design standards are very similar to the site plan requirements that govern our new industrial park buildings like Rolls-Royce and CCAM and the other new medical office building uses found along Puddledock Road within the emerging growth area of Prince George County. We believe that better site design work will be submitted for our review using these standards.

# Prince George County Design Standards



## Defining Neighborhoods, Building Community & Making Places for Prince George County, Virginia

Community Development & Code Compliance  
Planning Division — January 2016  
[www.princegeorgecountyva.gov](http://www.princegeorgecountyva.gov)



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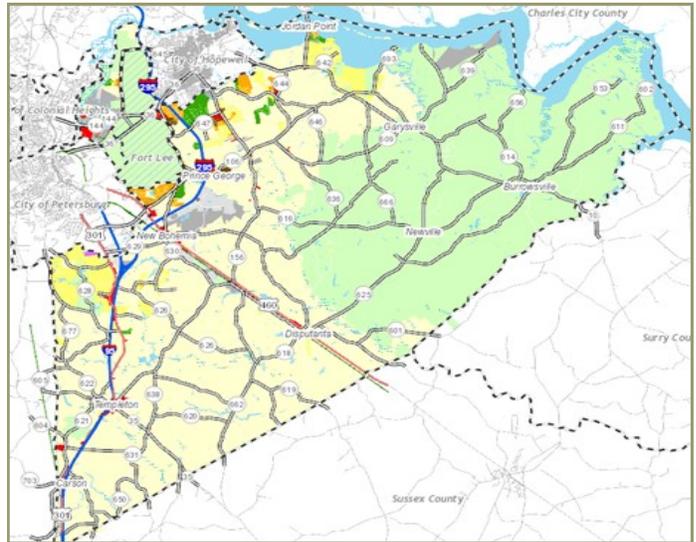
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>SECTION ONE: PERMITS AND CERTIFICATES</b>		<b>page</b>
<b>Part One</b>	Zoning Permit Requirements	<b>1-1</b>
<b>Part Two</b>	Certificate of Occupancy	<b>1-2</b>
<b>Part Three</b>	Conditional Use Permits	<b>1-2</b>
<b>SECTION TWO: SITE PLANS AND DESIGN STANDARDS</b>		
<b>Part One</b>	Site Plan Requirements	<b>2-1</b>
<b>Part Two</b>	Minimum Improvements	<b>2-2</b>
<b>Part Three</b>	Buffers, Screening & Landscaping	<b>2-2</b>
<b>Part Four</b>	Buffer Yard Requirements	<b>2-4</b>
<b>Part Five</b>	Buffer Yard Plantings and Screening	<b>2-5</b>
<b>Part Six</b>	Exterior Storage / Dumpster Enclosures	<b>2-6</b>
<b>Part Seven</b>	Parking Areas: Perimeter Landscaping	<b>2-7</b>
<b>Part Eight</b>	Parking Areas: Interior Landscaping	<b>2-7</b>
<b>Part Nine</b>	Landscaping Maintenance	<b>2-8</b>
<b>Part Ten</b>	Administrative Modifications	<b>2-8</b>
<b>Part Eleven</b>	Conflicting Requirements	<b>2-9</b>
<b>Part Twelve</b>	Site Lighting Requirements	<b>2-9</b>
<b>SECTION THREE: TOWER AND SITING GUIDELINES</b>		
<b>Part One</b>	Intent	<b>3-1</b>
<b>Part Two</b>	Applicant Requirements	<b>3-2</b>
<b>Part Three</b>	General Standards	<b>3-3</b>

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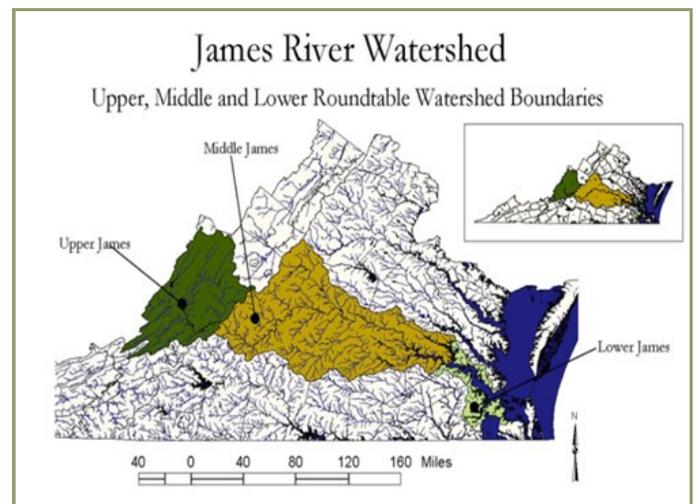
## Part One: Zoning Permit Requirements

### Sec. 90-821. Zoning Permits

**(a)** Buildings or structures shall be started, reconstructed, enlarged or altered only after a zoning permit has been obtained from the administrator.

**(b)** The planning commission may request a review of the zoning permit approved by the administrator in order to determine if the contemplated use is in accordance with the zoning district requirements.

**(c)** Each application for a zoning permit shall be accompanied by three copies of a scaled drawing. The drawing shall show the size and shape of the parcel of land on which the proposed building is to be constructed, the nature of the proposed use of the building or land, and the location of such building or use with respect to the property lines of the parcel of land and to the right-of-way of any street or highway adjoining the parcel of land. Any other information which the administrator may deem necessary for consideration of the application may be required. If the proposed building or use is in conformity with the provisions of this chapter, a permit shall be issued to the applicant by the administrator. One copy of the drawing shall be returned to the applicant with the permit.



**(d)** All necessary drainage facilities shall be provided within the James River watershed to ensure compliance with the water quality standards contained in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Designation and Management Regulations (VR 173-02-01) based on the best management practices efficiencies shown in Appendix C of the Chesapeake Bay local assistance department's local assistance manual for lots created prior to April 1, 1995.

## Part Two: Certificate of Occupancy

### Sec. 90-822. Certificate of Occupancy

*Land may be used or occupied and buildings, structurally altered or erected, may be used or changed in use only after a certificate of occupancy has been issued by the administrator. Such permit shall state that the building or the proposed use or the use of the land complies with the provisions of this chapter. A similar certificate shall be issued for the purpose of maintaining, renewing, changing or extending a non-conforming use. A certificate of occupancy either for the whole or a part of a building shall be applied for simultaneously with the application for a zoning permit. The permit shall be issued within ten days after the erection or structural alteration of such building or part has conformed with the provisions of this chapter.*



## Part Three: Conditional Use Permits

### Sec. 90-823. Conditional Use Permit

*Where permitted by this chapter, the location of hotels, motels, mobile home parks, commercial amusement parks, hospitals, mobile homes, airports, borrow pits, sanitary fill method of garbage disposal, public utilities, refuse sites and other permitted uses shall require, in addition to the zoning permit and certificate of occupancy, a conditional use permit. These permits shall be subject to such conditions as the Board of Supervisors deems necessary to carry out the intent of this chapter.*



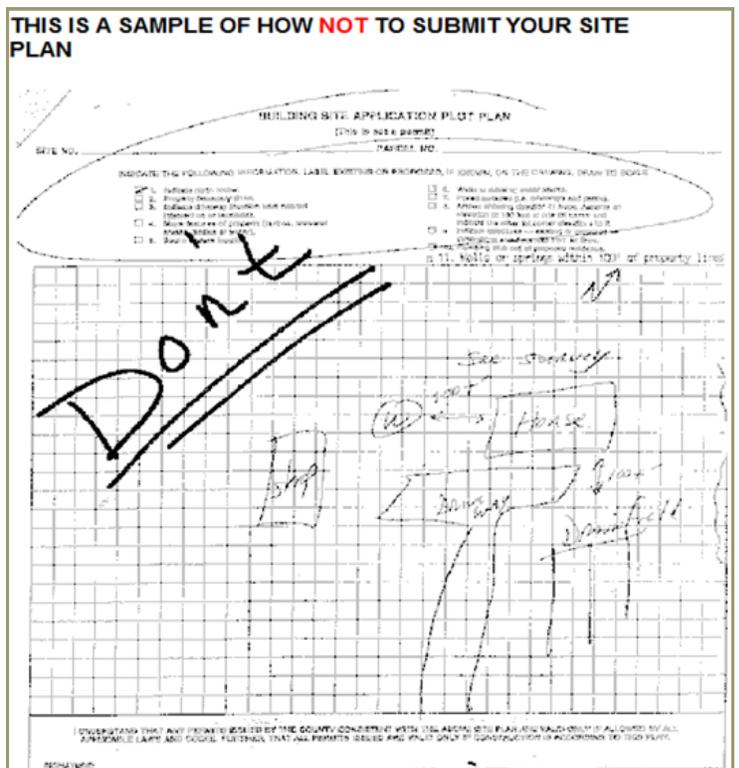
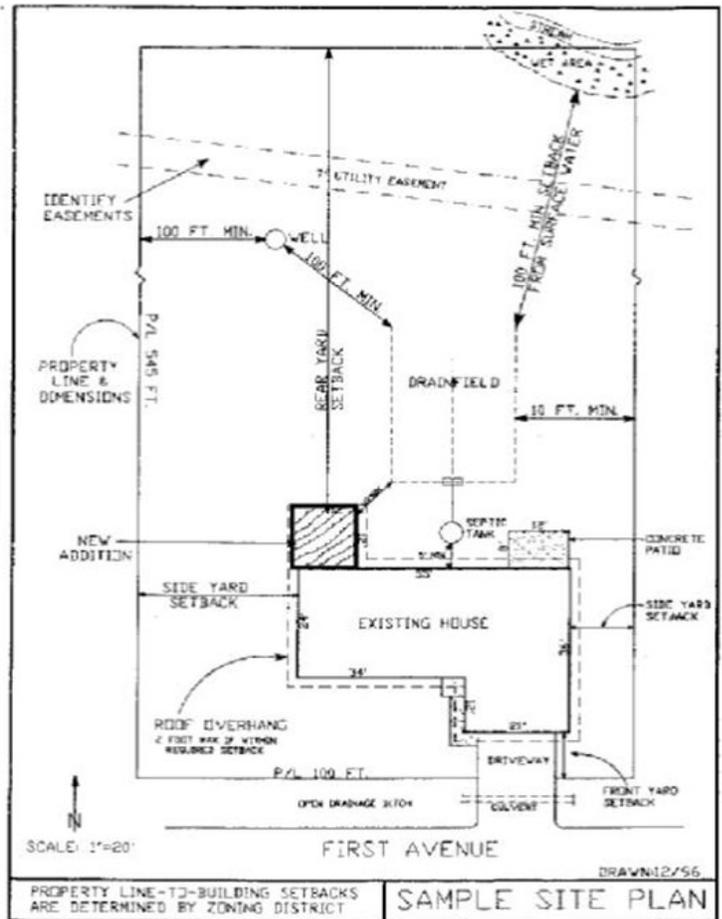
## Part One: Site Plan Requirements

### Sec. 90-824 Site plan Required

(a) A site plan shall be required for all structures which contain more than four residential units or are for other than agricultural purposes. No building permit shall be issued to erect or to alter any building until a site plan is approved under the provisions of this article.

(b) Site plans shall be prepared by a licensed architect, landscape architect, engineer, or land surveyor; signed, sealed and dated and shall include but not be limited to: scale; north arrow; property boundaries; including topography with site specific contour intervals; the location of the 100-year floodplain boundaries; location and size of utility lines such as water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer along with the required easements; both existing and proposed; points of site ingress and egress on state maintained roads; on-site and off-site stormwater drainage structures; erosion and sediment control measures; solid waste refuse storage and recycling collection facilities; proposed recreational areas and open space areas; parking areas; landscaping and screening; lighting; side-walks; and curbs and gutters.

(c) The county shall review and provide comments for any site plan that is submitted for review within 60 days of the filing of the plan with the county. Approval of a final site plan pursuant to the provisions of this article shall expire five years from the date of approval in accordance with Code of Virginia, § 15.2-2261, as amended, unless a building permit and/or a zoning permit has been obtained for the development. No building or zoning permit shall be issued by any county official for any building, structure or use depicted on a required site plan, until such time as the site plan is approved by the county.



## Part Two: Minimum Improvements

### Sec. 90-825 Required Minimum Improvements

(a) Any improvement required by this article, or any other ordinance of the county shall be installed at the cost of the developer unless other agreements have been reached between the developer, the county, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and/or any other governmental agency.

(b) Prior to approval of a final site plan, the developer shall execute an agreement to construct required or proposed improvements located within public rights-of-way or easements or any such improvement connected to any public facility. The developer shall also file a performance guarantee with surety acceptable to the county in the amount of the estimated cost of the improvements plus ten percent contingency, as determined by the county engineer, VDH or VDOT. The developer's performance guarantee shall not be released until the construction work has been inspected and accepted by the county, by VDH and/or VDOT.

(c) A landscaping plan shall be submitted for site plan approval. The natural landscape and topography shall be preserved except when alterations are necessary to accommodate building sites, parking areas, and access drives, necessary stormwater drainage facilities and utility systems and certain recreational areas.

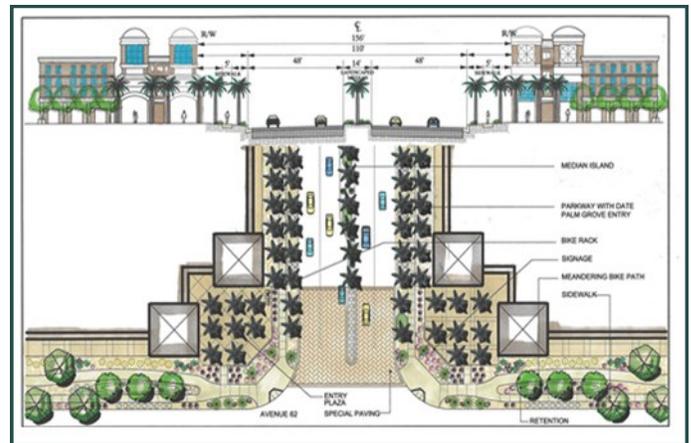


## Part Three: Buffers, Screening and Landscaping

### Sec. 90-826 Buffers, Screening and Landscaping

(a) These standards are designed to promote the public health, safety and welfare by reducing common conflicts associated with incompatible land uses. These standards also seek to provide a transition between different land uses by reducing any noise, glare, dust, overcrowding, maintaining property values, promoting privacy and by enhancing the natural environment and they do seek to encourage innovation in both landscape and architectural site design.

(b) Buffers may be bisected by any necessary utilities perpendicularly provided that the buffer area is restored to provide the proper site screening for the zoning district.



## Part Four: Buffer Yard Requirements

### Sec. 90-826.1. Buffer Yards

(a) Required buffer yards shall be located so that they provide a visual and physical barrier between abutting zoning districts and shall buffer and screen all outside storage, loading and parking areas. No use of the site may be extended into or beyond the required buffer yard. Required buffer yards shall not be located in any portion of any existing or any dedicated public right-of-way and they shall not obstruct the visibility of traffic circulation and shall not interfere with the use of adjoining land.

(b) The buffer yard shall be reserved solely for screening and plantings, except for required pedestrian or vehicular access driveways to the property, passive recreational areas, or pedestrian or bicycle trails, which can be accommodated in a manner that preserves the intended screening function between abutting zoning districts. In no case shall any portion of a required buffer yard be used for storage, loading or parking areas or any other use that impairs the intended buffer.

(c) The property owner or the lessee shall have the responsibility to continuously maintain the required buffer yards, site screening and plantings so that they continue to meet the specified standards and intent of this section to properly buffer different zoning district uses.



## Part Five: Buffer Yard Plantings and Screening

### Sec. 90-826.2 Buffer Yard Plantings & Screening

**(a)** Plantings required by this section shall be provided in accordance with:

**(1)** Where required, all evergreen shrubs shall have a height of at least 24 inches at the time of planting and an ultimate height of six feet or greater within five years or less. One shrub shall be planted for each three linear feet of buffer yard.

**(2)** Where required, each small evergreen tree or shrub shall have a height of at least six feet at the time of planting and an ultimate height of 15 feet or greater within five years or less. One tree or shrub shall be planted for each five linear feet of buffer yard.

**(3)** Where required, each large evergreen tree shall have a height of at least eight feet at the time of planting and an ultimate height of 50 feet or greater within five years or less. One tree shall be planted for each 15 linear feet of buffer yard.

**(4)** Existing evergreen trees and shrubs which meet the requirements of this section may be counted as contributing to the total planting requirements. All portions of buffer yard areas not containing plantings shall be seeded with grass or other approved vegetative ground cover for stabilization and decorative landscaping purposes.

**(b)** Screening required by this section shall be provided in accordance with the following standards:

**(1)** Screening shall be visually opaque and shall be constructed of a durable material. It shall be installed within the required buffer yard and shall be continuously maintained by the property owner or by the lessee.

**(2)** Acceptable screening materials shall include but are not limited to: decorative fences, decorative masonry or brick walls matching the building, and earthen berms with landscaping and other existing vegetation, or a combination of the above to screen outside storage areas.

**(3)** If screening is to be accomplished by landscaping, the landscaping materials shall achieve the standards stated within a period of five years or less.





## Part Six: Exterior Storage and Dumpster Enclosures

### Sec. 90-826.3. Requirements for Exterior Storage & Dumpster Enclosures

**(a)** Any exterior area used for storage or other similar use that is visible from a public right-of-way shall be screened with a buffer yard, screening and/or plantings and shall be provided in a manner which screens the use from view.

**(b)** All commercial and industrial use types shall screen from surrounding views all articles and materials being stored, maintained, repaired, processed, erected, fabricated, dismantled or salvaged on premises.

**(c)** All dumpsters for recycling and refuse storage shall be screened on all sides by an opaque enclosure that should match the building and has a minimum height of six feet and nothing should exceed the height of the enclosure area. If adjacent to residential units or hotel rooms, there shall be a sign posted on the gate that indicates: "No servicing before 6:00 a.m. or after 10:00 p.m."

**(d)** Areas set aside for recycling and refuse storage collection should be conveniently located and shall be screened from view from adjacent properties and rights-of-way. Dumpsters and bins must be accessible to service trucks at all times and may not be blocked by parking spaces.

**(e)** Where any area is used for an active outdoor recreational use, such as a playground, tennis courts, a swimming pool, or other similar land use located within a residential district, such use shall be screened from any adjoining residences with buffer yards, screening and/or plantings.



### Part Seven: Parking Areas Perimeter Landscaping

#### Sec. 90-826.4. Perimeter Landscaping for Parking Areas

**(a)** *When a new, expanded or redesigned parking area is required or is proposed adjacent to a public right-of-way, a landscaped planting strip shall be established between the parking area and the adjacent right-of-way. The required landscaped planting strip shall have a minimum width of ten feet to accommodate the required plantings. When buffer yards as specified in this section are not required, an eight-foot wide landscaping planting strip shall be provided between all parking areas and adjacent properties.*

**(b)** *Front setback areas located between a building and a public right-of-way shall be landscaped with a combination of trees, shrubs, and groundcover. In cases where existing vegetation that can be preserved exists on the property it may be substituted for required landscaping requirements or supplement them at the discretion of the administrator.*

### Part Eight: Parking Areas Interior Landscaping

#### Sec. 90-826.5. Interior Landscaping for Parking Areas

*The following minimum standards for interior parking area landscaping shall be met for all new, expanded or redesigned parking areas containing 10,000 square feet or greater of impervious area:*

**(1)** *At least one deciduous tree shall be installed for every ten parking spaces provided. All deciduous trees shall have a minimum caliper of two inches at the time of planting. Smaller flowering trees may be used at the discretion of the administrator. When used, these trees may retain their lower limbs but shall be planted with due consideration of visibility and the traffic flow on the premises.*

**(2)** *Planting islands, with a minimum width of nine feet shall be provided between every 15 parking spaces. One deciduous tree shall be provided within each planting island.*

**(3)** *Landscaping may be used to delineate vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns, improve stormwater quality and to promote stormwater management objectives. Directional signs and other techniques shall be used to further direct the flow of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the parking area.*



## Part Nine: Landscape Maintenance

### Sec. 90-826.6. Landscaping Maintenance Requirements

**(a)** All landscaped areas shall be provided with an available water supply with at least one hose bib located within 150 feet of all planted areas. Drip-type irrigation systems are encouraged for long-term maintenance of plant materials.

**(b)** All required or provided trees, shrubs and other plant materials must be replaced during the first available planting season if they die on the premises within the five-year or less maturity period.

**(c)** Trees shall not be trimmed or topped so that signage may be visible. Trees shall be allowed to grow and at the appropriate time the tree crown may be lifted during regular tree maintenance procedures.



## Part Ten: Administrative Modifications

### Sec. 90-826.7. Administrative Modifications

The requirements of this section shall be applied equally to all properties but may be modified or waived by the administrator where the intent of this section is preserved and where proposed developments of the new land use meets any of the following guidelines:

**(1)** Natural land characteristics and/or existing vegetation would achieve the same intent of this section provided such natural features are maintained and not modified by the development or use of the site;

**(2)** The amount of the required buffer yard would occupy more than 15 percent of the total parcel and proportional increases of planting and screening are added which are determined by the administrator to offset any reductions of the required buffer yard;

**(3)** When property lines abut another jurisdiction, the administrator shall determine the specific screening and buffer requirements along the property lines. Requirements shall not exceed those that would be required for similarly situated property within the county boundaries.



### Part Eleven: Conflicting Requirements

#### Sec. 90-826.8. Conflicting Requirements

When buffering, screening or planting requirements are required by a conditional rezoning or special exception case approved after the effective date of this article, and said requirements are in conflict with the requirements contained herein, the most restrictive zoning requirements shall apply.

### Part Twelve: Site Lighting

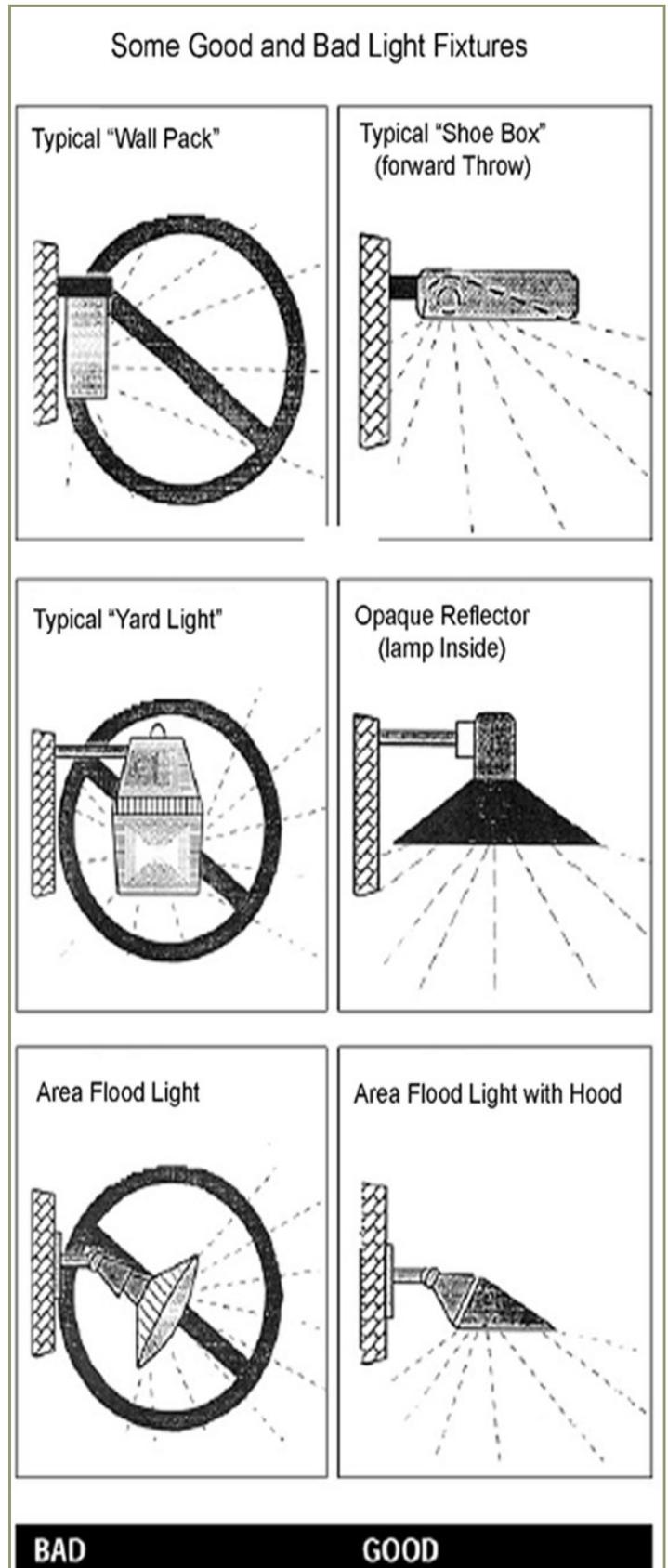
#### Sec. 90-826.9. Site Lighting Requirements

(a) All exterior site lighting fixtures shall be designed, located and arranged so as not to direct glare on adjoining roads or residential properties. All exterior fixtures shall be shielded or designed so that light is directed towards the ground and so it does not interfere with motorists' vision.

(b) No freestanding light fixtures shall exceed 35 feet in height above grade, except for publicly owned fixtures and where possible, the light fixtures may be limited to 20 feet in height above grade.

(c) Lighting intensity at the property line shall not exceed one foot candle and shall limit the amount of light pollution adjacent to any federal property where night training activities are conducted for Department of Defense security purposes.

(d) A lighting plan shall be submitted for site plan approval providing the location of the light fixtures in relation to the proposed landscaping trees to avoid future lighting conflicts at the time of planting maturity.



#### Part One: Intent

A. 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.



**Relatively new tower with shrubs and natural buffer in rear**

## Part Two: Applicant Requirements

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.

In addition, all tower applicants for towers shall provide the following information:

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.

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.

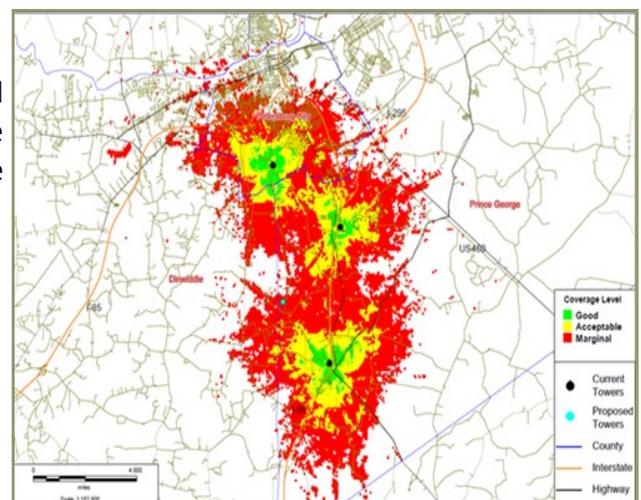
Photographic simulations showing the relationship of the proposed tower and associated antenna to the surroundings. Photographic simulations shall also be prepared showing the relationship of any new or modified road, access or utility corridors constructed or modified to serve the proposed tower site.

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.

All tower applicants shall be required, at their expense, to conduct an on-site "balloon" or comparable test prior to the required public hearings for 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 meeting.

Written verification that all required submittals to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have been submitted on the proposed tower site.

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.



**Coverage simulation**

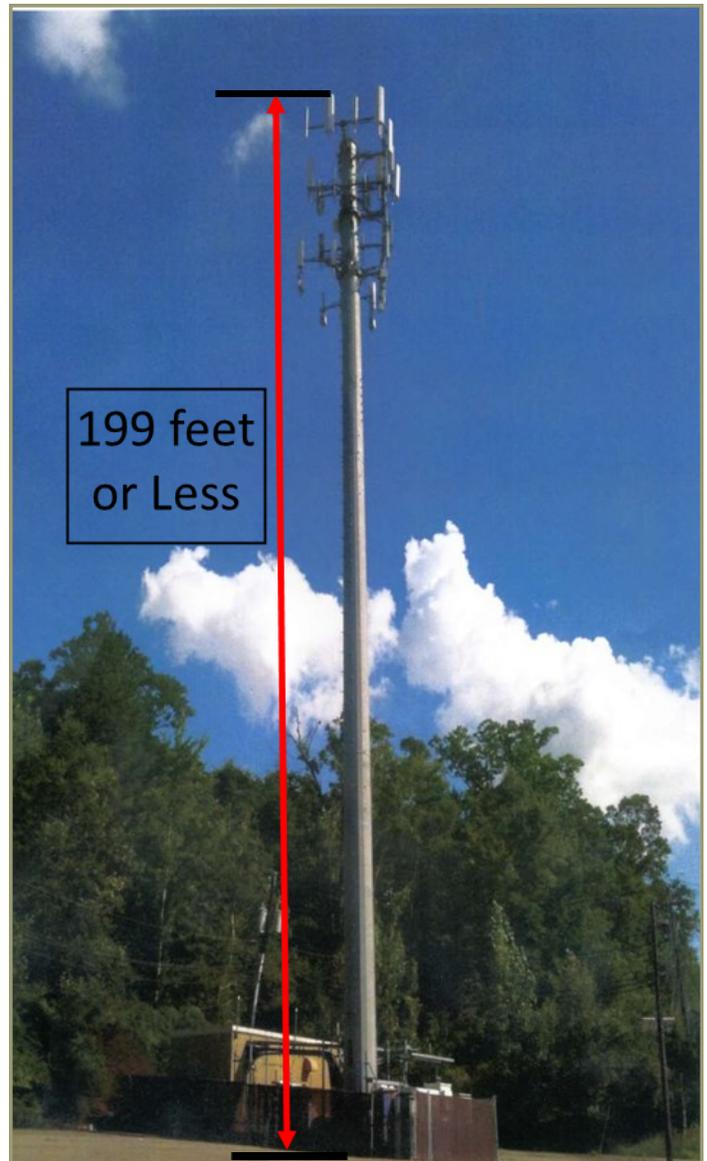
### Part Three: General Standards

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.

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.

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.

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.

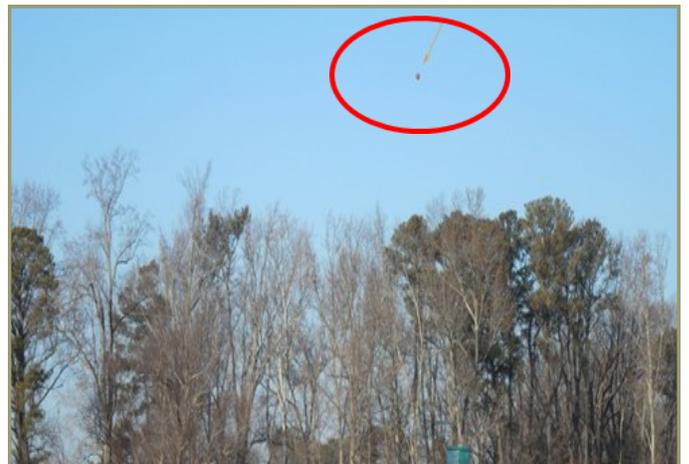


**Tower located in wooded area, no screening required**

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.

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.

No business signs shall be allowed on the property identifying the name of, or services offered by, any business associated with the tower.



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.

**Balloon test at proposed site**

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