

**PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES, ANTENNAS,
TOWERS AND SUPPORT STRUCTURES (CATS) THAT REQUIRE A SPECIAL USE PERMIT**

July 14, 2020

In order to maintain the integrity of James City County's significant historic, natural, rural and scenic resources, to preserve its existing aesthetic quality and its landscape, to maintain its quality of life, and to protect its health, safety, general welfare, and property values, communications, antennas, towers and support structures (CATS) should be located and designed in a manner that minimizes their impacts to the maximum extent possible and minimizes their presence in areas where they would depart from existing and future patterns of development. To implement these goals, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors have adopted these performance standards for use in evaluating special use permit applications for CATS. While all of the standards support these goals, some may be more critical to the County's ability to achieve these goals on a case by case basis. Therefore, some standards may be weighed more heavily in any recommendation or decision on a special use permit, and cases that meet a majority of the standards may or may not be approved. The terms used in these standards shall have the same definition as those same terms in the Zoning Ordinance. In considering an application for a special use permit, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will consider the extent to which an application meets the following performance standards. When considering these applications, the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors will evaluate the proposal based on both the initial height of the proposed CATS and the maximum increase in the physical dimension of the proposed project permitted by Section 6409(a) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 and the FCC's implementing regulations.

A. Location and Design

1. CATS should be consistent with existing and future surrounding development and the Comprehensive Plan. While the Comprehensive Plan should be consulted to determine all applicable land use principles, goals, objectives, strategies, development standards, and other policies, certain policies in the Plan will frequently apply. Some of these include the following: (1) CATS should be compatible with the use, scale, height, size, design and character of surrounding existing and future uses, and such uses that are generally located in the land use designation in which the CATS would be located; and (2) CATS should be located and designed in a manner that protects the character of the County's Community Character Corridors and historic and scenic resource areas and their view sheds.
2. CATS should be located and designed consistent with the following criteria:

| <i>Proposed Location of CATS</i> | <i>Impact Criteria</i> |
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| <i>a. Within a residential zone or residential designation in the Comprehensive Plan</i> | <i>Use a camouflage design, a well buffered slickstick, Multi-Antenna system, or have a minimal intrusion on to residential areas, historic and scenic resources areas or roads in such areas, or community character corridors.</i> |
| <i>b. Near a historic or scenic resource area or on a Community Character Corridor</i> | <i>Use a camouflaged design or slicksticks that have minimal intrusion on to residential areas, historic and scenic resources areas or on community character corridors.</i> |

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| <p><i>c. Within a rural lands designation in the Comprehensive Plan</i></p> | <p><i>For areas designated rural lands in the Comprehensive Plan that are within 1,500 feet from the tower, use a well buffered monopole, a camouflaged design, or other design that has minimal intrusion on to residential areas or community character corridors.</i></p> <p><i>For rural lands more than 1,500 feet from the tower, no more than the upper 25% of the tower should be visible.</i></p> |
| <p><i>d. Within a commercial or in an industrial designation in the Comprehensive Plan</i></p> | <p><i>Use a camouflage design, well buffered monopole, or other design that has minimal intrusion on to residential areas, historic and scenic resources areas or roads in such areas or community character corridors.</i></p> |

Notes for the above table:

1. Exceptions to these criteria may be made on a case by case basis where the impact of the proposed CATS is only on the following areas: (1) An area designated residential on the Comprehensive Plan or zoning map which is not a logical extension of a residential subdivision or which is a transitional area between residential and nonresidential uses, (2) a golf course or a golf course and some combination of commercial areas, industrial areas or utility easements, provided the tower is located on the golf course property, or (3) a scenic easement.
2. A CATS will meet the minimal intrusion criteria if it is not visible off site above the tree line. Such CATS should only be visible off-site when viewed through surrounding trees that have shed their leaves.
3. Camouflaged towers having the design of a tree should be compatible in scale and species with surrounding natural trees or trees native to Eastern Virginia.
4. CATS should be less than 200 feet in height in order to avoid the need for lighting. Taller heights may be acceptable where views of the CATS from residential areas and public roads are very limited. At a minimum, CATS 200 feet or more in height should exceed the location standards listed above.
5. Towers should be freestanding and not supported with guy wires.
6. Any modification to CATS should adopt the same camouflaging and screening measures as the original structure.

B. Screening

1. CATS should be placed on a site in a manner that takes maximum advantage of existing trees, vegetation and structures so as to screen as much of the entire CATS as possible from view from adjacent properties and public roads. Access drives should be designed in a manner that provides no view of the CATS base or related facilities.



Figure 1: Example of a well screened slickstick with minimal intrusion

2. Towers should be screened from adjacent land uses and public roads as much as possible. Following buffer widths and standards should be met:
 - a. In or adjacent to residential or agricultural zoning districts, areas designated residential or rural lands on the Comprehensive Plan, historic or scenic resource areas or community character corridors, an undisturbed, completely wooded buffer consisting of existing mature trees at least 100-feet-wide should be provided around the tower.
 - b. In or adjacent to all other areas, at least a 50-foot-wide vegetative buffer consisting of a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees native to Eastern Virginia should be provided.