



**Marion County
Board of County Commissioners**

Growth Services

2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd.
Ocala, FL 34470
Phone: 352-438-2600
Fax: 352-438-2601

**PLANNING & ZONING SECTION
STAFF REPORT**

	P&ZC Date: 05/27/2026	BCC Date: 06/16/2026
Case Number:	260606SU	
CDP-AR:	PL SUP-000450-2026	
Type of Case:	Special Use Permit: Requesting permission to install one 125-foot-tall monopole-style telecommunication tower and support facility in a Mixed Residential (R-4) zone.	
Owner	Martin R. Helgerson Trust	
Applicant	Skyway Towers, LLC	
Street Address	No assigned address.	
Parcel Number	32651-000-01	
Property Size	±63.90 acres	
Future Land Use	Rural Land (RL)	
Zoning Classification	Mixed Residential (R-4) and Community Business (B-2)	
Overlay Zone/Scenic Area	Secondary Springs Protection Zone, Flood Prone Areas	
Staff Recommendation	Approval with Conditions	
P&ZC Recommendation	TBD	
Project Planner	Xinyi Cindy Chen	
Related Case(s)	N/A	

I. ITEM SUMMARY

Skyway Towers, LLC, on behalf of the property owner, Martin R. Helgerson Trust, has filed an application for a Special Use Permit (SUP) to request permission to install one 125-foot-tall monopole telecommunication tower and support facility in a Mixed Residential (R-4) zone. (See Attachment A) Figure 1 is an aerial photograph showing the general location of the subject property. The Parcel Identification Number associated with the property is 32651-000-01. The subject property has no assigned street address and is located off SE 24th Street, Silver Springs, FL 32179. The legal description is displayed in the survey included in the application (See Attachment A). The subject property is ±63.90 acres. The applicant is applying for a SUP because T-Mobile needs to collocate on a new monopole-style telecommunication tower in order to address a gap in wireless coverage in the Silver Springs area. Staff recommends approval because the requested use is compatible with the surrounding area, will not adversely affect the public interest, and is consistent with the Marion County Comprehensive Plan.

Figure 1
Aerial Photograph of Subject Property

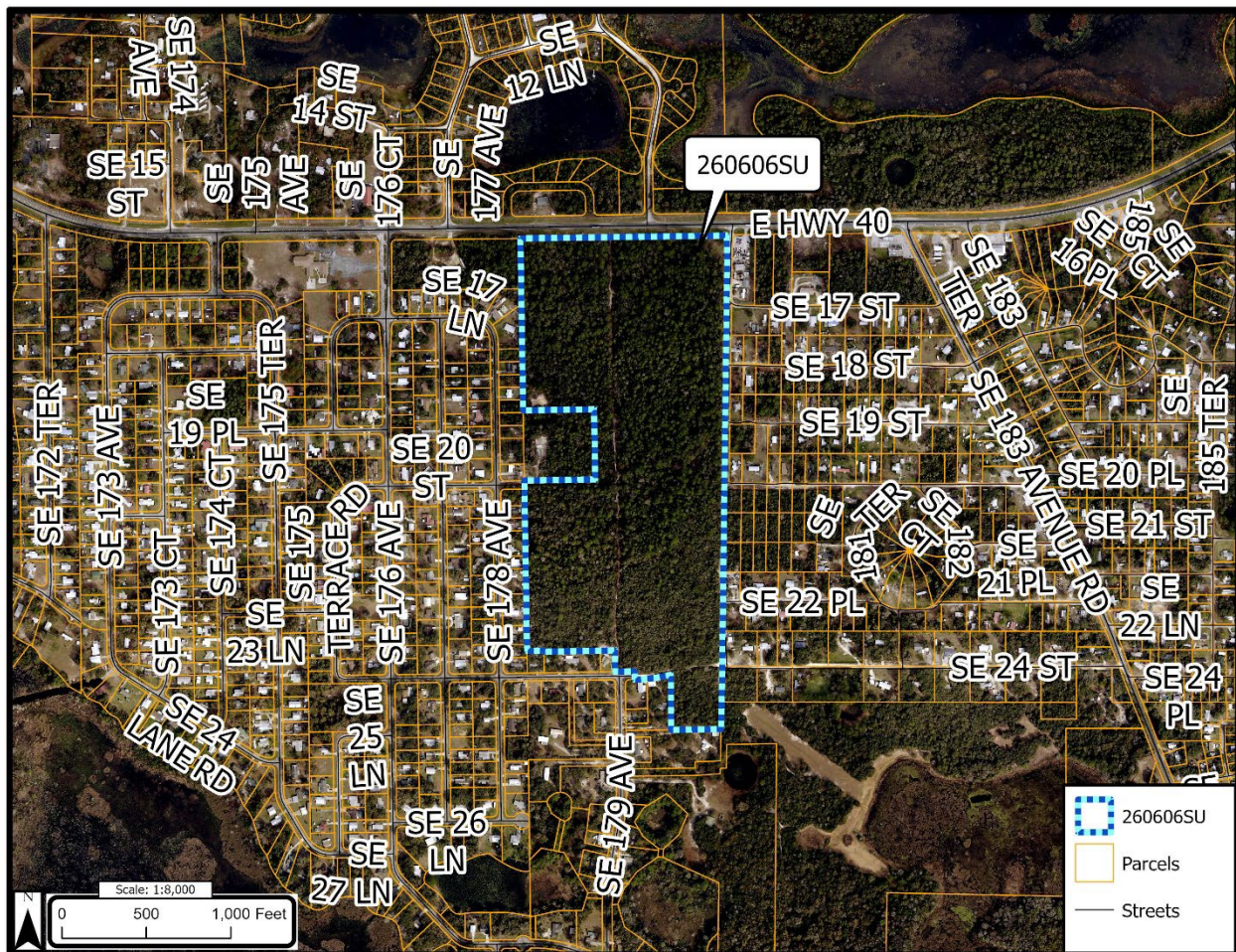
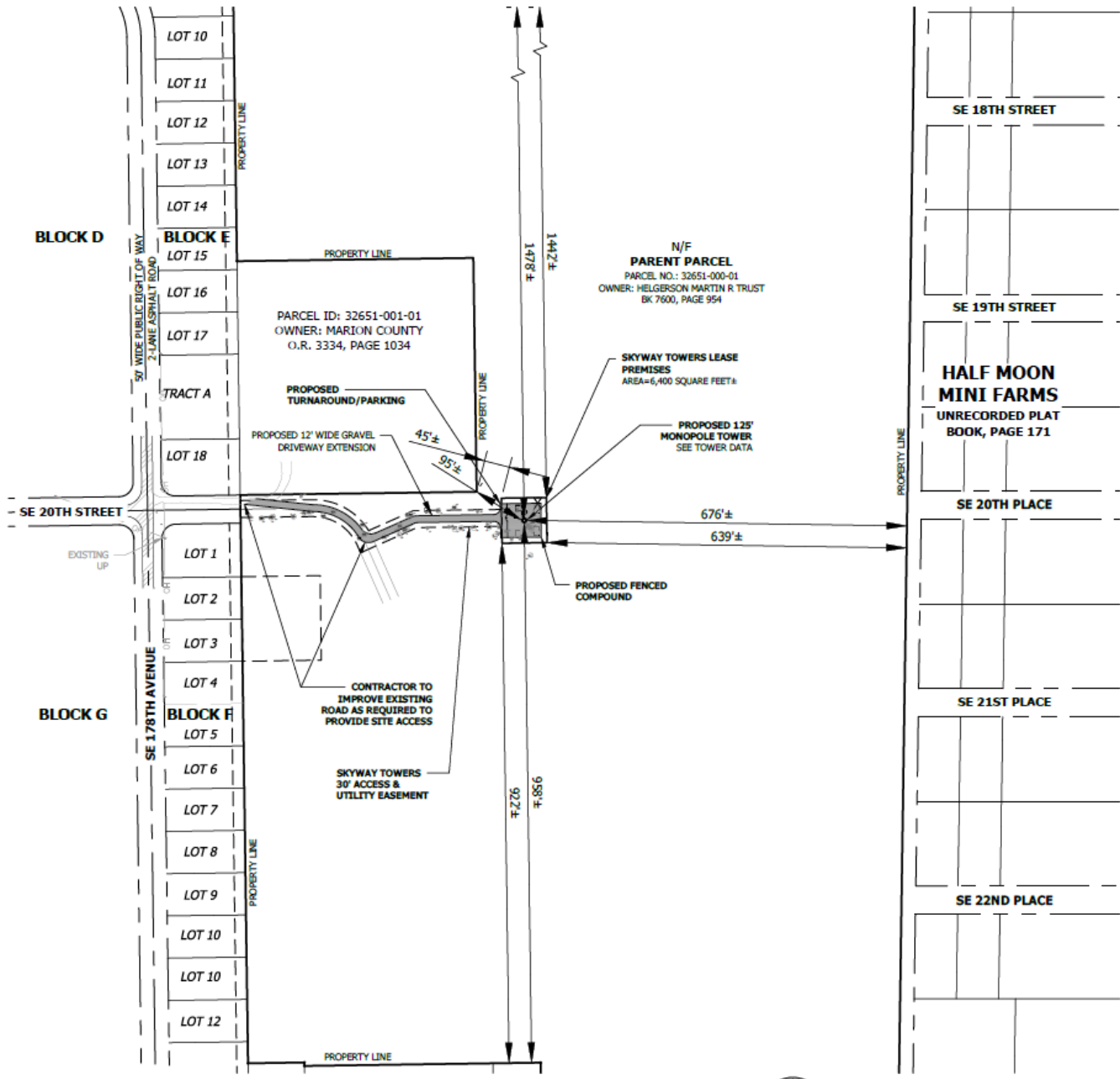


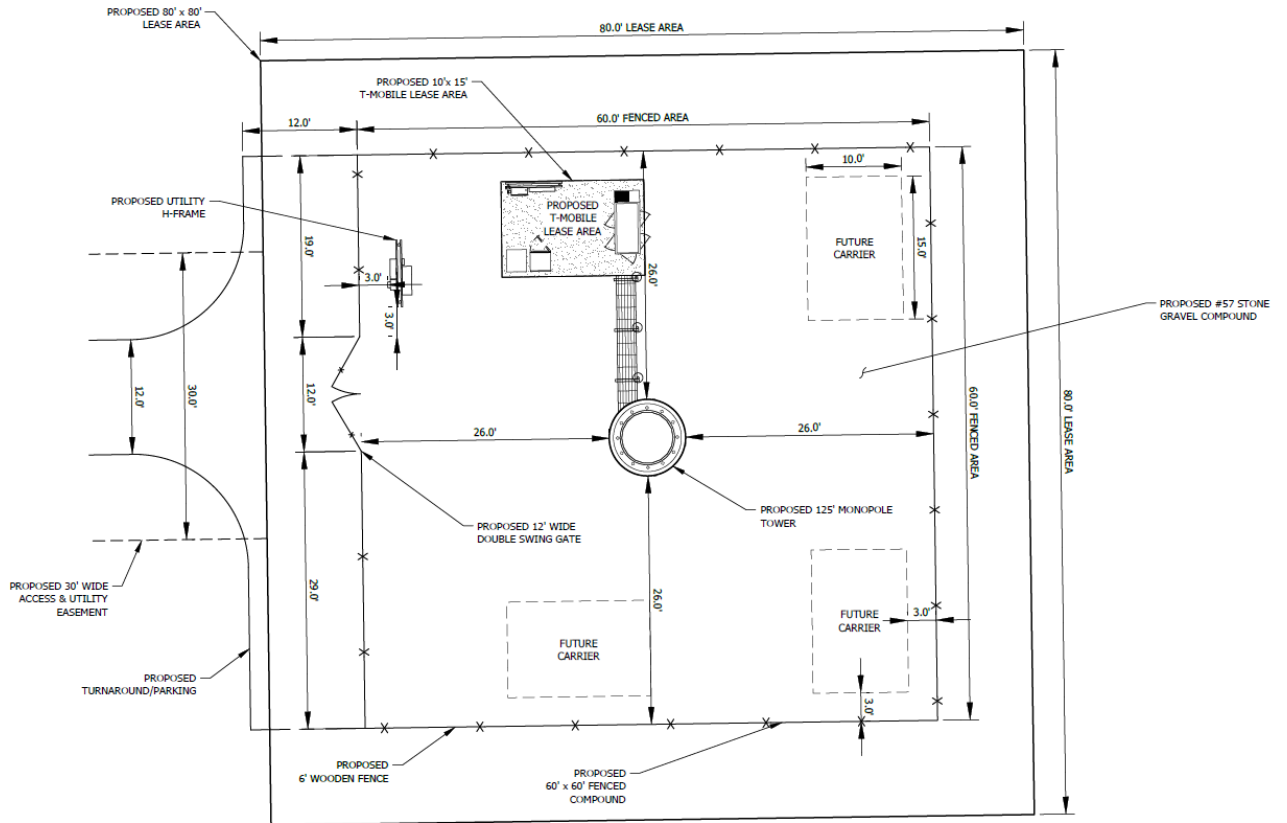
Figure 2 Conceptual Plan



1 OVERALL SITE PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 200'



Figure 3 Enlarged Compound Layout



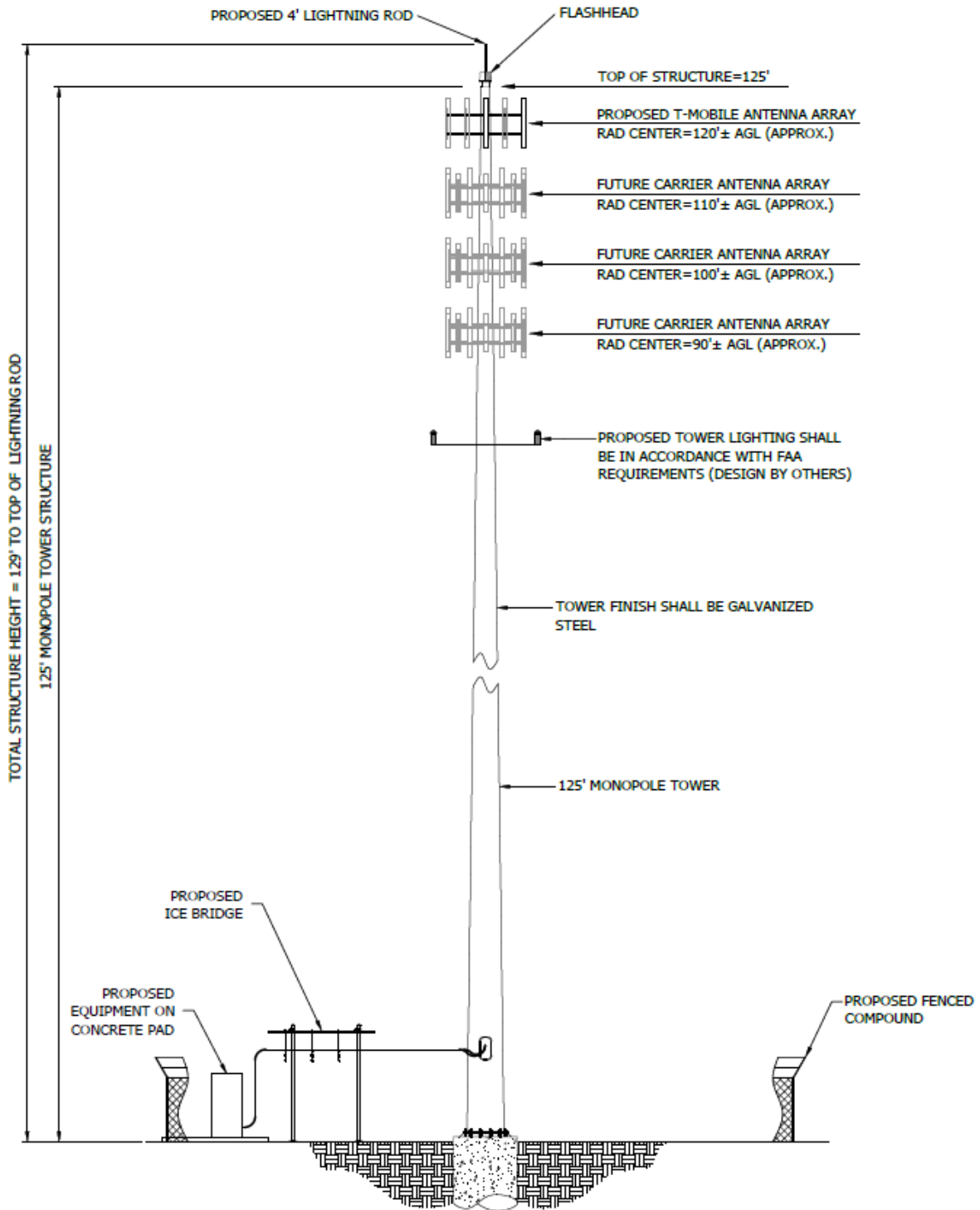
1 COMPOUND LAYOUT
SCALE: 0' 5' 10' 15' 20' 1"=10'



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Figure 4 Tower Elevation



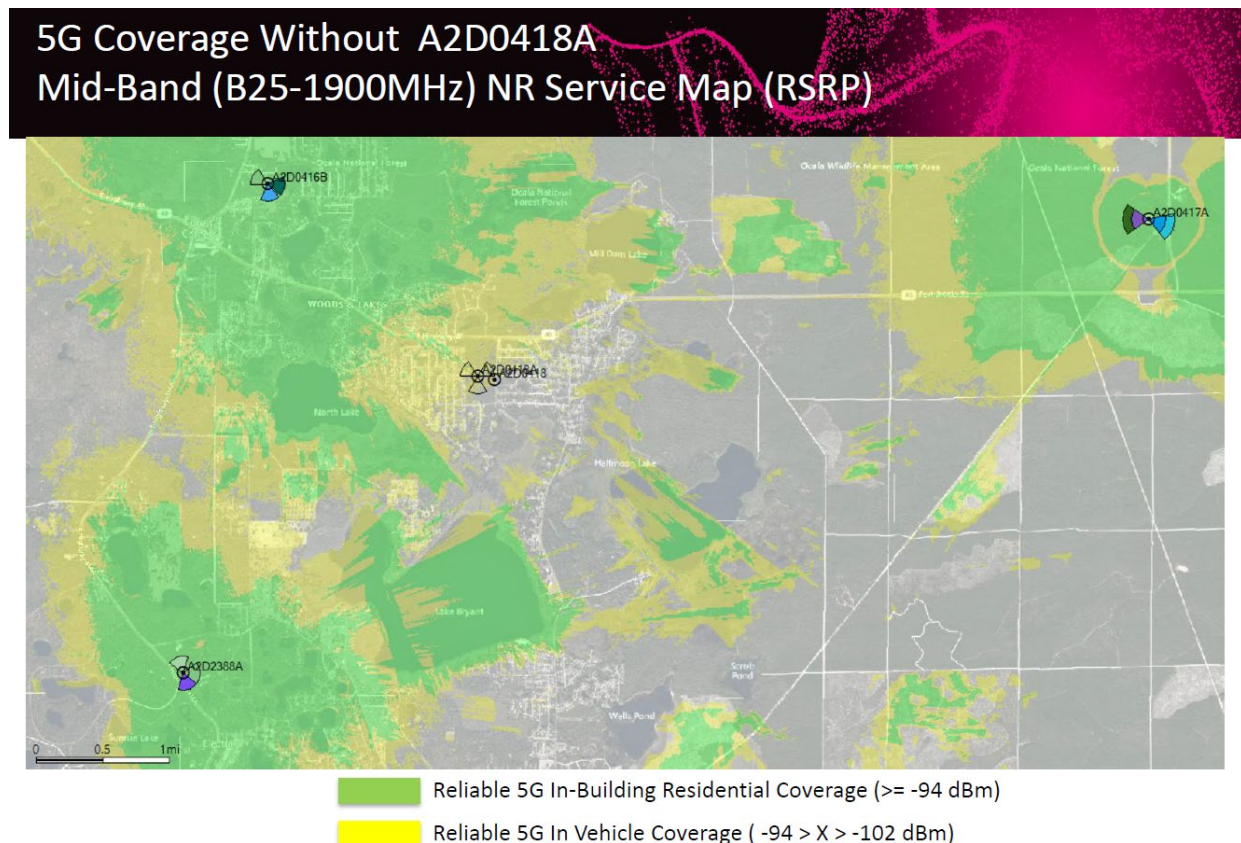
1 TOWER ELEVATION
SCALE: N.T.S.

Above in Figures 2 and 3 (Attachment A) is the conceptual plan and enlarged compound layout provided by the applicant. The proposed monopole and equipment compound will be located in the interior of the parent parcel, approximately midway between SE 20th Street and SE 24th Street, within a clearing surrounded by mature tree canopy on all sides. Skyway Towers' leased area encompasses 6,400 square feet (80' x 80'), including a 3,600-square-foot (60' x 60') equipment compound. The compound will be enclosed by a 6-foot opaque wood fence with a 12-foot double-swing access gate. The existing native tree canopy surrounding the compound will serve as the primary visual buffer in lieu of new landscape plantings, consistent with LDC Sec. 4.3.25.

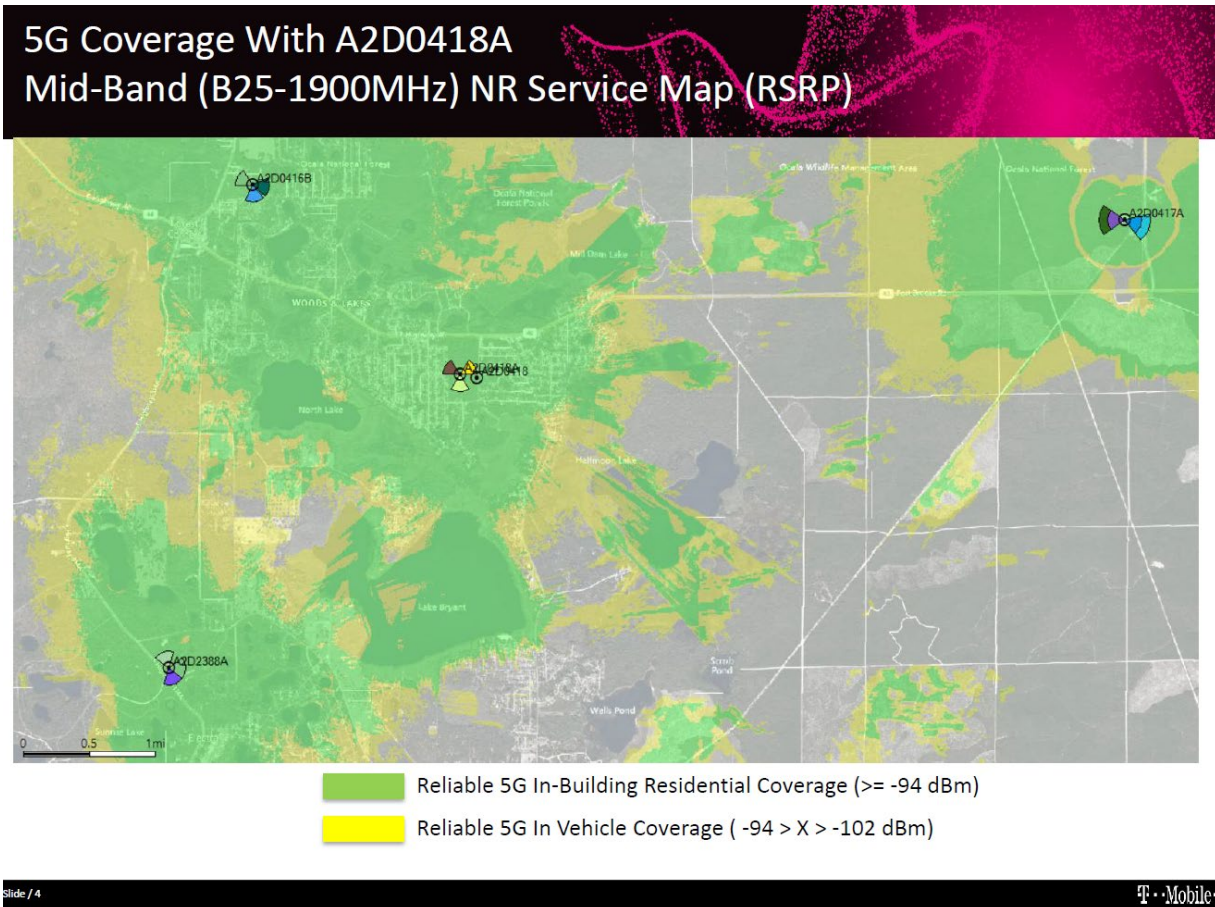
Figure 4 (Attachment A) shows the elevation provided by the applicant. The proposed telecommunications facility consists of a 125-foot-tall monopole-style tower constructed of galvanized steel with no guy wires. T-Mobile's antenna array will be located at a rad center of approximately 120 feet, with three additional future carrier positions at 90, 100, and 110 feet. The total structure height, including a 4-foot lightning rod, will be 129 feet. Tower lighting will be provided only if required by the FAA.

Figure 5 (Attachment A) shows the T-Mobile RF propagation maps comparing coverage without and with the proposed tower. The proposed tower addresses a gap in 5G mid-band (B25-1900 MHz) in-building and in-vehicle coverage in the Silver Springs area.

Figure 5.1
Propagation Map without Proposed Tower



**Figure 5.2
Propagation Map with Proposed Tower**



II. STAFF SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends **approval with conditions** specified in Section VII.B. of this Staff Report. The recommended conditions are being imposed to address compliance with the requirements in Land Development Code (LDC) Sections 2.8.2.D and 2.8.3.B.

III. NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.C, notice of public hearing was mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property on 05/08/2026. Consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.B, public notice was posted on the subject property on 05/07/2026 where site photos were also collected (Attachment C), and consistent with LDC Section 2.7.3.E, due public notice was published on the Marion County website on 05/11/2026. As of the date of the initial distribution of this staff report, no letter of support or opposition has been received. Evidence of the above-described public notices are on file with the Growth Services Department and are incorporated herein by reference.

IV. BACKGROUND/CHARACTER OF THE AREA

- A. *Existing site conditions.* The subject parcel is a large vacant, predominantly wooded tract. The site contains no existing structures. Figure 6 shows the existing condition of the property and Figure 7 shows the property is currently listed as Vacant by the Marion County Property Appraiser's Office. The surrounding uses are small-lot single-family residential (to the west, south, and east) and commercial uses along the E. Highway 40 (SR 40) corridor to the north.

Figure 6
Existing Conditions Map

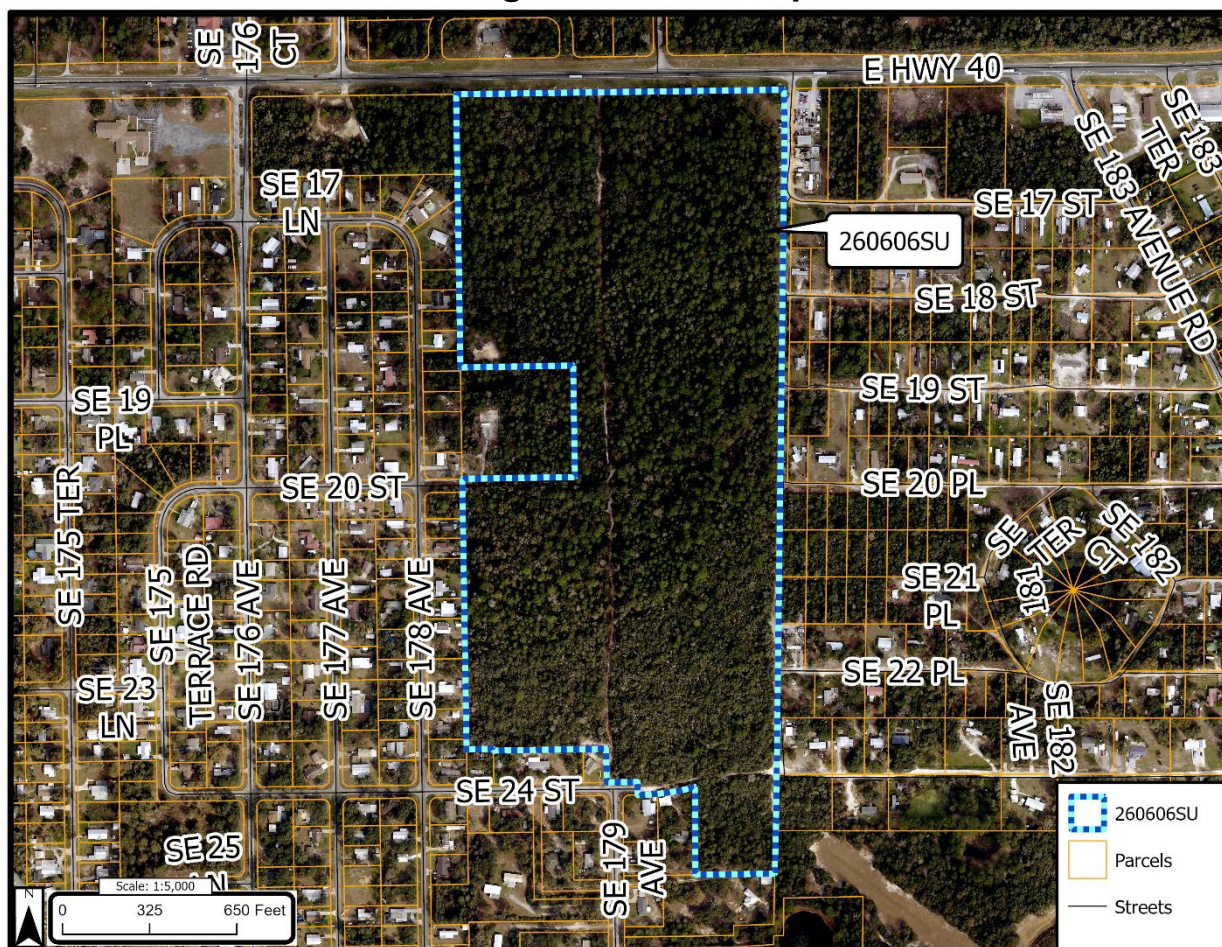


Figure 7
Existing Uses Map by Marion County Property Appraiser's Office

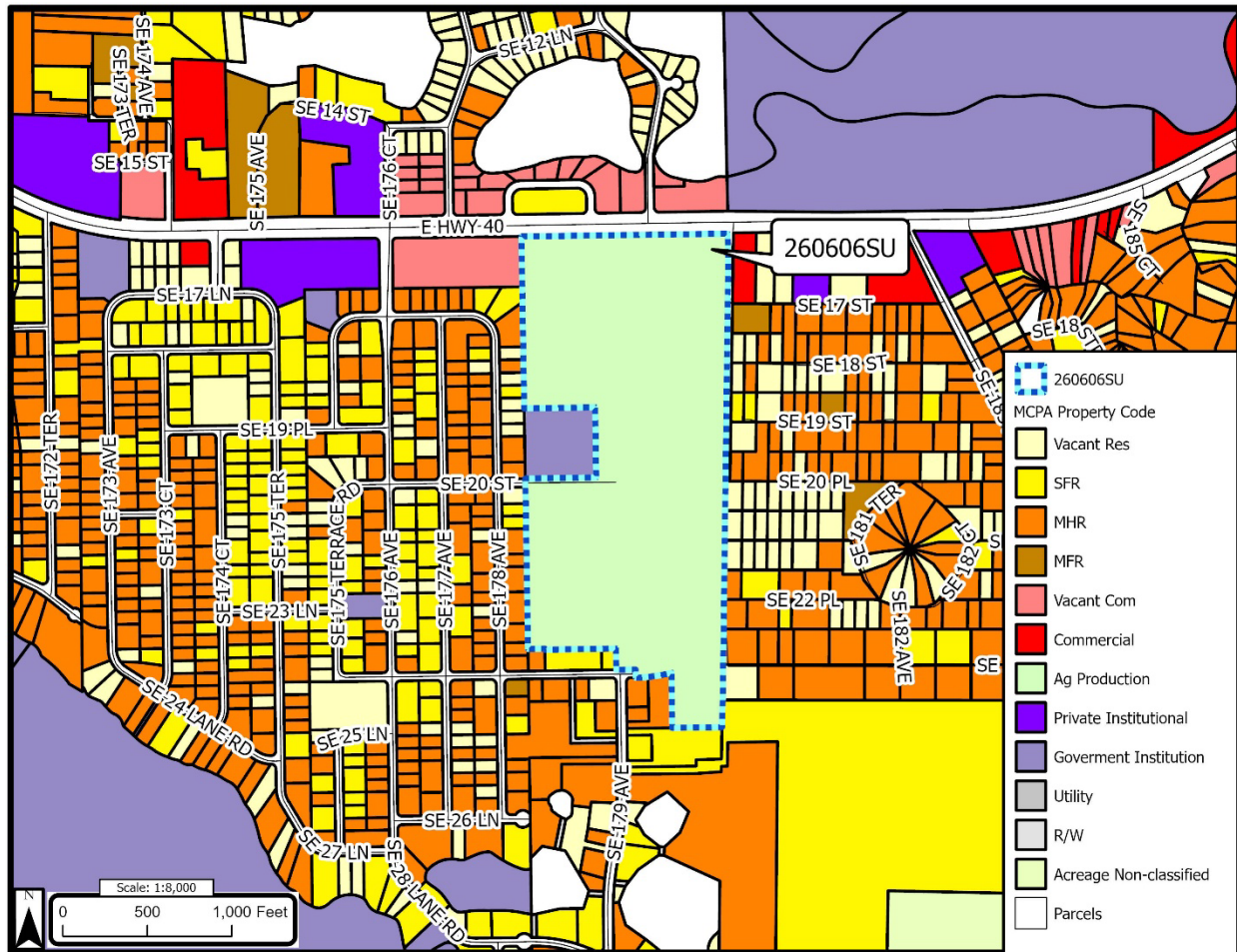
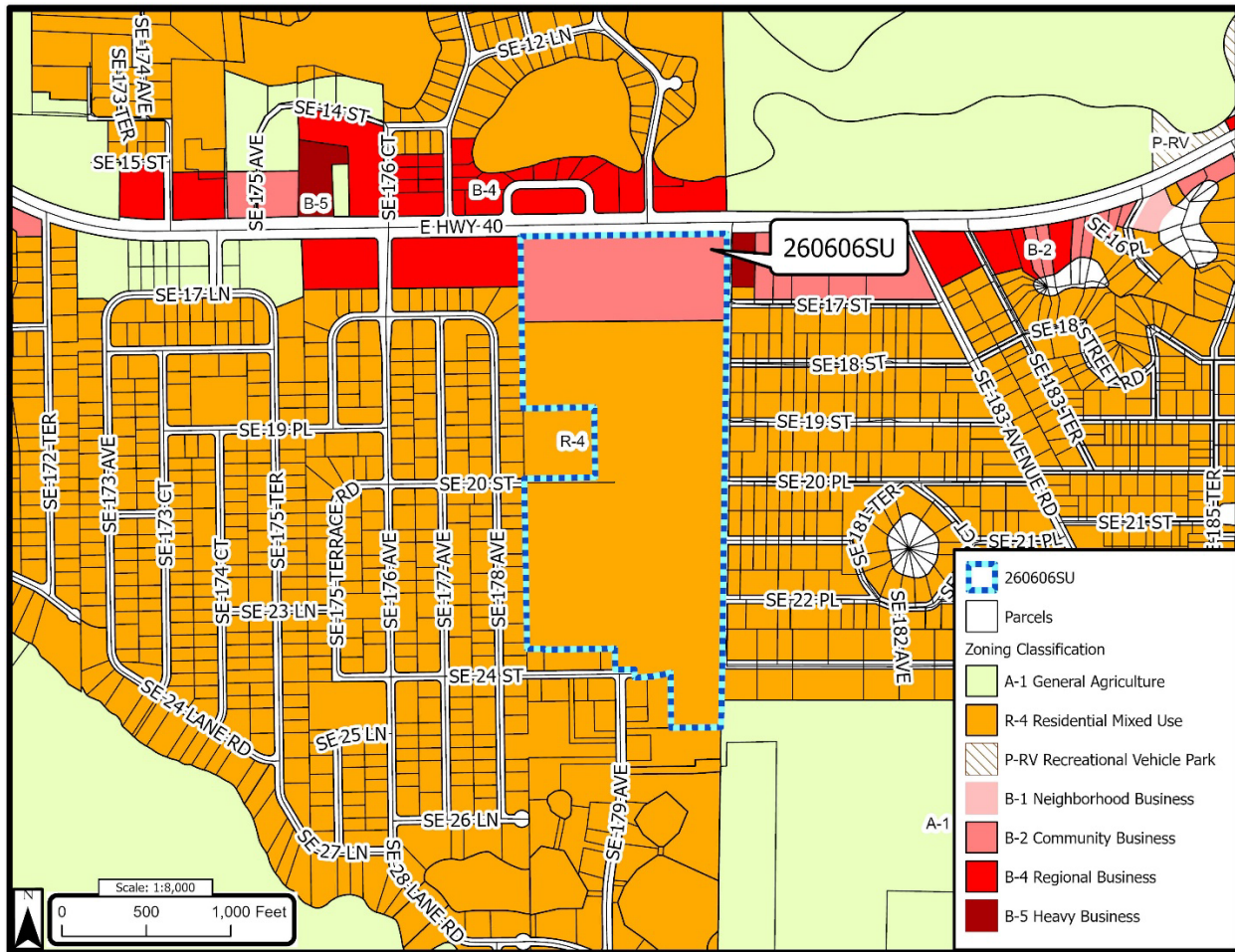


TABLE 1. ADJACENT PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
Direction	FLUMS	Zoning	Existing Use
Site	Rural Land (RL)	Mixed Residential (R-4) and Community Business (B-2)	Ag Production
North	ROW	ROW	ROW
South	Rural Land (RL) / ROW	Mixed Residential (R-4) / ROW	SFR, MHR, ROW
East	Rural Land (RL) / Medium Residential (MR) / Commercial (COM)	Mixed Residential (R-4) / Heavy Business (B-5) / General Agriculture (A-1) / ROW	SFR, MHR, MFR, Commercial, Vacant
West	Rural Land (RL) / Public (P)	Mixed Residential (R-4) Regional Business (B-4) / ROW	SFR, MHR, ROW, Gov, Vacant

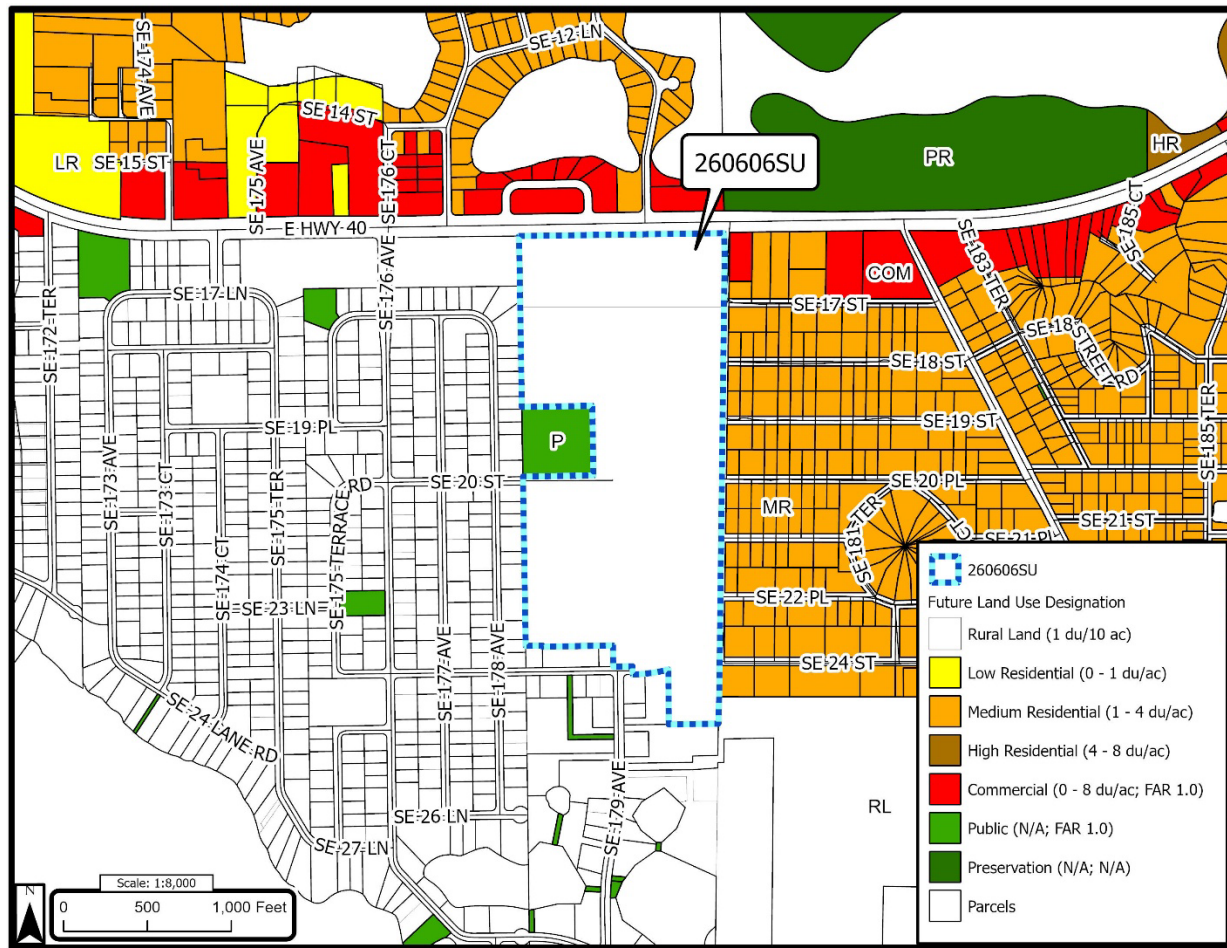
- B. *Zoning district map.* Figure 8 shows the subject property is zoned R-4, and the surrounding properties are predominantly zoned R-4, with B-2 and B-4 commercial zoning along the SR 40 corridor to the north. This is the property's initial zoning classification.

Figure 8
Zoning Classification



C. *FLUMS designation.* Figure 9 is the FLUMS and it shows that the subject property and abutting properties are designated Rural Land (RL). This is the property's initial land use designation.

Figure 9
FLUMS Designations



V. ANALYSIS

LDC Section 2.8.2.D provides that in making a recommendation to the Board, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall make a written finding the SUP addresses nine (9) specific requirements. LDC Section 2.8.3.B requires consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Staff's analysis of compliance with these ten (10) requirements are addressed below.

A. Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Policy 2.1.5: **Permitted & Special Uses** – The county shall identify permitted and special uses for each land use designation and zoning

classification, as further defined in the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning, and LDC.

Analysis: LDC Section 4.3.25 allows telecommunication towers in the R-4 zoning district by Special Use Permit. The proposed 125-foot monopole tower is within the permitted height range for towers requiring SUP approval in the R-4 district. The proposed tower and compound, subject to the conditions herein, shall be compliant with LDC requirements and is consistent with the Marion County Comprehensive Plan and FLUE Policy 2.1.5.

- B. *Provision for **ingress and egress** to property and proposed structures thereon with particular reference to automotive and pedestrian safety and convenience, traffic flow and control, and access in case of fire or catastrophe.*

Analysis: Access to the proposed tower compound will be provided via a 30-foot-wide non-exclusive access and utility easement running from SE 20th Street through the parent parcel to the compound gate, as depicted on the submitted site plan. SE 20th Street is a 50-foot-wide publicly maintained County right-of-way. A 12-foot-wide gravel driveway extension and turnaround/parking area are proposed at the compound gate. The access driveway shall be improved with a stabilized surface and designed with a turning radius sufficient to accommodate emergency vehicles, including fire apparatus, in accordance with Marion County Fire Rescue and applicable engineering standards. The proposed telecommunications facility is an unmanned use, and no pedestrian access is anticipated beyond authorized maintenance and service personnel. Due to the limited and infrequent nature of site visits (approximately one vehicle trip per month per carrier), the proposed development is not expected to generate measurable traffic impacts or affect traffic flow and control in the surrounding roadway network.

Based on the information provided, staff finds that the application provides adequate provisions for ingress and egress and **is consistent** with the applicable Special Use Permit criteria. Conditions below are imposed:

- The access driveway and utility easement shall be designed, constructed, and maintained in compliance with applicable Marion County engineering standards and Marion County Fire Rescue requirements, including emergency vehicle access and turning radius standards.
- Access shall be maintained for emergency uses at all times during construction and operation of the facility.

- C. *Provision for **off-street parking and loading areas**, where required, with particular attention to the items in (1) above and the economic, noise, glare, or odor effects of the SUP on adjoining properties and properties generally in the surrounding area.*

Analysis: The proposed telecommunications facility is an unmanned use, and site activity will be limited to periodic maintenance and service visits. Due to the infrequent nature of these visits, the proposed development is not expected to generate regular vehicular traffic or require designated off-street parking or loading

areas. No off-street parking spaces are proposed as part of the application. Maintenance and service vehicles will access the site via the approved access driveway and utility easement. According to the applicant, the tower will typically generate approximately one vehicle trip per month per carrier, with technicians generally accessing the site using pickup-sized vehicles. Maintenance and service vehicles will park within the access driveway at the gated entrance to the compound.

The proposed use will not generate noise, glare, odors, or other operational impacts that would adversely affect adjoining properties or the surrounding area. The monopole will be unlit and does not involve on-site generators or continuous mechanical operations. Staff concludes the application **is consistent** with the provision of off-street parking and loading areas.

- D. *Provisions for **refuse and service area**, with particular reference to the items in (1) and (2) above.*

Analysis: This facility is an unmanned site and will not generate solid waste. Routine maintenance does not require on-site storage of refuse or hazardous materials. Any temporary construction debris will be removed upon project completion. The application **is consistent** with this provision.

- E. *Provision for **utilities**, with reference to locations, availability, and compatibility.*

Analysis: The proposed facility is unmanned and does not require potable water or sanitary sewer services. Utility infrastructure associated with the tower will be limited to what is necessary to support telecommunications operations and will be located within the designated compound area. Staff concludes the application **is consistent** with the provision of utilities.

- F. *Provision for **screening and buffering** of dissimilar uses and of adjacent properties where necessary.*

Analysis: The applicant proposes to locate the monopole telecommunications tower and equipment compound in the interior of the parent parcel, surrounded by the site's dense native tree canopy. According to the application materials and survey, the proposed tower location is entirely enclosed by mature tree cover, which provides substantial natural visual buffering from all surrounding properties. The applicant states that the existing tree canopy on and around the site significantly limits ground-level line-of-sight visibility of the proposed tower from neighboring properties and public roadways, and requests to utilize this existing vegetation in lieu of new landscape plantings per LDC Sec. 4.3.25.

The proposed equipment compound will be enclosed by a 6-foot opaque wood fence with a lockable 12-foot-wide double-swing access gate, which will provide visual screening and security. The applicant proposes to utilize existing native vegetation as the primary landscape buffer around the compound perimeter, consistent with LDC Sec. 4.3.25(E)(1)(c)(4).

To maintain the existing natural trees and proposed landscaping buffer, staff recommend the following conditions:

- Existing native vegetation within 50 feet of the subject property's boundaries shall be preserved and maintained, except where clearing is necessary for the approved access road and utility easement corridor, subject to applicable permitting requirements.
- The landscape buffer shall be installed and maintained around the perimeter of the equipment compound in accordance with Marion County Land Development Code Sec. 4.3.25 Telecommunication Towers and Antennas E.(1)(c)(4) Landscapes and Buffers.

G. *Provision for **signs**, if any, and exterior lighting with consideration given to glare, traffic safety, economic effects, and compatibility and harmony with properties in the surrounding area.*

Analysis: The applicant proposes limited on-site signage consisting only of site identification signage and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) required safety placards, as shown on the submitted plans (Attachment A). No advertising or additional signage is proposed. No exterior lighting is proposed for the tower or equipment compound beyond what may be required by the FAA or applicable safety regulations. Tower lighting, if required by the FAA, will comply with all applicable federal requirements. Due to the limited nature of the proposed signage and the absence of unnecessary exterior lighting, the proposed development is not expected to create glare, adversely affect traffic safety, or result in negative economic impacts on adjoining properties. The proposed signage and lighting approach is compatible with the surrounding residential area and maintains harmony with adjacent properties. Based on the information provided by the applicant, staff finds that the request is consistent with the Special Use Permit criteria related to signage and exterior lighting.

- A photometric plan shall be provided during the Development Review Phase if additional lighting is proposed to be added to the site.

H. *Provision for **required yards and other green space**.*

Analysis: The existing tree lines along the borders to the South, West, and East of the property will be maintained as buffering. A condition related to this issue has already been imposed in section F.

I. *Provision for general **compatibility** with adjacent properties and other properties in the surrounding area.*

Analysis: Compatibility is defined as a condition in which land uses or conditions can coexist in relative proximity to each other in a stable fashion over time such that no use or condition is unduly negatively impacted directly or indirectly by another use or condition. Figure 1 is an aerial photograph displaying existing and surrounding properties.

Additionally, Table 2 below shows the required separations as provided in LDC Sec. 4.3.25. Separations from the cell tower relative to the surrounding area meet the LDC requirement.

A waiver is required from the separate standard requiring a tower to be located at least 100% of its height (125 feet) from any residentially-zoned property boundary. The subject parcel and the immediately adjacent Marion County-owned parcel (Parcel ID 32651-001-01) are both zoned R-4. Due to the irregular configuration of the subject parcel, which wraps around a County-owned 'pocket' parcel, the proposed tower is located approximately 3/4 of required distance, which is about 95 feet from the nearest corner of that parcel. A waiver request for relief from the 100% tower-height separation standard from the adjacent Marion County owned parcel shall be submitted to the Development Review Committee (DRC) for approval, pursuant to LDC Section 4.3.25. DRC approval of said waiver is required prior to issuance of any development plan or building permit for the tower.

Staff finds the waiver request justified for the following reasons: (1) the adjacent R-4 parcel is owned by Marion County and is utilized as a utility facility, not for residential purposes; (2) the irregular parcel geometry creates a condition where strict compliance is not physically achievable given the required interior placement of the tower; and (3) the submitted fall zone certification confirms that the tower, in the event of structural failure, would remain entirely within the leased premises, well within the subject parcel's boundaries, thus no risk to the adjacent parcel or its users.

TABLE 2. CELL TOWER SEPARATIONS				
Separation Type	North	South	East	West
Required (Property Lines)	100% of tower height to adjacent ROW = 125'	100% of tower height to adjacent residential property= 125'	100% of tower height to adjacent residential property= 125'	100% of tower height to adjacent residential property= 125'
Required (Residences)	150% of tower height = 143.75'	150% of tower height = 143.75'	150% of tower height = 143.75'	150% of tower height = 143.75'
Provided	1704'	948'	737'	513'

Based on the given information, staff concludes that the proposed use is compatible with the surrounding area.

- J. *Provision for meeting any **special requirements** required by the site analysis for the particular use involved.*

Analysis: Staff notes that unlike a variance, which runs with the land and is recorded in the public records, a special use permit is not automatically recorded. As a result, a subsequent owner may not have constructive notice of the requirements. Staff has therefore recommended a condition requiring that any

transfer of ownership or operational control of the tower be reported to the County within 30 days, and that successor entities assume all SUP obligations.

- The Special Use Permit is limited to one monopole tower as indicated in the submitted application.
- A site plan approval is required before construction of the tower and compound.
- The Special Use Permit runs with Skyway Towers LLC and not the property.
- Construction of the telecommunications tower shall be complete, or subject to an issued unexpired building permit, within two (2) years after the date of the approval of this Special Use Permit. If the tower is not completed and not subject to an unexpired building permit within two (2) years, the Special Use Permit shall terminate.

Based on the above findings, Staff concludes the SUP is consistent with LDC Sections 4.3.25 and provided conditions to address the ten (10) requirements are imposed.

VI. ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, adopt the findings and conclusions contained herein, and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to **DENY** the special use permit application.
- B. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a proposed Ordinance to **APPROVE AS CONDITIONED** the special use permit.
- C. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, amend the findings and conclusions contained herein so as to support the approval of the Ordinance with amended conditions, and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a proposed Ordinance to **APPROVE WITH AMENDED CONDITIONS** the special use permit.
- D. Enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing, identify any additional data and analysis needed to support a recommendation on the proposed Ordinance, and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to **TABLE** the application for up to two months in order to provide the identified data and analysis needed to make an informed recommendation on the proposed Ordinance.

VII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- A. Staff recommends the Planning and Zoning Commission enter into the record the Staff Report and all other competent substantial evidence presented at the hearing and make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a proposed Ordinance to **APPROVE AS CONDITIONED** the special use permit.
- B. To address compliance with LDC Sections 2.8.2.D and 2.8.3.B, the following conditions are imposed:
1. The Special Use Permit is limited to one monopole tower as indicated in the submitted application.
 2. The site shall be developed and operated consistent with the submitted conceptual plan and the conditions as provided with this approval.
 3. A site plan approval is required before construction of the tower and compound.
 4. The access driveway and utility easement shall be designed, constructed, and maintained in compliance with applicable Marion County engineering standards and Marion County Fire Rescue requirements, including emergency vehicle access and turning radius standards.
 5. Access shall be maintained for emergency uses at all times during construction and operation of the facility.
 6. Existing native vegetation within 50 feet of the subject property's boundaries shall be preserved and maintained, except where clearing is necessary for the approved access road and utility easement corridor, subject to applicable permitting requirements.
 7. The landscape buffer shall be installed and maintained around the perimeter of the equipment compound in accordance with Marion County Land Development Code Sec. 4.3.25 Telecommunication Towers and Antennas E.(1)(c)(4) Landscapes and Buffers.
 8. A photometric plan shall be provided during the Development Review Phase if additional lighting is proposed to be added to the site.
 9. The Special Use Permit runs with Skyway Towers LLC and not the property.
 10. Construction of the telecommunications tower shall be complete, or subject to an issued unexpired building permit, within two (2) years after the date of the approval of this Special Use Permit. If the tower is not completed and not subject to an unexpired building permit within two (2) years, the Special Use Permit shall terminate.

VIII. PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

To be determined.

IX. BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' ACTION

To be determined.

X. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- A. SUP application.
- B. DRC Comments.
- C. Site Photos