

**SHELBY COUNTY ZONING REGULATIONS**  
**ARTICLE XVIII ◊ TELECOMMUNICATION TOWERS**

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**SECTION 1800 - INTENT**

In as much as the Congress of the United States enacted the Telecommunications Act of 1996, to deregulate the telecommunications industry by providing a more competitive environment for wired and wireless telecommunications. Kentucky Legislature initially passed House Bill 168, and later enacted House Bill 270, to allow local governments which have adopted planning and zoning regulations to plan for and regulate the siting of cellular antenna towers. The intent of this Article of the Zoning Regulations is to provide for cellular telecommunication towers in appropriate locations throughout the community at sites which provide adequate cellular telecommunication service while protecting the public, preserving the character and value of surrounding property, and protecting the view from residential areas.

**SECTION 1801 – APPLICABILITY**

This Article of the Zoning Regulations shall apply to all cellular telecommunication towers located, or to be located, within the jurisdiction of Shelby County, the city of Shelbyville, and the city of Simpsonville.

**SECTION 1802 – DEFINITIONS**

For the purposes of this Article, the following definitions shall apply:

1. Alternative Cellular Antenna Tower – Any facility, such as a clock or bell tower; steeple; light pole; or other similar alternative-design mounting structure that accommodates, minimizes, camouflages or conceals the presence of a cellular

antenna or cellular antenna tower and that is constructed (or reconstructed) primarily for the purpose of accommodating a cellular antenna or cellular antenna tower.

2. Antenna or Related Equipment – Transmitting, receiving, or other equipment used to support cellular telecommunications services or personal communications services.
3. Cellular Antenna Tower – A tower constructed for, or an existing building or facility that has been adapted for, the location of transmission or related equipment to be used in the provision of cellular telecommunications services or personal communications services.
4. Cellular Antenna Tower Height – The distance from the anchored base of the tower, whether on the top of another building or at grade, to the highest point of the antenna structure.
5. Cellular Equipment Cabinet – A cabinet designed to house radio equipment, similar in size to a traffic signal cabinet, not designed for human occupancy. Any maintenance to radio equipment can only be done from outside the cabinet, as opposed to an alternative larger sized equipment shelter that can be totally accessed by service personnel.
6. Cellular Telecommunications Facility – The lot, tract, or parcel of land that contains the cellular antenna tower, its supporting structure, any accessory building, parking, and any other uses or structures that are associated with the transmission facility.
7. Cellular Telecommunications Service – A retail telecommunications service that uses radio signals transmitted through cell sites and mobile switching stations.
8. Cellular Telephone Transmitting Facility, Temporary – Any system of wires, poles, rods, reflecting disks, or similar devices used for the transmission or reception of electromagnetic waves, not meeting the definition of a “structure” as defined by this Zoning Regulation.
9. Cellular Tower Height-To-Yard Ratio – For the purposes of this Article a cellular tower height-to-yard ratio shall be the relationship of the height of the tower to the lot line, the boundary of the long-term lease area, or to the nearest building intended for human habitation, whichever is greater, whether or not that building is located on the lot with the tower and as further specified in these regulations.
10. Co-Location – Locating two (2) or more carrier’s transmission antennae or related equipment on the same cellular antenna tower.
11. Search Ring – The necessary search area within which a site for a cellular antenna tower should, pursuant to radio frequency requirements, be located.

12. Uniform Application – The application submitted to the Planning Commission by an applicant, complete and meeting all requirements as provided in KRS 100.9865, for the construction of a cellular antenna tower for cellular telecommunications services or personal communications services. Completion of a uniform application shall not be required for temporary cellular antennae that are deployed during construction of permanent facilities; used in the event of emergency situations where infrastructure has been damaged; or in connection with temporary high usage situations, such as sporting events.

### **SECTION 1803 – WHERE PERMITTED**

To the largest extent feasible, applicants are encouraged to consider properties owned by the local government for the location of cellular towers, if such properties are appropriate in view of surrounding land uses. Whenever possible, cellular antenna towers, whether temporary or permanent, shall be sited at locations that minimize their adverse effect on residential uses in the immediate area. Only when no other adequate site is available shall a cellular antenna tower be permitted in a residential zone, unless located on a property not used or intended for residential purposes. In accordance with the procedures established by this Article, cellular antenna towers may be permitted in any zone when approved by the Planning Commission, with the following exceptions:

1. No cellular antenna tower, accessory structure or cabinet shall be permitted in a designated flood hazard area as shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) as being the 100-year floodplain. Any cellular tower accessory structure must be located at least twenty-five (25) feet outside of a designated flood hazard area. However, the tower itself, the equipment cabinet, as defined herein, as well as the fence that surrounds the tower and cabinet, may be located within the 25-foot buffer area.
2. No cellular antenna tower shall be permitted in or within 1,200 feet of a local historic district, or within 1,200 feet of a National Register District or Property, unless the Planning Commission, in addition to the requirements of Section 1808, subsection 3, finds that no other reasonable site within the search ring is available; and unless it can be determined that the location of a cellular tower will be beneficial to the historic property or district where it is proposed. Every means feasible shall be used to conceal the tower or antenna so that it is reasonable to discern its existence.

### **SECTION 1804 – DESIGN STANDARDS**

The following design standards shall apply to all cellular antenna towers:

1. Cellular antenna towers shall not be lighted, except as required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
2. The arrangement of the tower and its accessory structures on the lot or site shall provide adequately for the servicing of the facilities, including safe access points from streets and roads.

3. No signs shall be located on the cellular antenna tower; on the fence surrounding the antenna; or on any buildings accessory to the cellular antenna tower, with the exception of signs providing information or instructions relating to warnings, safety, emergencies and the like.
4. Cellular antenna towers located in non-residential zones shall have a height-to-yard ratio of not less than 3:1, unless the owners of the adjoining properties agree or the adjoining properties fail to object to a height-to-yard ratio which is less. The Planning Commission will have the authority to reduce the height-to-yard ratio in cases of demonstrated hardship and only when that location is essential for service.
5. The tower shall be constructed to withstand a minimum wind speed with  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of ice or the basic wind speed, and seismic load capacity standards as determined by Kentucky Building Code. The tower design shall be certified by a registered engineer, licensed in the State of Kentucky.
6. The location of the cellular antenna tower shall not interfere with the traffic circulation, access, storm drainage, required landscaping or other requirements of the Zoning Regulations, and shall not reduce the number of parking spaces below what is otherwise required.
7. All accessory structures associated with the cellular antenna tower shall be located as close to the antenna tower as possible and at least twenty-five (25) feet from any adjoining property in a residential zone or any property used for residential purposes. The Commission shall have the power to reduce the 25-foot setback in cases of demonstrated hardship or where adequate natural screening exists on the cell tower lot itself.
8. An amended development plan shall be filed for those sites that were subject to a previous development plan. Such amended plans shall be filed with the Planning Commission within thirty (30) days of Planning Commission approval of a cellular tower, and shall be subject to the procedures and requirements of a development plan as set forth in Article XIII.
9. A security fence, not less than eight (8) feet in height, shall enclose the base of the cellular antenna tower. In addition, the perimeter of the facility shall be bounded on all sides by a Type "A" Buffer Zone, Area "1" or five (5) feet densely planted buffer easement as set forth in Article XV, Section 1509 of these regulations. The Planning Commission shall have the authority to waive or modify the landscape requirements if adequate natural screening already exists on the property.
10. Monopole and alternative design cellular antenna towers shall be permitted in all zones. Lattice towers and guyed towers may only be located in Professional Office zones; Interchange zones; industrial zones; and agricultural zones. In the agricultural zone, lattice and guyed towers shall only be permitted when more

than 250' from all existing residences.

11. Co-location shall be encouraged in each site considered by the Planning Commission. Each cellular antenna tower should be of sufficient height, and the site should be of sufficient size, to accommodate a minimum of three (3) antenna users, except in cases of alternative tower design. Where co-location is not an option, innovative (alternative) design, as described in Section 1802, shall be encouraged and will require that only staff review be provided to the Planning Commission, provided it meets the setback and screening requirements as set forth in Section 1804 and the criteria in Section 1808 (sub-section 3). A bond or other acceptable surety will be required, as described in Section 1811 herein below.
12. In cases where a cellular antenna tower or antenna is located on a portion of a property whose "subdivision" is based on a long-term lease, the lease area shall not take the parent tract below the minimum lot requirement for the zone in which it located.
13. Prior to construction and/or location of a cellular antenna or tower, whether on an existing structure or on ground level, any applicable permits must be obtained from the Planning Commission and the local building inspection department for the jurisdiction the cellular antenna or tower is being located.

#### **SECTION 1805 – MITIGATING DESIGN STANDARDS FOR CELLULAR ANTENNA TOWERS IN RESIDENTIAL OR AGRICULTURAL ZONES**

When no adequate alternate site for a cellular antenna tower is available, a site in a residential or an agricultural zone may be permitted. The Planning Commission shall consider the following mitigating design standards and may reduce or modify these standards in cases where it can be demonstrated that there is a hardship:

1. The Planning Commission shall have the power to impose additional landscaping requirements, which may include plantings, trees, and fencing designed to complement the character of the landscaping in the surrounding residential area.
2. Design and materials to be used in the accessory building or buildings may be required to be submitted to the Planning Commission for review and approval.
3. Asphalt or other hard-surface paving shall be provided for driveways and parking.
4. A 1:1 height-to-yard ratio shall be required. A reduction in the height-to-yard ratio may be permitted if no other location for the tower can be found.
5. Monopole or alternative tower design shall be used in any residential zone; and acceptable colors but not limited to, such as light gray or light blue, shall be used to minimize any negative visual impact the tower or antenna may have on adjoining properties. The tower must be maintained on a regular basis by the owner of the facility in order to ensure that it continues to have minimal visual

impact on the surrounding area.

## **SECTION 1806 – TEMPORARY CELLULAR ANTENNA TOWERS**

Temporary cellular antenna towers, which shall be subject to approval by the Planning Commission, shall be limited to a time period of no more than one (1) year from the date the zoning permit is issued by the Planning Commission, shall be subject to the same screening requirements (other than plant material) as a permanent tower, and shall be limited to a height of seventy (70) feet. Removal of the security fence when the tower and any associated accessory structures are dismantled or removed from the site shall be the responsibility of the owner of the tower and shall be accomplished within ninety (90) days of the removal of the tower. Temporary transmitting facilities shall be permitted by right where permanent cellular towers and antennae have been approved, until permanent construction is completed. The Planning Commission shall have the power to require a bond, or other appropriate alternative surety in order to ensure the safe removal of the tower and any accessory structures.

## **SECTION 1807 – UNIFORM APPLICATION FOR A CELLULAR ANTENNA TOWER**

Any applicant that proposes to construct a cellular antenna tower for cellular telecommunications services or personal communications services within Shelby County, city of Shelbyville, or the city of Simpsonville must submit a completed uniform application to the Planning Commission, as mandated by KRS 100.9865. A copy of the requirements for submission of a uniform application is on file and may be obtained from the Planning Commission. Unless waived by the applicant, all information contained in the uniform application and any updates, except for information that specifically identifies the proposed location of the cellular antenna tower then being reviewed, shall be deemed confidential and proprietary. In accordance with KRS 100.987, the Planning Commission may not approve public requests for the inspection of this information, whether submitted under Kentucky's Open Records Act or otherwise, except when ordered to release the information by a court of competent jurisdiction or when the applicant has provided a written waiver of confidentiality. In addition, the applicant shall submit the following information:

1. Efforts of the applicant to locate on an existing structure by identifying:
  - a. The location of the towers or other structures (including buildings) located within the search ring for the subject facility and which are capable of its support.
  - b. Reasons why the co-location was unsuccessful in each instance. Such reasons shall be supported by documentation and shall relate to the following criteria:
    - 1) The existing towers or facilities are not of sufficient height to meet the applicant's engineering standards.
    - 2) The existing towers or facilities do not have sufficient structural

strength to support the applicant's proposed antenna or related equipment.

- 3) The physical constraints of the site preclude co-location.
- 4) The applicant's proposed equipment would cause frequency interference with other existing or proposed equipment on the tower or facility; or the existing or proposed equipment on the tower or facility would cause frequency interference with the applicant's planned equipment, which cannot reasonably be prevented.
- 5) The owner of the existing tower or facility is unwilling to entertain a co-location proposal.

2. A statement of the relationship of the cellular antenna tower location to the adopted Comprehensive Plan of Shelby County.

## **SECTION 1808 – PLANNING COMMISSION PROCEDURE**

Upon filing of the uniform application, the Planning Commission shall charge the applicant a fee as established by the Triple S Planning Commission. The Commission shall have sixty (60) days to complete its review of the request for a cellular antenna tower and act on the request. If an application does not contain all of the information as required by KRS 100.9865, it will be considered incomplete and shall not be accepted as "filed." The 60-day time limit for review will not begin until the application has been completed and filed in accordance with the requirements of the uniform application. In situations where it can be demonstrated by the applicant that some portions of the uniform application are unreasonable for the location and construction of a cellular antenna tower, the Planning staff (or other authorized representative of the Planning Commission) may waive such requirements, and the application shall be considered complete. However, the applicant must first provide a written request, including a justification of the waiver, before it can be considered by the staff. Once it has been determined that portions of the uniform application may be waived, the application shall be considered complete as of the date that determination is made. The requisite 60-day time period for review and/or final action on the application will begin at that time.

1. **NOTICE** – The Planning Commission shall give notice of the time, date and place of the public meeting by one publication in the newspaper of highest circulation in Shelby County, not earlier than 21 days, nor later than 7 days before the public hearing. In addition, notice of the hearing shall be given by the posting of a sign on the proposed site by the applicant. The sign shall be constructed of durable material; shall not be less than two (2) feet by four (4) feet; shall state "Cellular Antenna Tower" in bold letters not less than three (3) inches in height; shall state the time, place and location of the public meeting and the phone number of the Triple S Planning Commission in letters at least one (1) inch in height. The sign shall be posted on the property at a location visible from the highest traffic volume roadway abutting the property not more than three

days after the filing of the application and shall be maintained until the meeting date. The applicant shall provide an affidavit to the Planning Commission at the hearing, stating that the sign was posted as required and has been maintained on the property during the notice period to the best of the applicant's knowledge and ability.

In addition, for any cellular tower or antenna that requires Planning Commission review, the Planning Commission shall provide notice of the public hearing by registered mail with return receipt requested at least twenty-one (21) days in advance to the owners of all property within a 500-foot radius of the subject property. It shall be the duty of the applicant to furnish the Planning Commission the names and addresses of the owners of all property within a 500-foot radius of the subject property. Records maintained by the Property Valuation Administrator may be relied upon conclusively to determine the identity and address of said owner.

2. PUBLIC MEETING ON REQUEST FOR CELLULAR ANTENNA TOWER – After giving notice as provided herein, the Planning Commission shall hold a public meeting and vote to approve, conditionally approve or disapprove the proposed cellular antenna tower. At the public meeting, the Planning Commission shall receive the report of the staff, orally and/or in writing, and shall hear testimony of the staff members as it sees fit. The Commission shall allow the applicant, protesters, and other interested citizens to testify and rebut the evidence presented by other parties. The Chairman shall have the power to limit repetitive testimony and shall exclude irrelevant testimony and evidence. It should be noted that testimony regarding the environmental effects of radio frequency emissions is considered irrelevant and shall not be permitted.
3. CELLULAR TOWER REVIEW – The Planning Commission shall have the authority to hear and decide requests by an applicant for a cellular antenna tower. The Commission may approve, disapprove, or take no action on the request for a cellular antenna tower. The burden shall be on the applicant to establish the following by a clear preponderance of the evidence:
  - a. The application meets all requirements of the Zoning Regulations;
  - b. The application is in agreement with the Comprehensive Plan;
  - c. Certificate of Authority in the Commonwealth of Kentucky is in good standing;
  - d. Federal Communication Commission (FCC) License is in good standing;
  - e. Reasons why the site is appropriate for a cellular antenna tower and why it will not have an adverse effect on the health, safety and welfare of the adjoining area;
  - f. Reasons why the tower will not alter the essential character of the

surrounding area;

- g. Reasons why the applicant has been successful in its attempts to co-locate on towers designed to host multiple wireless service providers' facilities or other existing structures, such as a telecommunications tower or another suitable structure capable of supporting the applicant's facilities.

4. ACTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION – Action by the Planning Commission to either approve, conditionally approve, postpone or disapprove an application for a cellular antenna tower must occur within sixty (60) days of the receipt of a completed uniform application. No action on the part of the Planning Commission means that the Commission has not taken definitive final action on the application within the requisite time period. The following actions by the Planning Commission shall have the meanings so stated:

- a. APPROVAL – Means the application meets the requirements of the Zoning Regulations and is in agreement with the Comprehensive Plan. Once it is determined that the application meets these requirements, the Planning Commission may then act to approve the application.
- b. CONDITIONAL APPROVAL – Means that the Planning Commission has imposed certain reasonable conditions and/or has required modifications to the application, to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community and to protect the essential character of the surrounding area. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to, relocating the tower or the accessory building to a different location on the site; installation of landscaping or screening; modification of the tower design; or modification of the antenna design. Conditions imposed by the Planning Commission shall be binding upon any tower constructed on the proposed site, including co-locators.
- c. POSTPONEMENT – Means the Planning Commission has delayed action on the application to a future Planning Commission meeting for definite reasons, which shall be noted by the Commission, in order that certain clarifications can be made. In no case, can the postponement extend past the sixty (60) day time period, unless granted by the applicant writing.
- d. DISAPPROVAL – Means the application does not meet the requirements of the Zoning Regulations and/or is in disagreement with the Comprehensive Plan. In these cases, the Planning Commission may then act to disapprove the application. The specific findings and reasons for the disapproval shall be stated in the Planning Commission's action and shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and made available to the applicant and to the public. A tie vote by the Planning Commission shall be disapproval by operation of law.

- e. **NO ACTION** – Means that if the Planning Commission has not taken final action on an application within requisite time period, unless there is a written agreement between the applicant and the Planning Commission which specifies a date by which the decision will be rendered, the application is deemed approved by operation of law.

### **SECTION 1809 – FORWARDING THE COMMISSION’S ACTION TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

If the application is approved, the applicant shall inform the Public Service Commission of the Planning Commission’s action within ten (10) working days of the approval. The notice to the Public Service Commission shall include a map showing the location of the construction site. If an applicant fails to file notice of an approved uniform application with the Public Service Commission, the applicant shall be prohibited from beginning construction on the cellular antenna tower until such notice has been made.

### **SECTION 1810 – EXISTING FACILITIES**

Any existing cellular antenna towers that were constructed prior to the adoption of these regulations shall be considered permitted uses and shall be subject to these regulations in the event the cellular tower is to be removed. These regulations shall also apply to existing facilities if a tower or antenna is replaced and/or augmented to increase the height more than 50%. Replacement towers for lattice or guyed towers located in residential zones shall be monopoles or alternative tower design unless, in the review of the application, the Planning Commission finds that the replacement with a lattice or guyed tower would improve or preserve the opportunities for co-location. In its review of such an application, the Commission shall consider the impact of the proposed tower on the immediate neighborhood and the surrounding neighborhoods, and may attach appropriate and reasonable conditions to the approval of the tower to mitigate such impacts.

### **SECTION 1811 – ACTION REQUIRED IN THE EVENT OF ABANDONMENT OF CELLULAR ANTENNA TOWER**

The Planning Commission may request the owner of a cellular tower or antenna to provide a declaration of intent for continued operation and use of the tower or antenna. In the event that the tower or antenna is abandoned or there is no response from the owner within 90 days, it must be removed within six (6) months of ceasing operation at the owner’s expense. Prior to issuance of a zoning permit for construction of a tower or antenna, a bond or other appropriate surety shall be filed with the Planning Commission, in order to ensure the successful dismantling and removal of the tower or antenna and any associated accessory structure.

### **SECTION 1812 – STAFF REVIEW PROPOSALS BY THE APPLICANT**

When an applicant seeks to place antennae on an existing structure; or in the event an applicant proposes to augment the height of an existing tower, provided the height of the tower will not be increased over 50%, and the height will not result in additional

lighting requirements pursuant to Federal Aviation Administration rules, and provided Section 1808, subsection 3 (c) and (d) is complied with, the application may then be reviewed and acted on by the staff.

### **SECTION 1813 – APPEALS**

Any party claiming to be aggrieved by a final action of the Planning Commission under the provisions of KRS 100.985 to 100.987 may bring an action for review in Shelby Circuit Court.

All orders of the Planning Commission which have not been appealed within thirty (30) days shall become final; however, there shall be no stay of any action on the subject property until such time as an appeal has been filed.

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