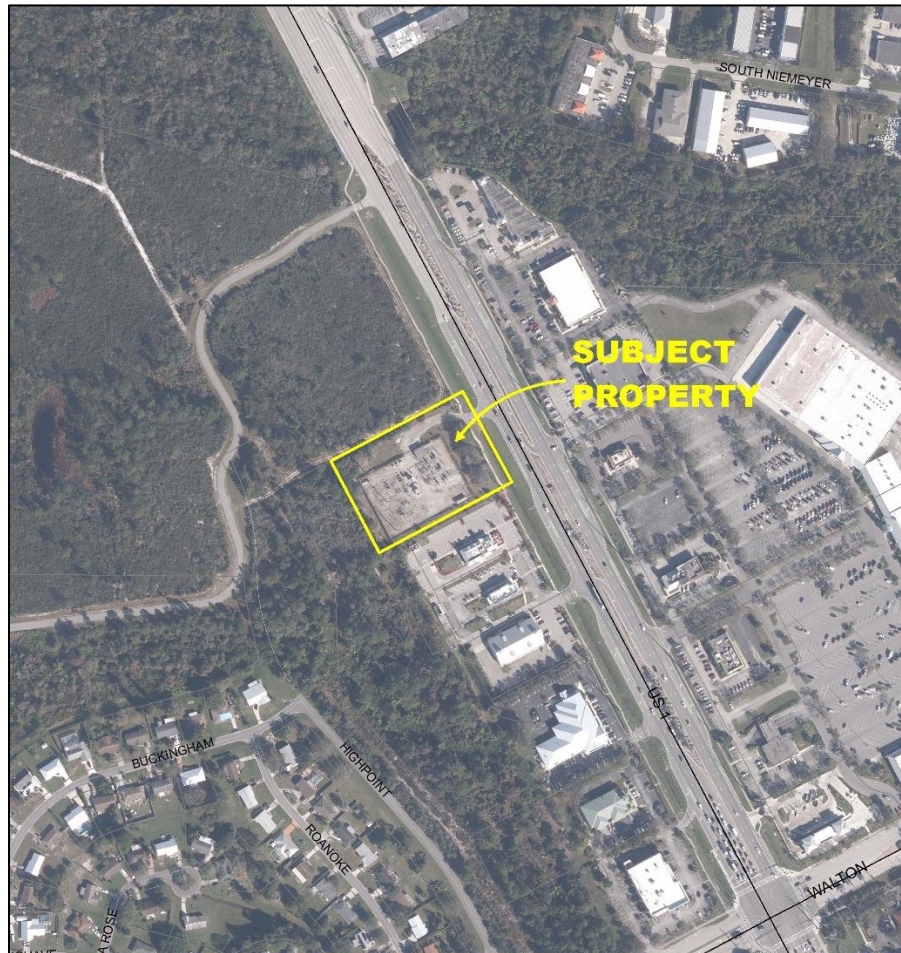




FPL Savannah Substation – Cell Tower
Special Exception Use
P24-131



Project Location Map

SUMMARY

Applicant's Request:	The request is for a Special Exception Use (SEU) to allow a 150-foot-tall monopole wireless communication tower on a 2.52-acre developed parcel within the General Use (GU) zoning district.
Agent:	James Johnston, Shutts & Bowen, LLP
Property Owner:	Florida Power & Light Company (FPL)
Location:	North of SE Veterans Memorial Parkway and west of US Highway 1
Project Planner:	Sofia Trail, Planner I

Project Description

The City of Port St. Lucie has received a request from Shutts & Bowen, the applicant, on behalf of the property owner, Florida Power & Light Company (FPL), for a Special Exception Use (SEU) to allow a 150-foot monopole tower on a developed parcel within the General Use (GU) zoning district. The subject property is located north of SE Veterans Memorial Parkway and west of US Highway 1 and is legally described as a tract or parcel of land lying in Section 35, Township 36 South, Range 40 East, St. Lucie County, Florida. The parcel has a Utility (U) future land use designation and is within the General Use (GU) zoning district.

Section 158.213(D), Wireless Communication Antennas and Towers, of the City of Port St. Lucie Code of Ordinances, requires all antennas and towers to be considered as a special exception use. The proposed monopole tower has a height of 150 feet, which meets the height requirements for wireless communication towers for parcels with a GU zoning designation per Section 158.213(F)(1)(a). It will accommodate at least two additional carriers to enhance connectivity in the vicinity. The conceptual plan depicts the 150-foot-monopole tower and accompanying equipment within a 15-foot by 35-foot (525-square-foot) rectangular lease area on the northwest corner of the FPL Savannah Substation property.

The tower shall be designed by a licensed Florida State Professional Engineer meeting the respective building code criteria. The tower shall be designed and constructed such that in an event of a tower failure, the tower shall collapse upon itself with a resultant tower fall zone radius which will be entirely on the leased tower area.

Previous Actions

The City of Port St. Lucie Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) reviewed and recommended approval of the conceptual site plan at their August 27, 2025, meeting.

Public Notice Requirements

Notice of this request for a Special Exception Use was mailed on October 24, 2025, to owners of property within a 750-foot radius of the subject property.

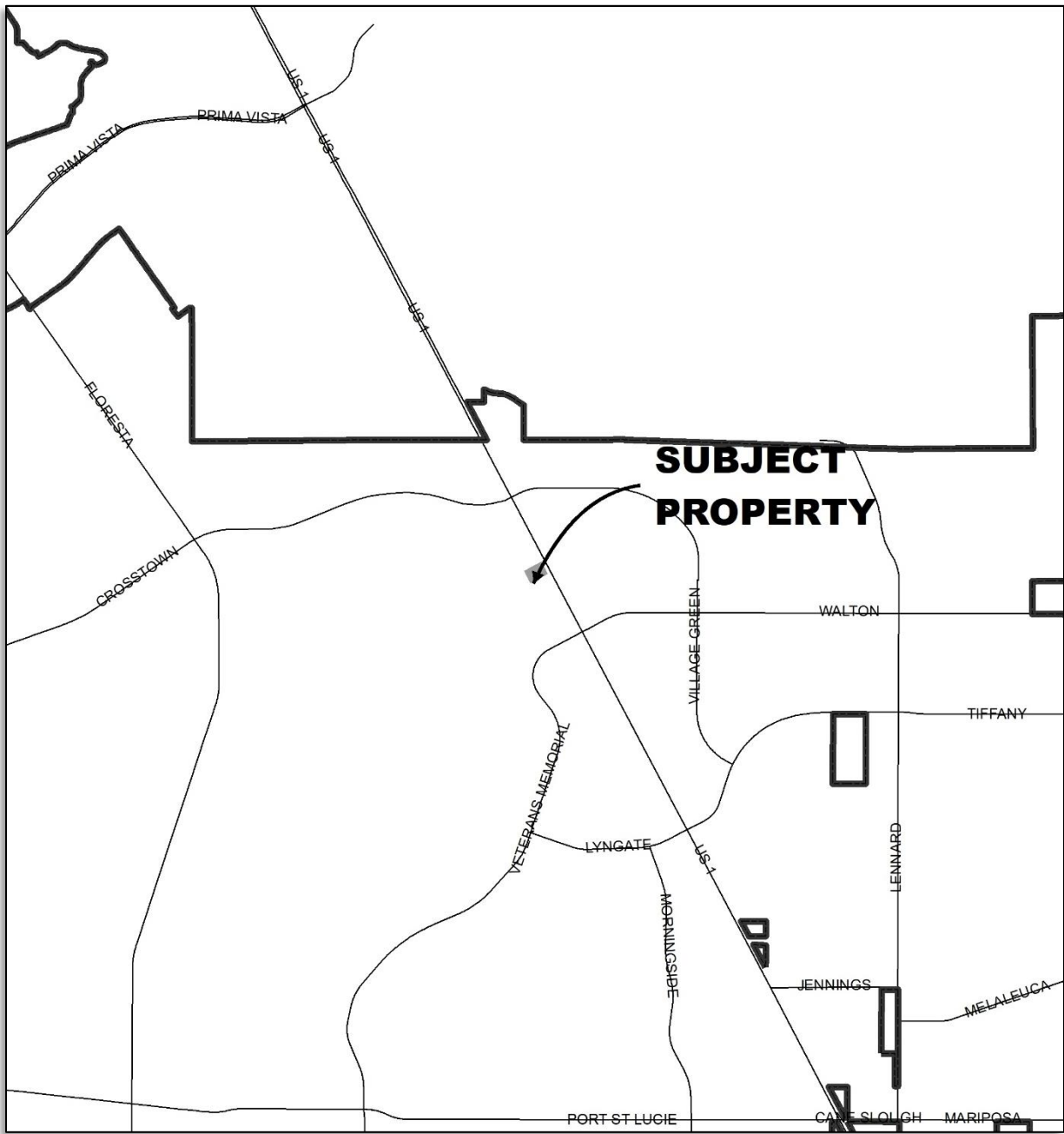
Location and Site Information

Parcel Number:	3435-133-0001-000-1
Property Size:	+/- 2.52-acres
Legal Description:	A tract or parcel of land lying in Section 35, Township 36 South, Range 40 East, St. Lucie County, Florida
Future Land Use:	U (Utility)
Existing Zoning:	GU (General Use)
Existing Use:	FPL Substation

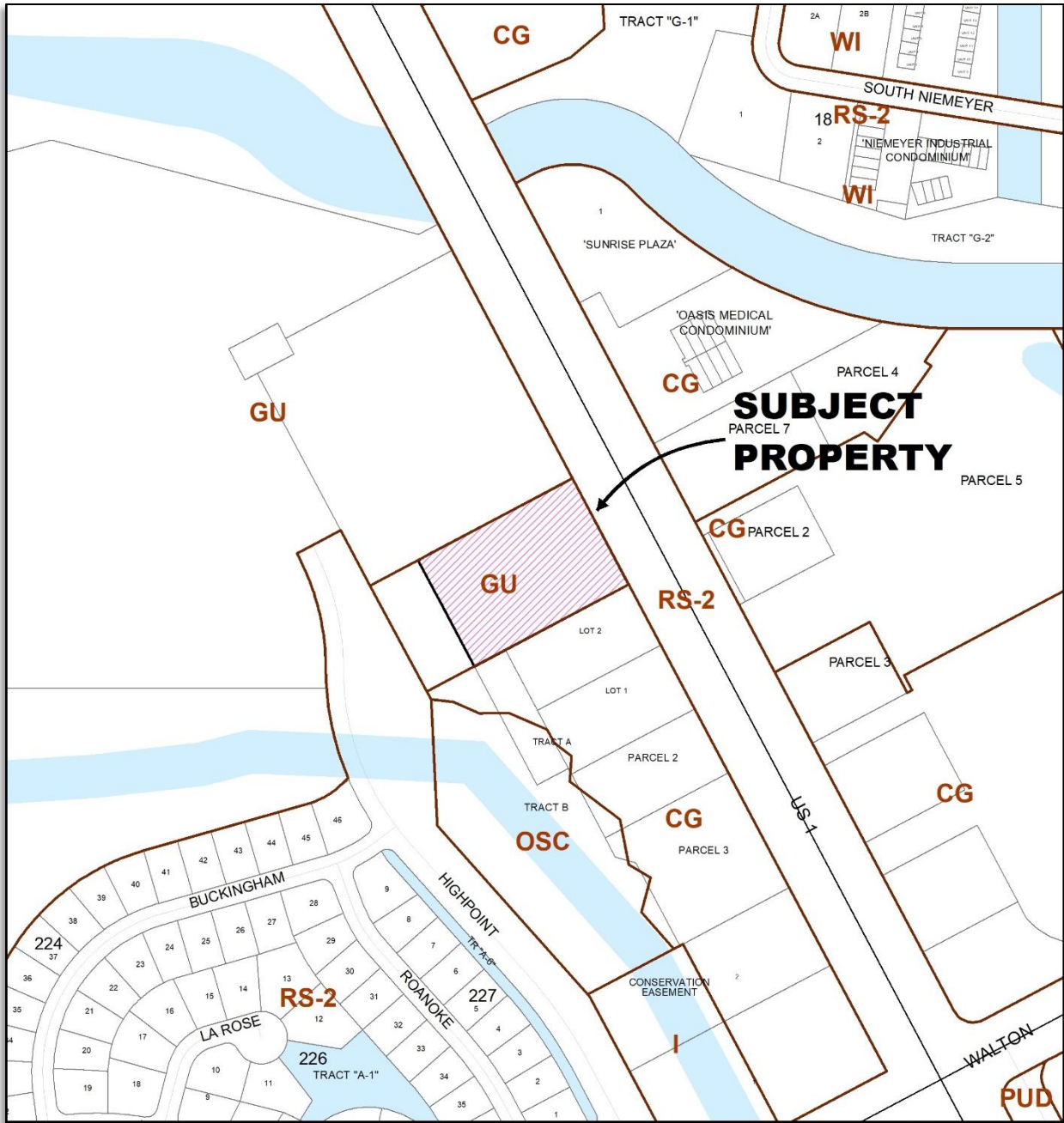
Surrounding Uses

Direction	Future Land Use	Zoning	Existing Use
North	OSC	GU	Savannas Preserve State Park
South	CG	CG	Dairy Queen
East	CG	ROI/CG	Walgreens
West	CG	GU	Vacant

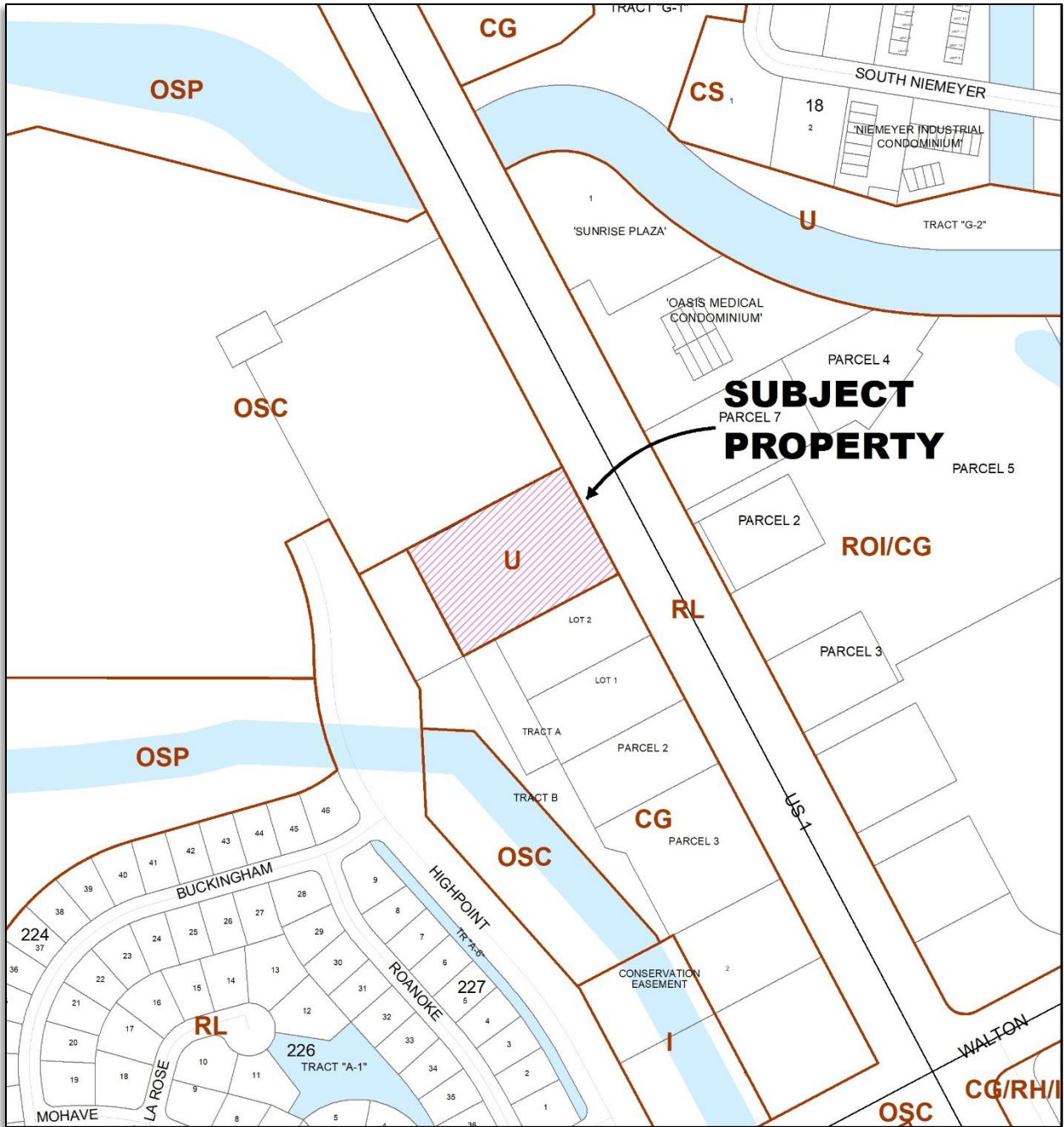
OSC – Open Space Conservation, GU – General Use, PUD – Planned Unit Development, ROI – Residential/Office/Institutional, U – Utility, RS-2-Single-family residential



Location Map



Land Use Map



Zoning Map

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Special exceptions are uses that would only be allowed under certain conditions and are reviewed to be compatible with the existing neighborhood. Approval of a special exception application shall only be granted by the City Council if it meets the criteria established under Section 158.260 (A) through (L) as noted below. The applicant's response to the criteria is attached. Staff's review is provided below.

Evaluation of Special Exception Criteria (Section 158.260)

(A) Adequate ingress and egress may be obtained to and from the property, with particular reference to automotive and pedestrian safety and convenience, traffic flow and control, and access in case of fire or other emergency.

- Applicant's Response: *The communication tower and equipment will be accessed from US Highway 1 from the existing driveway entrance for the electric substation. The communication tower is an unmanned facility and only requires approximately one maintenance visit per month.*
- Staff findings: Adequate ingress and egress exist on the property from US Highway 1. The Public Works Department determined that the proposed use is not anticipated to create any additional traffic impacts to the adjacent roadway network.

(B) Adequate off-street parking and loading areas may be provided, without creating undue noise, glare, odor, or other detrimental effects upon adjoining properties.

- Applicant's Response: *The communication tower is an unmanned facility that only requires approximately one maintenance visit per month. There is ample room on the parent parcel for the maintenance vehicle.*
- Staff findings: There is a paved parking area in front of the utility building on the site. Since the site will only have approximately one trip per month, this parking area is adequate for any maintenance vehicle.

(C) Adequate and properly located utilities are available or may be reasonably provided to serve the proposed development.

- Applicant's Response: *Because the facility is unmanned, it does not require water or wastewater utilities. Additionally, there are adequate electric and fiber facilities on US Highway 1 for the proposed communication tower.*
- Staff findings: Currently, the site does not require services from The City of Port St. Lucie Utilities Department. The proposed development will not require water or wastewater services.

(D) Adequate screening or buffering. Additional buffering beyond that which is required by the code may be required in order to protect and provide compatibility with adjoining properties.

- Applicant's Response: *Applicant does not believe additional buffering and screening will be required for the communication tower and related facilities. There are existing trees and foliage along the border of the parent parcel that provides screening for the surrounding properties. Additionally, there is undeveloped South Florida Water Management District and HOW parcels abutting along the north, west, and southwest that provide screening and buffering for the closest residential development.*

- Staff findings: The site has established landscaping around the fenced area of the FPL substation. There is also adequate landscaping along the perimeter of the property. The monopole wireless communication tower will require landscaping around the accompanying equipment. The conceptual landscape plan does meet the landscaping requirements as described in Chapter 154 of the Code of Ordinances.

(E) Signs, if any, and proposed exterior lighting will be so designed and arranged so as to promote traffic safety and to eliminate or minimize any undue glare, incompatibility, or disharmony with adjoining properties. Light shields or other screening devices may be required.

- Applicant's Response: *The communication tower will not have signage and, based on the height of the tower, no lighting is required.*
- Staff findings: The monopole tower will only require signage on the fence housing the accompanying equipment. No lighting is proposed on the conceptual site plan.

(F) Yards and open spaces will be adequate to properly serve the proposed development and to ensure compatibility with adjoining properties to eliminate or minimize any undue glare.

- Applicant's Response: *The parent parcel is located in a commercially developed area along US Highway 1, with commercial development to the south. Additionally, there are South Florida Water Management District and HOA owned parcels along the north, west, and southwest, that buffer the proposed use and help ensure compatibility with the surrounding properties. Finally, the parent parcel is currently developed with an electric substation use that will remain, so the introduction of the communication tower is compatible with the existing use.*
- Staff findings: *The front, side, and rear yard building setbacks, along with open space, are depicted on the concept plan and in accordance with the requirements of the General Use (GU) zoning district as per Section 158.060 of the Code of Ordinances.*

(G) The use as proposed will be in conformance with all stated provisions and requirements of this chapter.

- Applicant's Response: *The City's Code permits communication towers in the General Use zoning category subject to special exception review and approval. The communication tower is required by Verizon Wireless in this area and at the proposed height in order to fill an existing service coverage and capacity gap. The proposed tower will be a monopole design, which is generally considered to have less visual impact than a guyed or self-support towers. The Code permits communication towers in the General Use zoning category up to 300', so the proposed tower is only one-half of the permissible height. Additionally, the Code's special exception requirements are meant to protect the surrounding property owners from the potential impacts of the communication tower use. The proposed communication tower is being located on a FP&L existing electric substation along US Highway 1, and that use will remain. The communication tower is compatible with the electric substation use and the general commercial development along US Highway 1 in the surrounding area. Additionally, the parcels surrounding the FP&L property include: (i) existing commercial development that also fronts on US Highway 1 to the south, (ii) US Highway 1 to the east, (iii) undeveloped property owned by the South Florida Water Management District to the north, and (iv) platted preservation and conservation property owned by the Midport Crossing Association, Inc to the west. Therefore, the proposed communication tower's location and design will be in conformance with the applicable provisions and requirements of the Land Development Regulations.*

Applicant is requesting approval to locate the proposed communication tower 15' from the rear property line instead of meeting the 25' GU rear setback. Although there will be a reduced rear setback, the tower's location will not negatively impact the abutting parcels. First, the parcels abutting both the north and west property lines are undeveloped and will remain undeveloped. The property to the north is owned by the South Florida Water Management District, and the property to the west is a platted preservation and conservation property owned by FP&L electric transmission structure. As such, it is designed to withstand winds associated with Category 5 hurricanes, and FP&L has not had any of its dual-use transmission structures break or fall due to hurricane force winds.

Applicant is also requesting to not provide a certified fall zone for the communication tower. As mentioned above, PF&L will design and construct the communication tower as an electric transmission structure. Based on the communication tower's proximity to the existing electric substation, it is not designed with a "weak point" to provide for an engineered fall zone. Instead, as indicated above, it is designed and constructed as an FP&L transmission structure to withstand winds associated with Category 5 hurricanes.

Applicant is additionally requesting to not provide fencing around the communication tower, although fencing meeting the Code requirements will be provided around Verizon's ground equipment. Because the communication tower will be designed as a FP&L transmission structure, FP&L does not permit any walls, fencing, or other permanent structure around the tower that could provide a climbing aid into the adjacent substation or onto the tower. The communication tower will not have any pegs or climbing ladder attached. Verizon will access its antennas at the top of the tower using a crane and basket.

- **Staff findings:** The application for a Special Exception Use (SEU) for the property was submitted in August 2024. At that time, staff notified the applicant that the proposed monopole communication tower did not meet the setback requirements as required in the General Use (GU) zoning district. Rather than applying for a variance to the setback requirements, the applicant revised the conceptual site plan and relocated the proposed tower to meet the GU setback requirements. The conceptual site plan that was recommended for approval by the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) on August 27, 2025, shows the proposed tower 35' from the rear property line (west side of the property) and 25' from the side property line (north side of the property) which meets the City Code requirements. In addition, the tower is being designed to withstand Category 3 hurricane intensity as required by the City Code, and not Category 5.

The applicant did provide a certified fall zone letter and fencing around the proposed monopole communication tower and accompanying equipment as shown on the attached conceptual plan.

Section 158.213 of the Zoning Code provides the requirements for wireless communication towers as documented below:

- Section 158.213 (E) Wind Load: The applicant has provided certification from a Florida-registered professional engineer that the tower would collapse within the designed and specified fall radius depicted on the plan and that the tower shown in the plan can withstand winds of Category 3 hurricane intensity.
- Section 158.213(F) Height Limits: The maximum height for a wireless communications tower in the GU zoning district is 300 feet. The proposed tower will have a maximum height of 150 feet.

- Section 158.213(G) Co-Location: The feasibility of co-location for service provision in this area is limited. Existing towers are situated at a considerable distance and would not provide reliable coverage due to the significant gap between them.
- Section 158.213(H) Fencing: A six-foot fence with a gate, with or without barbed-wire, around the tower and outside structures is required. An eight-foot fence, with a gate and barbed-wire, is proposed as depicted on the SEU concept plan and proposed site plan amendment.
- Section 158.213(I) Landscaping: The conceptual plan depicts an 8-foot-high chain-link fence and associated landscaping around the leased area.
- Section 158.213(L) Site Plan Review: A site plan (P86-126-A1) was submitted in association with the application for a special exception use.
- Section 158.213(M) Obsolete and Unused Towers: A removal bond or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of \$15,000 shall be required prior to obtaining final site development permits.
- Section 158.213(N) Separation: –The applicant has submitted a map that shows the nearest tower is located 1.3 miles from the proposed site.
- (O)Interference (Bleed Over). As a condition of approval, any proposed tower or antennae shall not cause interference with the use of radio, television, or telephone broadcasting and reception. This condition has been included as part of this application.

The proposed use and conceptual plan do meet all stated provisions and requirements of Section 158.060 (General Use Zoning District) and Section 158.213 (Wireless Communication Antennas and Towers).

(H) Establishment and operation of the proposed use upon the particular property involved will not impair the health, safety, welfare, or convenience of residents and workers in the City.

- Applicant's Response: *Please see response to (G) above regarding how the location and design of the proposed communication tower will help to buffer residents and workers in the surrounding area. Additionally, the communication tower will improve Verizon Wireless' coverage and capacity in the area for residents and workers. This improved service is not only important for the convenience of the residents and workers, but is also important for their health, safety, and welfare. Over 80% of all 911 calls are now made from wireless devices, so having improved coverage and capacity in the area will directly benefit the residents and workers. Moreover, the improved coverage and capacity will help to improve E911 Phase II.*
- Staff findings: The proposed new tower is intended to improve communication services in this part of the City.

(I) The proposed use will not constitute a nuisance or hazard because of the number of persons who will attend or use the facility, or because of the hours of operation, or because of vehicular movement, noise, fume generation, or type of physical activity.

- Applicant's Response: *The proposed communication tower is an unmanned facility that only requires approximately one maintenance visit per month. Additionally, the use does not generate noise or fumes. Therefore, the facility will not constitute a nuisance or hazard to the surrounding neighborhood.*
- Staff findings: The proposed tower is expected to generate one trip per month which will not affect the capacity of the adjacent roadway.

(J) The use as proposed for development will be compatible with the existing or permitted uses of adjacent property. The proximity or separation and potential impact of the proposed use (including size and height of buildings, access location, light and noise) on nearby property will be considered in the submittal and analysis of the request. The City may request project design changes or changes to the proposed use to mitigate the impacts upon adjacent properties and the neighborhood.

- Applicant's Response: *Please see responses to (A) – (I) above.*
- Staff findings: The proposed use is within the General Use (GU) zoning district and is allowed as a special exception. It is compatible with the existing FPL Electric Substation that is developed on the property and the surrounding uses. The use meets all required setbacks, buffering, and height regulations as listed under Sections 158.060 and 158.213.

(K) As an alternative to reducing the scale and/or magnitude of the project as stipulated in criteria (J) above, the City may deny the request for the proposed use if the use is considered incompatible, too intensive or intrusive upon the nearby area and would result in excessive disturbance or nuisance from the use altering the character of the neighborhood.

- Staff findings: Acknowledged.

(L) Development and operation of the proposed use will be in full compliance with any additional conditions and safeguards which the City Council may prescribe, including but not limited to reasonable time limit within which the action for which special approval is requested shall be begun or completed or both.

- Staff findings: Acknowledged.
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PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD ACTION OPTIONS

If consistent with Section 158.260 (A) through (L) of the City code, then the Board may:

- Motion to recommend approval to the City Council with the following conditions of approval:
 1. In accordance with Section 158.213 of the Code of Ordinances, interference with the use of radio, television, or telephone broadcasting and reception, as a result of any approved tower or antennae shall be considered a violation of the special exception approving the tower and may result in the revocation of the special exception. Such interference may further be considered a public nuisance, and the city may order abatement of the same including but not limited to, requiring removal of the tower.
 2. Any obsolete or unused tower shall be removed after twelve (12) months of non-use. A removal bond or irrevocable letter of credit equal to Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) shall be required prior to obtaining final site development permits.
- Motion to amend the recommendation and recommend approval to the City Council

If the board finds that the special exception use application is inconsistent with the criteria as listed in Section 158.260 (A) through (L) of the City code, then the Board may:

- Motion to recommend denial to the City Council

Should the Board need further clarification or information from either the applicant and/or staff, it may exercise the right to table or continue the hearing or review to a future meeting.