

II-B	WIRELESS COMMUNICATION FACILITIES (WCFS)
This section provides an overview of the County’s regulation of communication towers, structures, and antennas – referred to as “wireless communication facilities (WCFS).”	
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Wireless communication facilities, or WCFs, include all towers and structures for wireless communications and their associated infrastructure and equipment. WCFs are a business use described in detail in [Zoning Ordinance Section 5.2C](#). This Ordinance section includes the definition for WCFs, use regulations, and the allowable zoning districts for certain WCFs. Design standards and application requirements for WCF sites may be found in [Zoning Ordinance Section 7.3](#).

WCFs are categorized according to a numbered “Class” system as follows:

- [Class 1](#) – Communication towers with a maximum height of 50 feet above ground level (AGL)
- [Class 2](#) – Communication towers with a maximum height of 80 feet AGL
- [Class 3](#) – Communication towers with a maximum height of 120 feet AGL
- [Class 4](#) – Communication towers with a maximum height of 199 feet AGL
- [Class 5](#) – Privately-owned amateur radio antennas as regulated by [Va. Code Section 15.2-2293.1](#) and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) provisions specified in the Code of Federal Regulations
- [Class 6](#) – Small-scale antenna support structures to facilitate wireless internet or for mounting of television antennas, satellite dishes, or similar communications equipment. Maximum height of 100 feet AGL for freestanding structures, maximum height of 80 feet AGL for attached structures.

WCF regulations also address the co-location of new equipment on existing WCFs and other structures, and the maintenance or replacement of equipment on existing WCFs.

The most common WCF applications involve the installation of commercial telecommunication towers for cellular and internet service. These WCFs fall into the Class 1-4 range depending upon the maximum proposed height. Class 1 and 2 WCFs are allowable by-right and Class 3 and

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2024 VERSION

4 WCFs require a special use permit. In addition to requiring a special use permit, a new Class 3 WCF is required to be proposed in a location consistent with the County’s [Telecommunications Infrastructure and Broadband Study 2020](#). This study identifies 11 general locations where new WCFs should be constructed in order to maximize coverage to all County residents and businesses. For Class 4 WCFs in excess of 120 feet, applicants are also required to demonstrate one or more of the following conditions to justify the increased height:

- The proposed site would provide a demonstrable coverage improvement over a Class 3 tower height and would be consistent with the guidance regarding the County’s coverage goals in the [Telecommunications Infrastructure and Broadband Study 2020](#).
- There is a need to ensure proper connectivity for microwave “point-to-point” systems.
- The proposed WCF is required by the property owner to be located in an area with a lower elevation in relation to the overall property elevation.

The County also employs a telecommunications engineering consultant to review WCF applications. All applications for Class 2, 3, and 4 WCFs shall be reviewed by the telecommunications engineering consultant and the applicant shall be responsible for the review fee. Consultant review of Class 1 and 5 WCFs and certain co-location and maintenance/replacement applications may be required at the Zoning Administrator’s discretion.

Below is a table listing the zoning districts in which the various WCFs are allowed:

Class	AOC	FOC	CH	CN	RR	Historic Overlay*	Historic Access Overlay*
Co-Location	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
1 (Maximum height 50')	P	P	P	P	P	X	P
2 (Maximum height 80')	P	P	P	P	P	X	P
3 (Maximum height 120')	S	S	S	X	X	X	S
4 (Maximum height 199')	S	S	S	X	X	X	S
5 (Amateur radio antenna)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
6 (Antenna support structure)	P	P	P	P	P	X	P

(P) Permitted Use; (S) Special Use; (A) Accessory Use; (X) Prohibited Use

* -- Subject to underlying zoning district regulations and compliance with overlay district review criteria

GUIDANCE MANUAL TO THE CLARKE COUNTY ZONING & SUBDIVISION ORDINANCES
2024 VERSION

The chart below identifies the approval authority and summarizes the review process for each WCF application type:

SUMMARY OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION FACILITY REVIEW PROCESSES

Class	Approval Authority	Review Process
Co-location*	Zoning Administrator (By-right)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-application meeting held with Zoning Administrator, who determines whether engineering review will be required as well as whether any requirements may be waived. 2. Site Development Plan application filed with Zoning Administrator. 3. Zoning Administrator acts on application within 60 days.
1 (50' max)	Zoning Administrator (By-right)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-application meeting held with Zoning Administrator, who determines whether engineering review will be required as well as whether any requirements may be waived. 2. Site Development Plan application filed with Zoning Administrator. 3. Zoning Administrator acts on application within 60 days.
2 (80' max)	Planning Commission with required public hearing (By-right)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Site Development Plan application filed with Zoning Administrator following required pre-application meeting. 2. Application is routed to Planning Commission's Plans Review Committee, engineering consultant, Karst engineer, and other applicable agencies for review. 3. Application forwarded to Planning Commission to schedule/hold public hearing once all reviewers have commented. 4. Planning Commission acts on application within 60 days.
3 (120' max)	Board of Supervisors with Planning Commission review and required public hearings (Special Use)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special use permit and site development plan applications filed with Zoning Administrator following required pre-application meeting. 2. Application is routed to the engineering consultant, to the Planning Commission's Plans Review Committee, Karst engineer, and other applicable agencies for review. 3. Application forwarded to Planning Commission to schedule/hold public hearing once all reviewers have commented. 4. Planning Commission makes formal recommendation on application. 5. Application forwarded to Board of Supervisors to schedule/hold public hearing. 6. Board of Supervisors takes formal action on special use permit/site plan application.

GUIDANCE MANUAL TO THE CLARKE COUNTY ZONING & SUBDIVISION ORDINANCES
2024 VERSION

<p>4 (199' max)</p>	<p>Board of Supervisors with Planning Commission review and required public hearings (Special Use)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special use permit and site development plan applications filed with Zoning Administrator following required pre-application meeting. 2. Application is routed to the engineering consultant, to the Planning Commission's Plans Review Committee, Karst engineer, and other applicable agencies for review. 3. Application forwarded to Planning Commission to schedule/hold public hearing once all reviewers have commented. 4. Planning Commission makes formal recommendation on application. 5. Application forwarded to Board of Supervisors to schedule/hold public hearing. 6. Board of Supervisors takes formal action on special use permit/site plan application.
<p>5 (Amateur Radio)</p>	<p>Zoning Administrator (By-right)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-application meeting held with Zoning Administrator, who determines whether engineering review will be required as well as whether any requirements may be waived. 2. Site Development Plan application filed with Zoning Administrator. 3. Zoning Administrator acts on application within 60 days.
<p>6 (Antenna Support Structure)</p>	<p>Zoning Administrator (By-right)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Zoning Permit application is filed with the Zoning Administrator. 2. Zoning Administrator reviews the application for compliance with setback, maximum height, and maximum width requirements; acts on application following completion of administrative review.

* Review procedure is the same for new distributed antenna systems (DAS) and upgrades/equipment maintenance on an existing WCF.