PLANNING APPLICATION COVER SHEET

PROJECT TYPE: Rezoning

NO. VAR26-000008

APPLICATION DATE: 10/29/2026

PROPERTY OWNER: PHILLIP E PRYBIL

APPLICANT: Darren Hunter

WORK DESCRIPTION: Construction of a New Cellular Tower

SITE ADDRESS: 4411 Taft AVE SE

PARCEL NUMBER: 0931101002

PROPOSED USE OF STRUCTURE: Cell tower

APPLICATION INFORMAITON

Yard	Required Setback	Requested Setback
Front	214.5	175

Johnson County

Planning, Development and Sustainability

913 S. Dubuque St. Iowa City, IA 52240

planning@johnsoncountyiowa.gov. 319-356-6083

https://www.johnsoncountyiowa.gov/pds

THE GRINNELL GROUP

September 28, 2026

Johnson County Board of Adjustment
c/o Planning, Development and Sustainability
913 S. Dubuque St.
Iowa City, IA 52240

RE: **Variance Request Narrative**
Property Address: 4411 Taft Ave SE, Iowa City, IA 52240

Greetings Staff,

On behalf of Vertical Bridge and Verizon, I am submitting a Variance Application to reduce the setback requirement for a new cellular tower located at 4411 Taft Ave SE, Iowa City, IA 52240. The proposed location of the tower is 175' from the residence on the subject property. The proposed tower is 195' to meet the coverage objectives of Verizon to provide improved coverage and E911 services throughout the Gap Area.

The setback requirements state that the tower must be 110% from any residential structure. For a 195' tower that distance is 214.5', which would shift our tower an additional 39.5' west of the home. If the tower were to remain in its proposed location of 175' from the residence, we would have to reduce the tower height to 159'. Reducing the tower height by 36' would significantly diminish Verizon's goal to improve service in the Gap Area. Additionally, moving the site west would move the communications facility into the existing flood plain.

If we are granted a variance, the existing buildings and trees on the property provide better screening of the compound from public view. Moving the site would increase it's visibility from Osage St NE and Hwy 6. Furthermore, the property owner is aware of the setback requirements and is the only affected landowner by the variance request. They are willing to sign an affidavit in support of the proposed location or attend the public hearing to express their support for the request. We have also included a fall zone letter from the tower manufacturer stating the tower is designed to fail with a fall zone radius of 100' from the tower base.

Below are responses to the variance criteria stated in the Johnson County Code of Ordinances, Section 8:1.29 D.

1. The Board shall have the power to vary the following standards in the zoning ordinance:
    a. The setback, frontage, height, or other lot area regulations where there is an exceptional or unusual physical condition of a lot, which condition is not generally prevalent in the vicinity and which condition when related to the setback, frontage, height, or other lot area regulations of this section would prevent a reasonable

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arrangement of buildings on the lot. Vertical Bridge is requesting a setback variance for the separation of the proposed tower from the residence on the same property.

2. Request for variance from the zoning regulations shall only be approved if the Board of Adjustment finds that an application substantially conforms with the following hardship criteria:
    a. The requested relief exceeds the standards for qualifying as a special exception;
    b. The provisions of this chapter, as applied to this property, result in an unnecessary hardship and amount to a practical confiscation. The applicant must demonstrate that a hardship is a compelling force and will not merely serve as a convenience to the applicant. Factors that shall be considered include:
        i. Topographical conditions;
        ii. Surroundings;
        iii. Size and shape of the property;
        iv. Location of public utilities or improvements on or adjacent to the subject property;
        v. Other extraordinary or exceptional situation(s).
        vi. **Response** – The proposed location of the communications facility is located in a manner that the compound abutts an existing barn to the east and existing mature trees and another barn to the south. The location borders flood plain and we worked with the planning staff to avoid placing the tower and compound within the flood zone. Moving the tower to meet the setback requirement would place it into the flood zone as well as make the site more visible to the public from the north side of the property along Osage St SE and Hwy 6.
    c. The plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances of the property and not to the general conditions in the neighborhood.
        i. The hardship must have been created by the ordinance and not by the applicant and/or a predecessor in title.
        ii. A strict application of the Zoning Ordinance precludes the use of land for any purpose to which it is reasonably adapted.
        iii. The problem cannot be alleviated by zoning the property to another classification.
        iv. **Response** – The challenge is specific to the property due to the flood plain on the parcel. The problem can't be resolved with a zoning reclassification.
    d. The use to be authorized by the variance will not alter the essential character of the locality. Granting the variance cannot:
        i. Impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property. By granting the variance, it will not impede the development of the surrounding properties. The only person affected is the property owner where the tower will be located.
        ii. Have substantially adverse effect on the value of adjacent properties. The additional height of the tower will have no impact on property values.

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iii. Impair the provision of adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, and/or other necessary facilities, either to the property in question or to nearby properties. The additional height will have no effect.
iv. Increase the danger of the hazard from fire, flood, or similar dangers nor produce nuisance conditions to occupants, or nearby premises, by reason of dust, noise, fumes, odor, vibrations, smoke, or lights. The additional height will have no effect, no lighting is proposed on the tower.
v. Effect the supply of light and air to adjacent properties. The additional height will have no effect.

e. The land in question cannot yield a reasonable return if used as allowed in the zone in which it is located.
   i. Variances will not be granted on the basis of value of the property nor to increase the profitability of the property. The proposed height increase is intended to improve the cellular coverage in the area, improve E911 service and to better connect with the existing Verizon sites within their network. The proposed site will help offload existing sites that are near capacity as well as provide service to areas with poor and limited coverage.

We request your consideration and approval of this request. If you require any additional information to complete your review, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Darren Hunter

THE GRINNELL GROUP
Darren Hunter
[redacted]

Property Owner:
Phillip Prybil
[redacted]

Lessor:
The Towers LLC (Vertical Bridge)
[redacted]

Outlook

RE: Cell phone tower at 4411 Taft ave

From Joe Wilensky <jwilensky@johnsoncountyiowa.gov>
Date Mon 10/26/2026 3:02 PM
To [redacted]>; Darren Hunter <[redacted]>

Thank you for the comment. This will be added to the record for the special exception application for the cell tower siting to inform the Board of Adjustment's consideration of this application.

Joseph Wilensky, AICP, CFM | he, him, his
Planner, PDS
319.356.6083

Building permit and inspection questions can be emailed to building@johnsoncountyiowa.gov. Questions related to development applications or code enforcement can be emailed to planning@johnsoncountyiowa.gov.

Messages to and from this account are subject to public disclosure unless otherwise provided by law.

From: [redacted]
Sent: Monday, 26 October 2026 3:47 pm
To: Joe Wilensky <jwilensky@johnsoncountyiowa.gov>; Darren Hunter [redacted]
Subject: Cell phone tower at 4411 Taft ave

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Johnson County! Do not click links, open attachments or reply, unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe!

Joe,

I see that the folks are moving forward with seeking permission for the cell phone tower with the government agencies.

We are excited to be working with them and are in support of the application of variance. We believe we have a site that minimizes disruption of AG land and does not infringe on our future plans on site.

Thank you for the consideration.

Phillip prybil

verizon

STATEMENT OF NETWORK NEED

New Communications Tower in Johnson County, Iowa City, Iowa
Matt Bennett, RF Engineering Manager
Verizon ID: ***IAC COLGATE***

1. My name is Matt Bennett and I am a radio frequency (RF) engineer for Verizon Wireless ("Verizon"). I have been employed by Verizon since 1994 and have been in RF roles for Verizon since 2001.

2. The primary duties of an RF engineer include the design and management of Verizon's wireless communications network in its Great Plains Market, which includes the area in and around Johnson County, Iowa City, Iowa. RF Engineers are also responsible for identifying and addressing substantial service and capacity gaps that present themselves in Verizon's wireless network. These service gaps can be caused by lack of coverage or insufficient system capacity, or both. Service gaps are identified through the use of internal Verizon network monitoring tools and analysis showing the capacity and/or coverage needed in a particular area.

3. There is a significant service gap in Verizon's wireless communications network near Taft Ave SE and Hwy 6, Iowa City, Iowa (the "Gap Area"). As a result of this significant service capacity gap, Verizon customers using their devices in and around the Gap Area are likely to experience diminished call quality, slow and unreliable data transmission speeds, dropped calls, and blocked calls. Verizon's service gap in the Gap Area has existed for several years.

4. This significant service gap will remain and cannot be resolved unless a communications tower is constructed within the Gap Area. Verizon must remedy this service gap in order to provide high-speed wireless broadband access to the communities in and around the Gap Area, to fill in coverage gaps where wireless services are not reliable, and to provide enhanced E911 services.

5. Verizon identified a search area in which a tower would need to be located in order to resolve the service gap. Before proposing a new communications tower, Verizon first considered whether any existing structures in the area could be used to resolve the coverage gap in the Gap Area. There are existing structures well outside the search area that Verizon considered, but none of them will allow Verizon to remedy the service gap in the Gap Area. The following existing structures have been reviewed and disqualified for colocation as described below:

a. Array Digital Infrastructure, Inc [Location: 41.607200°N 91.443000°W]
    i. 190' Self-Support Tower
    ii. 1.15mi away from Gap Area
    iii. The tower owner confirmed that the highest height available for colocation is 172', which is too low to remedy the service gap. Further, this tower is over one mile from the Gap Area. As such, this tower will not meet coverage objectives because it is too short and too far from the Gap Area.

b. SBA [Location: 41.628978°N 91.464769°W]
    i. 195' Self-Support Tower
    ii. 1.1mi away from Gap Area
    iii. This tower is only 1.6 miles away from an existing Verizon site [Location: 41.640300°N 91.492200°W], which is too close to consider for colocation because it would cause interference. In contrast, the Gap Area is 2.5 miles south of the same existing Verizon site.

6. Because there were no existing towers on which Verizon could collocate to remedy the service gap in the Gap Area, Verizon and Vertical Bridge worked together to identify a property that could accommodate a communications tower and would meet Verizon's engineering requirements. Vertical Bridge has proposed to build a new 195' monopole at 4411 Taft SE Ave, Iowa City, IA 52240 ("Proposed Tower"). The tower height of 195' is necessary because of the surrounding topography and the size of the Gap Area. This particular location is optimal because it will allow Verizon to cover substantially all of the Gap Area with a single tower.

7. By co-locating its communications equipment on the Proposed Tower, Verizon will resolve the current significant service gap and will be able to provide improved service to residents, businesses, and emergency service providers in and around the Gap Area. If Verizon is unable to collocate its equipment on the Proposed Tower, the significant service gap in Verizon's wireless communications network will remain, and Verizon will be prohibited from providing reliable wireless service to its customers in the Gap Area.

Dated this 19th day of October, 2026

Matt Bennett
Assoc. Director – RF/SP Engineering, GP Regulatory
Iowa, Greater Minnesota, North Dakota

September 23, 2026
Christopher Molloy
Vertical Bridge Reit

RE: Proposed 195’ Sabre Monopole for Colgate, IA
Site coordinates: 41.611939 -91.464494
Proposal number: 27-1247

Dear Chris,

Upon receipt of order, we propose to design and supply the above-referenced monopole for a Basic Wind Speed of 109 mph without ice and 49 mph + 1.23” ice, Risk Category II, Exposure Category C, and Topographic Category 1, in accordance with the Telecommunications Industry Association Standard ANSI/TIA-222-I, “Structural Standards for Steel Antenna Towers and Antenna-Supporting Structures”.

Although we cannot guarantee exactly how a tower would fall if it were to fail, the most likely mode of failure would be a buckling failure of one of the pole sections due to excessive wind loading. The pole section with the highest stress ratio is located at the 99’ – 148’ level. The stress ratio in that section is calculated to be 98.2% of the code-permitted design loading. Given that the pole section with the highest stress ratio will most likely fail first, the proposed tower would fail at the 99’ level with the top 96’ of the tower collapsing. Depending on the conditions at the time of failure and the stress levels in structural material below, the top 96’ of the tower would likely fall within a 100’ fall radius.

The fall radius statement above assumes proper foundation construction and tower installation. The foundation design should be reviewed to ensure that no foundation limit state governs the entire structural system and negates the fall radius design. The fall radius expectancy requires that the foundation be designed with a capacity greater than that of the tower capacity. If the foundation design used in association with this tower is performed by a third party, Sabre must be provided the opportunity to review the design in order to confirm that the fall radius remains satisfactory. If for some reason Sabre does not provide the tower design or is not given the opportunity to design or review the foundation for this specific project, the content of this letter becomes void.

If you have any other questions or concerns regarding the design of your site-specific tower, please contact our engineering or sales department.

Sincerely,

Mital Chavda

Mital Chavda, PE
VP, Engineering and Drafting

[redacted]

