Fresh Coast Planning
Grand Haven, MI 49417
www.freshcoastplanning.com

MEMORANDUM

To: Tallmadge Charter Township Planning Commission
From: Gregory L. Ransford, MPA
Date: November 16, 2026
Re: Horvath Communications – Wireless Communications Facility (Cellular Tower) Special Use Application

---

In accordance with Section 3.35 – Wireless Communication Facilities of the Tallmadge Charter Township Zoning Ordinance (TCTZO), attached is a Special Use Application from Horvath Communications to locate a Wireless Communications Facility (WCF) at 13113 24th Avenue, which property is owned by Bryan and Tammy Geurink. The property is located within the Agricultural Zoning District as well as the Rural Preserve Zoning District. The proposed WCF will be located within the Agricultural Zoning District portion of the property. The purpose of the WCF is to install equipment for Verizon Wireless to improve coverage and capacity of service, as they outline in their September 28, 2026, letter regarding "Special Use Approval for Horvath Communication Tower at: 13113 24th Avenue, Marne, MI 49435 / HV1768 – Lincoln Street."

The application has been reviewed and found complete. Below we provide our observations and findings regarding the application for the Planning Commission and applicant to consider. We believe approval of the request may be appropriate, pending comments received at the public hearing.

Observations and Findings

Section 3.35(e)2A – Location

The location of proposed WCF is preferred within the C-1, C-2, or I-1 Zoning District. An applicant that seeks a zoning district outside of the aforementioned zoning districts shall demonstrate how and why location in a preferred district is not feasible or will not satisfy their need.

As you will note within the attached materials (specifically their September 28, 2026, letter regarding "Site Selection Report"), the applicant outlines their recognition of the preferred site locations within the Township and their methodology to select the proposed site. It appears they have provided sufficient evidence regarding the need for a non-preferred location.

Below is a copy of Section 3.35(e)2A of the TCTZO for your convenience.

> Section 3.35(e)2A – Location
>
> For Wireless Communications Support Structure requests, the Township has a strong preference for monopoles in districts C-1, C-2, or I-1. An applicant who seeks approval elsewhere shall demonstrate how and why location in one of the preferred districts is not feasible or will not satisfy the applicant's need.

Despite the information provided by the applicant, the Planning Commission may hire its own independent consultant to verify their position of need within the letter.

Section 3.35(e)5 – Camouflage

To the extent possible, a WCF shall consist of materials, colors, textures, screening, and landscaping that will blend into the natural setting and surrounding buildings. As you may be aware, the proposed location is very rural in nature adjacent to farm fields, wooded areas, and single family dwellings. For your convenience, below is an aerial photo of the subject property and the surrounding area. The subject property is shown in blue.



Additionally below for your convenience is a copy of Section 3.35(e)5 of the TCTZO.

> Section 3.35(e)5 - Camouflage
>
> Camouflage. Wireless Communications Facilities shall, to the extent possible, consist of materials, colors, textures, screening, and landscaping that will blend them into the natural settings and surrounding buildings. Depending on the location and the type of Wireless Communications Facilities, applicant may be required to design the Wireless Communications Facilities in a way that camouflages its existence or is otherwise compatible with the existing character of the proposed site.

The Planning Commission will need to determine if the proposed monopole tower requires any camouflage or is acceptable as presented.

Section 3.35(e)23 – Setback

The monopole tower of the WCF shall be setback at least the height of the structure unless it can be demonstrated and certified by a professional engineer that it will collapse within a shorter fall-zone. For your convenience, below is a copy of Section 3.35(e)23 of the TCTZO.

Section 3.35(e)23 – Setback

The setback of a Wireless Communications Support Structure from any lot line shall be in accordance with the required setbacks for main or principal buildings as provided in the schedule of regulations for the zoning district in which the monopole is located. The setback of all other Wireless Communications Support Structures from any lot line shall be no less than the Height of the structure, unless it can be demonstrated and certified by a registered professional engineer, to the satisfaction of the Township Engineer, that the Wireless Communications Support Structure has a shorter fall-zone distance.

In response to this section, the applicant noted in their June 26, 2026 letter regarding "Nello Tower Fall Radius – Hello 170' NNP Tower" that they "cannot guarantee exactly how a tower would fall if it were to fail" and they describe that it would likely buckle and would fall within a radius of zero feet. The Planning Commission will need to determine if this expectation is acceptable.

Section 3.36 – Non-Motorized Pathways

As you know, as a result of the recent text amendment to the TCTZO regarding non-motorized pathways, the Planning Commission shall review and determine whether a bike path or sidewalk shall be constructed along the 24th Avenue frontage or that no pathway is necessary.

For your convenience, below is a copy of Section 3.36(3) – None-Motorized Pathway of the TCTZO along with our comments in italic font to assist with your review.

Section 3.36(4)

In making this determination, the Planning Commission shall consider, in addition to any other relevant factors, all of the following standards:

a. Vehicle traffic likely to be generated by the development which requires Site Plan approval.

   Given the type of use, virtually no traffic will exist from the development.

b. Bicycle, pedestrian, and other non-vehicle traffic likely to be generated by the development requiring Site Plan approval.

   Given the type of use, no non-vehicle traffic will be generated by the development.

c. The importance of the required non-motorized pathways to provide a safe means for bicyclists and pedestrians, including children, to access schools, churches, parks, libraries, and other amenities intended for their use.

   Certainly, to alleviate conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, non-motorized pathways are essential to separating those types of uses and reducing conflict. That said, no pathway is present in this area of 24th Avenue.

d. The proximity of the development requiring Site Plan approval to attractions such as parks, churches, public buildings, and shopping opportunities.

The proposed development is not adjacent or near to any parks, churches, public buildings, or shopping opportunities.

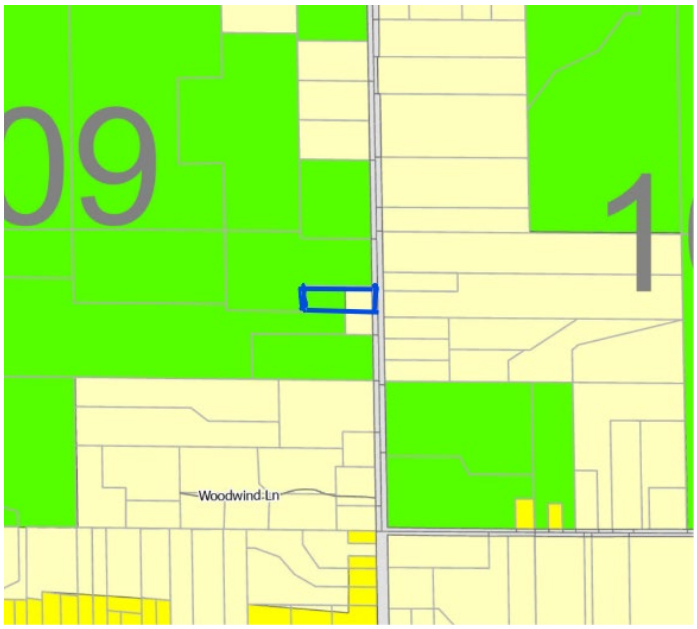
e. The fair market value of any land required for Easements for the required non-motorized pathways.

As long as the potential pathway is located within the right-of-way for 24th Avenue, which appears feasible, we do not believe that the fair market value of the property is relevant.

f. The character of the neighborhood in which the property is located.

As you will note on the aerial photo provided on page two of this memorandum, the character of the neighborhood is mostly rural farm fields with very few dwellings. Related, below is a snapshot of the Township Zoning Map with the property outlined in blue.

**Map Legend: Green = Agricultural, Tan = Rural Preserve, Yellow = Single Family Residential (R-1)*



Fire Department Review

Comments are pending from the Township Fire Department. We will transmit them to you once received.

Engineer Review

Given the use does not propose any significant impervious surface or grade changes, the Township Engineer has no comments in that regard.

Special Use Standards

As you know, the Planning Commission shall review the standards provided by Section 19.06 of the TCTZO during its deliberations. For your convenience, below is a copy of said section along with our comments in italic font to assist with your review.

> SECTION 19.06. REQUIRED STANDARDS AND FINDINGS. The Planning Commission shall find adequate evidence showing that the proposed use on the proposed lot generally satisfies the following:
>
> (a) Will be harmonious, and in accordance with objectives, intent, and purposes of this Ordinance;
>
> *Pending your review of any camouflage measures and receipt of public comment, it appears this standard has been met.*
>
> (b) Will be compatible with the natural environment and existing and future land uses in the vicinity;
>
> *As aforementioned, the surrounding property is rural. While cellular towers are generally impossible to "hide," the applicant has outlined that they sought to locate in accordance with the preferred locations pursuant to the TCTZO but could not do so to accomplish the coverage needs they seek. Given this, it appears this standard may be met.*
>
> (c) Will be compatible with the Township Master Plan;
>
> *While the Agricultural Classification (consistent with the Agricultural Zoning District) of the Tallmadge Charter Township Master Plan (TCTMP) never contemplated this type of development, goals of this Classification include preserving the rural character, woodlands, and wetlands, and supporting agricultural operations. The proposed tower, related cabinets, and future cabinet area, along with its room for collocation, prepare the site to minimize impacts on woodlands, wetlands, and agricultural operations. Given this, the proposed may be compatible with the TCTMP.*
>
> (d) Will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services, such as but not limited to highways, streets, police and fire protection, drainageways and structures, and refuse disposal, unless the persons or agencies responsible for the establishment of the proposed use will be able to provide adequately any such service;
>
> *As aforementioned, we are waiting for comments from the Township Fire Department but do not expect any concerns. Given this, it appears this standard may be met.*
>
> (e) Will not be detrimental, hazardous, or disturbing to existing and future neighboring uses, persons, property, or the public welfare;

While we do not believe the proposed use will be detrimental or hazardous to existing or future neighboring uses, pending comments received during the public hearing, this standard may be met.

(f) Will not create additional requirements at public cost for public facilities and services that will be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community.

We are unaware of any additional costs as a result of the proposed use. Given this, it appears this standard has been met.

Site Plan Standards

As you additionally know, the request shall be reviewed pursuant to the site plan review standards provided in Section 18.06 of the TCTZO. For your convenience, below is a copy of said section along with our comments in italic font to assist with your review.

SECTION 18.06. STANDARDS. The Planning Commission shall review the site plan for compliance with the requirements of this Ordinance and conformance with the following general standards:

(a) The applicant may legally apply for site plan review.

The applicant has engaged in a lease with the owner of the property to locate the WCF on the property. Given this, it appears that this standard has been met.

(b) All required information has been provided.

All required information has been provided. As a result, it appears this standard has been met.

(c) The proposed development conforms to all regulations of the zoning district in which it is located.

We believe the proposed development conforms to all regulations of the Agricultural Zoning District. As a result, it appears this standard has been met.

(d) All elements of the site plan shall be harmoniously and efficiently organized in relation to topography, the size and type of the lot, the character of adjoining property, and the type and size of buildings. The site shall be so developed as not to impede the normal and orderly development or improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in this Ordinance.

We believe all elements of the site plan are harmoniously and efficiently organized to the extent practicable given the type of use. Given the generally stagnant character of

the use, it is not expected to impede any adjacent development. As a result, it appears this standard has been met.

(e) The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practical, by minimizing tree and soil removal, and by topographic modifications which result in maximum harmony with adjacent areas.

Minimal landscaping exists on site. In fact, no landscaping exists in the area to be leased for the proposed WCF. As a result of screening requirements, the applicant will be adding Norway Spruce trees around the fence enclosure. However, the trees are proposed to be planted five feet on center to the fence, which would result in its branches growing through or into the fence given the species has a mature width of 25 to 30 feet. We recommend that these trees are repositioned at 12 feet on center to the fence.

Pending your review of the same, it appears this standard may be met.

(f) Natural resources will be preserved to and protected to the maximum feasible extent and organic, wet, or other soils which are not suitable for development will be undisturbed or will be modified in an acceptable manner.

We are unaware of any organic, wet, or other soils not suitable for development. Given this, it appears this standard may met.

(g) The proposed development will not cause soil erosion or sedimentation problems.

We do not believe the proposed will cause any soil erosion or sedimentation problems given minimal improvements are proposed and a gravel drive will access the structure. In addition, the Township Engineer is satisfied with the proposed plans particularly given that no grade changes or significant impervious surfaces are proposed. As a result, it appears this standard has been met.

(h) The drainage plan for the proposed development is adequate to handle anticipated storm water runoff and will not cause undue runoff onto neighboring property or overloading of water courses in the area.

As aforementioned, given minimal improvements and a the use of gravel drive the Township Engineer is satisfied with the proposed plans and does not have any drainage concerns. Given this, it appears this standard may be met.

(i) The proposed development properly respects floodways and floodplains on or in the vicinity of the subject property.

We are not aware of any floodways or floodplains on the property. Given this, it appears this standard has been met.

(j) The plan meets the specifications of Tallmadge Township for water supply, sewage disposal or treatment, storm drainage, and other public facilities.

As a result of the type of use, none of these items are proposed. Given this, it appears this standard may be met.

(k) With respect to vehicular and pedestrian circulation on the site, including walkways, interior drives, and parking; special attention shall be given to the location, number and spacing of access points; general interior circulation; separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic; the avoidance of building corners next to access drives; and the arrangement of parking areas that are safe and convenient, and insofar as practicable, do not detract from the design of the proposed buildings and structures, neighboring properties and flow of traffic on adjacent streets.

Following construction of the site, pedestrian and vehicular traffic will be virtually nonexistent. Given this, it appears this standard may be met.

(l) All buildings or groups of buildings shall be so arranged as to permit emergency vehicle access by some practical means as required by the Township fire department.

We have not received comments from the Township Fire Department. Once we receive their comments, we will transmit them to you. Pending their comments, this standard may be met.

(m) The site plan shall provide reasonable, visual, and sound privacy for all dwelling units located therein. Fences, walks, barriers, and landscaping shall be used, as appropriate, for the protection and enhancement of property and for the privacy of its occupants.

Given that no dwelling units are proposed for this development, we believe this standard does not apply.

(n) All loading and unloading areas and outside storage of materials which face or are visible from residential districts or public thoroughfares, shall be screened by a vertical screen consisting of structural or plant materials. Also, outdoor storage of garbage and refuse shall be contained, screened from view, and located so as not to be a nuisance to the subject property or neighboring properties.

No loading or unloading area is proposed for the use. Any maintenance to the facility requires one vehicle which will park at the enclosure gate. No storage of garbage is necessary for the use. Given this, it appears this standard may be met.

(o) All lighting shall be shielded from adjacent properties and public right-of-way.

The two proposed light fixtures are significantly setback from the 24th Avenue right-of-way. While the proposed facility is near an adjacent property line, the lights are fixed to a toggle switch on a 60 minute timer so they turn off when they are not needed. Given this, it appears this standard may be met.

(p) Phases of development are in logical sequence so that any phase will not depend upon a subsequent phase for adequate access, public utility services, drainage, or erosion control.

There are no proposed phases of development. Given this, it appears this standard does not apply.

(q) Site plans shall conform to all applicable requirements of state and federal statutes and approval may be conditioned on the applicant receiving necessary state and federal permits before a building permit or occupancy permit is granted.

We believe this standard can be considered accordingly.

Section 3.35(g) – Approval

Pursuant to Section 3.55(g)4 of the TCTZO, the Planning Commission has the authority to place conditions on the proposed use which they conclude are necessary to minimize any adverse effects of the WCF. A copy of said section is below for your convenience.

Section 3.35(g)4

In granting a special use permit, the Planning Commission may impose such conditions that the Planning Commission concludes are necessary to minimize any adverse effect of the proposed Wireless Communications Facilities on adjoining properties or which may relate directly to other requirements of this Ordinance or any other applicable local, state, or federal law.

In addition, pursuant to Section 3.35(g)5 of the TCTZO, in order to approve the application, the Planning Commission must find that two standards are met. A copy of those standards through said section are below for your convenience along with our comments to each in italic font to assist with your review.

Section 3.35(g)5

In order to approve the application, the Planning Commission shall find that:

A. The proposed Wireless Communications Facilities meet the special use approval standards of Chapter 19, except as otherwise indicated in this Section; and

Please see our review of Section 19.06 within this memorandum.

B. The proposed Wireless Communications Facilities meet all other requirements of this Section.

Pending your review of our Observations and Findings, all other requirements of Section 3.35 are met.

Public Hearing

Given that the request is a special use, a public hearing has been scheduled before the Planning Commission at your November 24, 2026, meeting.

Planning Commission Considerations, Recommendation, and Draft Motion

As the Planning Commission deliberates regarding this application, we believe the following warrant your review and consideration. They are listed in no particular order:

- Whether an independent need study is appropriate to confirm the proposed non-preferred zoning district location
- Whether the proposed monopole tower requires camouflage
- Whether the fall zone described is acceptable and or whether additional engineering data is necessary
- The position of the proposed Norway Spruce and its mature width related to the fence
- Consideration of the non-motorized pathway standards in Section 3.36(3)
- Consideration of the Special Use Standards provided in Section 19.06
- Consideration of the Site Plan Review Standards provided in Section 18.06
- Consideration of the WCF standards in Section 3.35(g)5

Recommendation and Draft Motion

Given our recommendation of approval and in an effort to assist with your formulation of a motion in that regard, we offer the following motion for your consideration. In the event a motion is offered to deny, we will gladly draft that motion for consideration at your next meeting based on your direction.

> Motion to recommend approval of the site plan as presented, because it meets the standards provided in Section 18.06, Section 19.06, and 3.35(g)5. The site plan includes:
>
> - Special Use Application dated 9/29/2026 (1 page);
> - Zoning Application – Written Report, dated September 28, 2026 re: Special Use Approval for Horvath Communication Tower at: 13113 24th Avenue, Marne, MI 49435 / HV1768 – Lincoln Street (7 pages);
> - Horvath Communications Towers and Das Site Selection Report letter dated September 28, 2026 (7 pages);
> - Location map dated June 15, 2026 (1 page);
> - Horvath Communications Towers and Das option and land lease agreement document, undated but refers to a dated April 28, 2026 document (1 page);
> - Long-Term Maintenance Plan (3 pages);
> - Coverage maps (current and proposed) (2 pages);
> - Certificate of Liability Insurance dated 06/23/2026 (1page);
> - Nello letter dated 6/30/2026 Attn: Gina Rodefer regarding a tower quotation (11 pages);
> - Nello letter dated June 26, 2026 re: Nello Tower Fall Radius – Nello 170' NTP Tower (1 page);

- Property Report Prepared for Horvath Communications and Verizon Wireless, effective date 3/25/1986 to 3/25/2026 (48 pages);
- Option and Lease Agreement (26 pages);
- Verizon Statement of Network Need for a New Communications Tower (2 pages);
- Final Survey, Sheet Title S1 and Sheet Title S2, dated 06/16/26 (1 page each, respectively);
- Lincoln Street HV1768 Site Plan Set, Job No 2026705.53, dated 11/02/26 including 38 sheets

with the following conditions:

1. Pursuant to Section 3.35(g)9 of the TCTZO, the applicant shall post a security deposit to cover the cost of removal of the WCF in the event it is abandoned. The security shall be in the form of cash or letter of credit.
2. Execution of the standard Sewer Special Assessment Contract and;
3. [Construct the pathway along 24th Avenue or do not require its construction]
4. [Insert Condition, if necessary]
5. [Insert Condition, if necessary]

As aforementioned, the proposed is scheduled for your November 24, 2026, meeting, as a public hearing. If you have any questions, please let us know.

GLR
Planner

Attachments

cc: Mark Bennett, Supervisor