

**TO: Redwood County Planning Commission**

**FROM: Jeanette Pidde**  
**Land Use and Zoning Supervisor**  
**Redwood County Environmental Office**

**DATE: January 15, 2025**

**RE: Planning Commission Hearing on January 28, 2025**



A meeting of the Redwood County Planning Commission has been scheduled for Tuesday, the 28<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2025, beginning at 1:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Redwood County Government Center, 403 South Mill Street, Redwood Falls, MN 56283.

The meeting will involve two (2) public hearings. A brief summary of the subject matter of the hearings is set forth below.

**1. Public Hearing on Application for Conditional Use Permit (11-24) by Blair Ransom of Buell Consulting, Inc., as agent for Vertical Bridge, o/b/o landowner James DuBois**

Application for Conditional Use Permit 11-24 was heard at the November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Planning Commission meeting. Following the meeting, it was discovered that the notice of hearing to adjoining landowners was insufficient. The hearing was put back on the Planning Commission's schedule, and notice was reissued. Also, since the time of the prior meeting, tower ownership was assigned from Verizon Wireless to The Towers, LLC d/b/a Vertical Bridge.

Vertical Bridge is proposing to construct a 250-foot self-supporting telecommunications tower and equipment platform in the N1/2 of the NE1/4 of Section 16, Vesta Township. The tower will include a lightning rod, adding another 9 feet to the total height. The tower will be built on land leased from Jim DuBois, located east of Highway 19, just north of the City of Vesta. The tower will include a Verizon antenna to accommodate increased wireless data and streaming usage. The tower will also have the capacity to house antennas from up to two additional providers.

The proposed tower area is located in an "A" Agricultural District. Cellular telecommunications towers are a Conditional Use in said district.

The tower site will include a gravel driveway and parking area and perimeter fence. The tower will be built within a 43' x 50' fenced gravel compound within a 100' x 100' lease area. The scope of the work includes a new 12' driveway onto Highway 19, which will be permitted through MNDOT.

The proposed communications tower is located in the Agricultural District. Redwood County Code of Ordinances Section 153.142 states that "Cellular Telecommunications Towers" are a conditional use in the Agricultural District.

In accordance with the application requirements stipulated in Section 153.381 of the Ordinance, Blair Ransom of Buell Consulting, Inc., acting on behalf of Verizon, submitted the following documents and information:

**Redwood County Government Center - Environmental Department**  
**P.O Box 130 Redwood Falls, MN 56283**  
**(507) 637-4023 redwoodcounty-mn.us Environmental@co.redwood.mn.us**

1. CUP application, project summary, and evidence of compliance with ordinance requirements
2. Site plan
3. Review of alternative structures
4. Engineer's statement
5. Colocation letter of intent
6. FAA determination of no hazard
7. Removal bond
8. FCC ASR approval
9. MNDOT approach permit



There are no county ditches located near the site. The nearest county tile line is located more than 700 feet from the proposed tower location. The nearest residences are located over 1,000 feet from the tower site in the City of Vesta. Section 153.384 of the Ordinance requires that communications towers be set back at least the height of the tower plus 100 feet from the following structures and features: Neighboring residences; property lines and public street right-of-way lines; and all structures not belonging to the applicant

However, the ordinance allows the set back from a property line to be reduced if the tower is "designed and engineered to collapse progressively within the distance between the tower and the property line." The proposed tower is designed to collapse within a radius of 83' 6", as described in an engineer's statement provided by the tower manufacturer.

A copy of the Conditional Use Permit application, maps, plans, and proposed permit conditions are enclosed.

## **2. Public Hearing on Application for Conditional Use Permit (1-25) submitted by Colin O'Neil of RedwoodSun, LLC, o/b/o landowners Richard and Lynn Green**

RedwoodSun, LLC, is proposing to construct a large solar energy system, consisting of two phases.

Phase one will be a 1 megawatt-AC community solar garden. Phase 2 will be a 4 megawatt-AC community solar garden development. The total project size will be 5 megawatt-AC. The project will be constructed in the E1/2 of Section 15, Morgan Township, with the majority of the project being constructed in the NE1/4 SE1/4 thereof. The project will be located on Saratoga Ave., approximately one-quarter mile east of the City of Morgan.

The proposed project area is located in an "A" Agricultural District. Large solar energy systems are a Conditional Use in said district.

The proposed solar project would be built on approximately 36 acres of the 121-acre parcel. The site is currently used for agricultural row crops. After the panels are in place, the project site will be vegetated with a short-growth pollinator mix. Phase 1 of the project would be constructed in 2025 or early 2026, depending on interconnection approval from Xcel Energy. Phase 2 is expected to have a 2027-2028 construction date.

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A SWPPP plan will be submitted prior to construction, and a wetland delineation was completed. No wetlands exist on the site.

The project will require an access driveway from Saratoga Avenue. The project area will be protected by an eight-foot chain link security fence.

The proposed decommissioning framework provides financial assurance to cover the cost of 25% of the estimated decommissioning costs on or before the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Commercial Operation Date, 50 percent on or before the fifteenth anniversary date, 75% on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary date, and 100 percent on or before the twenty-fifth anniversary date.

There are no county ditches located near the site. There is a county tile line is located on the site, and within the project area. The drainage inspector has determined that the 100' setback requirement could be reduced to 40' on one side of the tile line, as long as 100' is maintained on the opposing side. The drainage inspector also recommends that the portions of the tile line that extend under the proposed access road be replaced with non-perforated pipe. A setback waiver will be drafted by the Environmental Office.

The nearest residence is located approximately 720 feet east of the project location, and is owned by Richard and Kimberly Maurer. There is an existing solar energy site directly to the south of this proposed site.

A copy of the Conditional Use Permit application, maps, plans, and proposed permit conditions are enclosed.



