



City of Santa Ana
20 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701
Staff Report
May 4, 2021

TOPIC: Wireless Telecommunication Facilities Guidelines

AGENDA TITLE

Receive and File Standards and Guidelines for Wireless Telecommunication Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive and file Standards and Guidelines for Wireless Telecommunication Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way.

DISCUSSION

In 2018, the City Council adopted Ordinance NS-2954, revising Article X to Chapter 33 of the Santa Ana Municipal Code to regulate wireless facilities in the public right-of-way. The revision was to accommodate wireless technology advancements and new Federal and State laws. In addition, the ordinance also authorized the Director of Public Works to create the Standards and Guidelines for Wireless Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way (Guidelines) to provide procedural and design guidance, and specific design standards and requirements for project applicants proposing wireless facilities in the public right-of-way (Exhibit 1). Staff initially prepared the Guidelines in April 2019 and they have been revised to provide control and hierarchy of the proposed wireless facilities on support structures, which will facilitate staff's review of wireless facility applications.

BACKGROUND

Telecommunications advancements and consumer demand network data capacity have led to the need for smaller and more densified wireless antenna locations. Different types of antennas are required to deliver various wireless coverages and capacities. A "macro cell" is used for larger coverage, with a radius of several miles. These facilities are typically located on freestanding towers, faux tree poles, tall buildings, water tanks, etc., and until recently, have been the most common cell type utilized.

In recent years, wireless telecommunication providers have increasingly proposed placing single, "small cell" antennas and equipment on existing infrastructure located within the public right-of-way. The small cell antennas are usually deployed in areas that cannot be effectively served by a traditional macro cell, or areas that may have coverage but not enough capacity. A small cell is not intended to replace macro cell sites, but to fill

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coverage gaps in areas that do not have sufficient capacity. These small cells are placed in locations that are densely populated and/or need additional network capacity, such as downtown areas, around heavily traveled arterial streets, or within residential neighborhoods.

In recent months, some of the small cell antennas proposals have included installations adjacent to historic properties or in neighborhoods with decorative streetlights, which are unsuitable for attachments. To help respond to and regulate the proposed applications, the Director of Public Works Agency is updating the Guidelines. The revised Guidelines now contain specifications on preferred structures and locations. This section provides a hierarchy for support structures and a list of prohibited structures for wireless facility installations. Also included is a distance requirement for installations near historic properties or resources to ensure that the character of the historic structure is preserved. Other changes to the Guidelines include the prohibition of new poles in the public right-of-way. Provisions have been made to allow the Director to consider such requests.

Wireless telecommunication installations outside of public streets and alley rights-of-way (such as within parks and on private property) will continue to require a conditional use permit administered by the Planning and Building Agency; that process remains unchanged.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

There is no environmental impact associated with the action.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

EXHIBIT(S)

1. Guidelines for Wireless Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way

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Approved By: Kristine Ridge, City Manager