



Community Development Department

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MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission
From: Emily Arteche, Community Development Director
Date: November 18, 2024
Subject: Wireless Communication – Introduction

Introduction

Wireless Communication Facilities (WCFs) are the antennas, support structures and other equipment or apparatus necessary for providing personal wireless services and information services. This form of telecommunications provides for the transmission of information over distances to the general public which is a vital communication system in our community.

Typically, such WCF's involves access to the public right-of-way (ROW) or other locally owned infrastructure, such as property, poles, towers, reservoirs, etc. Since telecommunications services involve both interstate activity (transmitting information) WCF's are regulated by laws at the federal, state, and local level.

Washington State law recognizes the federal telecommunications authority, including the Federal Communications Commission FCC. For example, [RCW 35.99.040\(2\)](#) allows localities to regulate the placement of telecommunications facilities in the ROW, but only if the regulation doesn't prohibit facility placement entirely or violate [47 U.S.C. §253](#). The city regulates WCF in SMC Chapter 17.77 Wireless Communication Facilities. A primary objective Chapter 17.77 is to preserve the existing visual and aesthetic character of the city and its neighborhoods, as well as minimizing the noise impacts generated by WCFs.

Background

SMC Chapter 17.77 was repealed in its entirety and a new Chapter 17.77 was adopted by the City Council on December 14, 2015. The Chapter created the provisions for location of wireless communication facilities, i.e., the siting hierarchy and permitting locations. The highest-ranking location for WCFs is on attached existing support structures, both city-owned and non-city owned property. Over the course of the past 9 years few WCFs have been installed. There are existing gaps in wireless coverage.

Analysis

Wireless companies continually express the need to site additional facilities. SMC Chapter 17.77 siting hierarchy and permitting location provisions allow for few if any real all opportunities for new facilities to be constructed. The FCC continually updates provisions that regulate WCF's which need to be consistent with Snoqualmie's wireless code.

Next Steps

Staff will prepare draft amendments to Title 17.77 for a future Planning Commission meeting.