

## Cell Tower Zoning Text Amendment

## STAFF REPORT

**Ordinance No:** 2022-30

**Applicant:** Village of Wellington

**Request:**

To amend Sections 6.2.2.G.3 of Wellington's Land Development Regulations (LDR) modifying regulations related to commercial wireless facilities (cell towers), and provide a map with the locations of preliminary approved towers and approved towers within Wellingtons.

**Boards, Committees, and Council:**

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Vote</b>
PZAB	10/19/2022	Pending
Council (1 <sup>st</sup> )	11/09/2022	Pending
Council (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	12/13/2022	Pending

**Wellington Vision:**

A Great Hometown: Great Neighborhoods, Great Schools, and Great Parks.

**Wellington Mission:**

To provide high-quality services that create economic, environmental, and social sustainability for residents.

**Wellington Goals:**

- Economic Development
- Neighborhood Renaissance
- Protecting Our Investment
- Respecting the Environment
- Responsive Government

**Project Manager:**

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**Background:**

At the 2022 Village Council Directions meeting staff was provided direction to identify ways to improve cellular/wireless service coverage within Wellington. Staff have been in contact with the main carriers (AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile) that provide cellular service within Wellington regarding ways the companies can improve cellular service immediately. AT&T has stated their coverage is adequate, while both Verizon and T-Mobile acknowledged some issues with bandwidth/coverage and have plans to improve. Wellington may have cellular coverage, but with the demand from residences and businesses at peak periods, the demand may be more capacity than the carrier can handle during those periods. Within the municipal boundaries there are seven (7) cell tower sites, which are in the north and eastern areas of Wellington. Cell towers (macro) are 100 feet plus in height, typically a monopole, lattice, and guyed tower design, with antenna arrays, microwave dishes, and ground space for support equipment.

With the development of 5G (fifth generation of wireless technology), communities are seeing the emergence of smart technologies, which will require infrastructure improvements including cell towers, small cells, rooftop antennas, and fiber. Wellington has seen the installation of several small cells within the public rights-of-way, which is allowed similar to other public utilities. Small cells (micro) are antennas typically on utility or light poles (50 feet in height or less) that covers an area less than half-mile. In an effort to improve the wireless coverage, Wellington will need to work with the carriers and tower developers to help expand the wireless infrastructure. This will include the need for

additional macro and micro towers within Wellington. Expanding the wireless infrastructure will also require changes to our regulations and process when it comes to cell towers, which may cause some challenges for Wellington.

What are some of the challenges?

- How to best meet the wireless coverage needs of residents, businesses, and Wellington facilities.
- Maintaining the aesthetics within Wellington while allowing additional cell towers.
- How to streamline cell tower development with regulations.

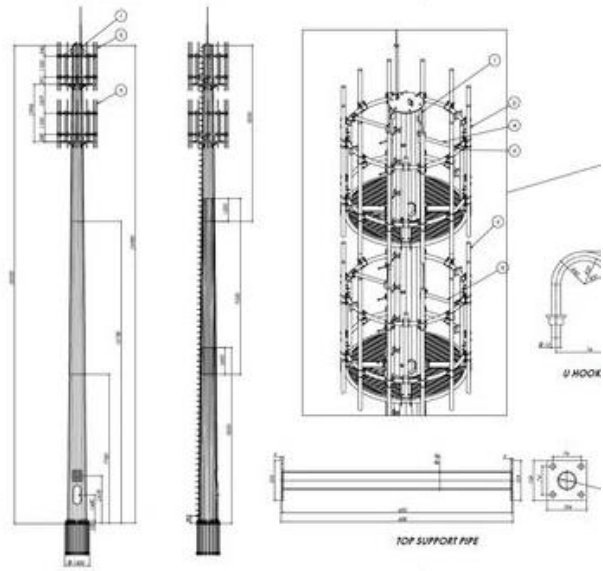
### **Analysis:**

Section 6.2.2.D.3 of Wellington's Land Development Regulations (LDR) provides requirements for the siting of commercial wireless facilities, excluding facilities in the rights-of-way (small cells). Per Council directions on implementing ways to improve wireless service within Wellington, we are proposing this text amendment to identify general sites that are pre-approved for commercial wireless facilities, including cell towers, small cells, rooftop antennas, etc. An issue the carriers and tower developers have stated are the limitations on siting of cell towers in or adjacent to residential areas, along with the approval process and timing. Approval of this text amendment will adopt, by reference, the Wellington Wireless Communication Tower Map, that identifies the general locations of preliminary approved tower sites and all existing approved tower sites within the municipal boundaries. The preliminary approved (pre-approved) sites as identified on the map are Wellington/Acme-owned properties, other public properties, and Florida Power & Light's (FP&L) major transmission line corridor that are suitable for commercial wireless facilities. These sites are identified based on assumptions of the carrier's wireless coverage areas and additional wireless infrastructure that will be required to support the current demand/capacity and the future demands of Wellington. A community with smart technologies (wearable devices, smart/connected buildings, advanced robotics, connected infrastructure, smart transportation, connected/autonomous vehicles, etc.) will utilize resources more efficiently, but will significantly increase the demand on the wireless infrastructure.

Other potential issues for carriers and tower developers with cell towers is the requirement to be camouflaged/stealth and being above the surrounding neutral/built environment (tree canopy, buildings, etc.). The cell tower that was constructed within the Wellington Market Place parking lot was approved as a stealth 120-foot flag pole design (flag-less) with concealment of the antennas. Each wireless carrier needs to position/adjust their antennas to ensure the best signal range, which can be impacted/limited by the concealment design and tree canopy in the area, not to mention potentially impacting carriers' wireless signals from the cell tower. Aesthetically, the camouflaged/stealth is the best option for sites located close to densely populated residential, commercial, and public areas. Areas that may not be as populated or visible may potentially be best for a monopole cell tower design. The monopole cell tower has triangular platforms where each wireless carrier installs their antennas, radio equipment, amplifiers, etc., needed to transmit the signal. Below are illustrations of monopole cell towers with attached triangular platforms and equipment that potentially could be allowed in the Wellington Environmental Preserve (Section 24) and the FP&L corridor sites as shown on the proposed Wellington Wireless Communication Tower Map.



(Image source: *terabonne.net* and *smartcitisolutions.com*)



If the Wellington Wireless Communication Tower Map is adopted, locations illustrated as preliminary approved tower sites will comply with standards as listed in the proposed LDR Section 6.2.2.G.3.D. and only require an administrative site plan approval, with public notice (properties within 300 feet of the site) being required prior to approval.

In addition to the above proposed text amendment, the setback and separation requirements for all cell tower sites are proposed for amendment as listed in Table 6.2.2.G-1. The other amendments to Section 6.2.2.G.3 included clean-up and simplifying the regulations to help with streamlining the process, while still maintaining Wellington's aesthetics and neighborhood character.

**Summary:**

The Planning and Zoning Division recommends approval of Ordinance No. 2022-30 to amend Wellington's LDR modifying regulations relating to commercial wireless facilities, while being responsive and making changes to our regulations based on interest from the public on the quality wireless service signal in Wellington.

**List of Exhibits:**

- Exhibit A: Proposed Changes to LDR
- Exhibit B: Wellington Wireless Communication Tower Map