



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

**ORD. 2015-080:** To amend and reordain City Code § 114-692.3, 114-692.4 and 114-1030.1, concerning the review criteria for installations utilizing alternative support structures and when a plan of development shall be required, respectively; and to amend and reordain the fees set forth in Appendix A for section 114-1020.4(a), both for the purpose of authorizing the installation of certain wireless communications facilities on alternative support structures with a building permit

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Land Use Administration  
**Date:** May 4, 2015

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#### **PETITIONER**

City of Richmond  
Verizon Wireless

#### **PURPOSE**

To amend the Zoning Ordinance for the purpose of permitting small scale telecommunication facilities on alternative support structures throughout the City and exempting them from the requirement to obtain a Plan of Development (POD).

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

At the March 16, 2015 meeting, the Commission agreed that it was appropriate to move forward with the development of the proposed amendments and approved a Resolution of Intent to Amend the Zoning Ordinance. This proposed ordinance would actually amend the Zoning Ordinance in accordance with what the Commission approved on March 16, 2015.

The proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance contains restrictions that would minimize visual clutter associated with telecommunication facilities, particularly along principal streets. In addition, the proposed amendment requires these type of facilities to receive a certificate of zoning compliance and establishes a \$500 fee for the certificate.

The proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance would permit small cell/data node facilities to be installed anywhere in the City (except on property occupied by single- and two-family uses) with only a building permit when located on alternative support structures. This system is being rolled out by multiple carriers in a large number of sites within the City and the proposed amendment would allow them in more locations and streamline the permitting process.

These small cell/data node facilities work with the existing macro (Tower) sites as the umbrella coverage, they have a low profile (usually less than 24" tall), are generally mounted on a building/roof/pole between 20-35' high, and have a very low power output (5 watts). In residential and lower intensity business district these type of facilities are currently only

permitted on property that contains no less than 12,000 square feet of lot area, developed with an existing building containing a minimum of 14,000 square feet of floor area, and with mounting height on the alternative support structure of no less than 45 feet. These requirements were intended for the larger telecommunication facilities and severely limit the ability to install the small cell facilities in those residential and lower intensity business district.

The proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance would allow the small scale facilities to have broader applicability throughout the City. The ordinance would place the following limitations on the type of facility that would be permitted throughout the City without the requirement to obtain a Plan of Development with the proposed changes from the February 2, 2015 meeting indicated:

- 1) The maximum combined projection (antenna and mounting hardware) above the alternative support structure shall not exceed 10 feet, provided, however if the installation is visible from the principal street frontage, then the maximum combined projection (antenna and mounting hardware) above the alternative support structure shall not exceed 5 feet in height;
- 2) The maximum dimensions of the antenna shall not exceed 2 feet by 2 feet by 2 foot or an alternative design not to exceed 3 cubic feet; and
- 3) The maximum dimensions of any new mechanical enclosures or cabinets located on a support structure where they would be visible shall not exceed 5 feet by 2 feet by 2 feet. ~~Any new enclosures or cabinets shall be designed and colored so as to appear to be an element of the support structure.~~
- 4) Any portion of the installation that is visible from the principal street frontage shall be designed and colored to appear as an element of the alternative support structure including the use of antennas, cables and equipment that are painted or tinted to match the surface of the alternative support structure on which they are affixed.

The ordinance would continue to prohibit the installation of any telecommunication facilities on properties occupied by single- and two-family dwellings.

Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendments.

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