City of Camas

Wireless Communication Facilities

February, 2017

Background

City Council through Ordinance 16-015 expressed a desire to:

- Review City of Camas zoning and use codes related to Wireless Communication Facilities for consistency with the vision, goals, and policies established through the “Camas 2035” Comprehensive Plan; and
- Explore best available information on wireless technology, stealth technology, and alternatives to the placement of additional Wireless Communication Facilities through the City of Camas;

Work Plan

Ordinance 16-015 established a Work Plan:

October 3, 2016 -City Council held a public hearing on Ordinance 16-015 establishing a moratorium on new Wireless Communication Facilities;

November 15, 2016 – Planning Commission public hearing to hear from citizens on regarding allowing the permitting of Wireless Communication Facilities within the City of Camas;

February 22, 2017 –Planning Commission workshop to discuss a list of options, based upon the testimony received through the November 15, 2016 public hearing and through research conducted. Recommendation from the Planning Commission on the direction is anticipated;

Camas 2035 Comprehensive Plan
(Vision/Goals/Policies)

- Vision: Vital, Stable and Livable Neighborhoods. "…Quality public facilities, services and utilities contribute to a high quality of life".[pg. 3]

- Franchise Utility Goal [pg. 5-12]
  - F-1: To Ensure that energy and communication facilities and their services are available to support development when they are needed.

- Franchise Utilities Policies [pg. 5-12]
  - F-1: Minimize the effects on adjacent properties, the environment, and the visual quality of the community of siting, developing, operating, and maintaining these facilities.
  - F-2: Coordinate to provide reliable service through partnering and agreements with utility companies.
  - F-3: Promote the conservation of energy resources through the adoption of appropriate energy codes and efficient land use patterns and transportation systems.

New/Emerging Technologies

- Demand for smart phones and other devises reliant on wireless communications (Internet of Things) continues to increase.
- Capacity to meet demand has resulted in new infrastructure development options such as:
  - Distributed antenna systems (“DAS”)/Small Cell networks located in right-of-way;
  - Development of new technologies such as 5G.
- The 2017 Washington State Legislature may consider legislation that could mandate how the City of Camas regulates small cell and 5G technologies.

Advantages of DAS and Small Cell Technologies [FCC 14-153]

- Physically much smaller;
- Can be placed on utility poles, building walls and rooftops, and other small structures either privately owned or in the public rights-of-way;
- Can be used in densely populated areas where traditional towers are not feasible or where localized wireless traffic demands would require an unrealistic number of macrocells;
- Utilize small equipment and transmit at lower signal power levels, they can be deployed in indoor environments to improve interior wireless services;
- Can address coverage needs in areas with stringent siting regulations, such as historic districts.
- Smaller and less visible. Easier to deployed with stealth measures such as concealment enclosures that blend with the structures on which they are installed;
- Comparatively cost-effective way of addressing increased demand for wireless broadband services in urban areas.

Public Testimony

November 15, 2016 Planning Commission (Summary)

- Establish clear and objective standards for effectively evaluating a significant gap in service and in evaluating visual and site impacts of new cell towers;
- Limit cell towers in residential zones to those necessary to address a significant gap in service under federal law;
- Require the significant gap analysis demonstration that no alternative sites are available within commercial or industrial zoned properties;
- Require least obtrusive designs (height, site location and architectural and landscape) and least obtrusive technologies in siting cell towers and other telecom. facilities.

Conclusions

- Changes have occurred in cell technologies and in the infrastructure options available to provide wireless coverage;
- Camas 2035 Plan desires to “Minimize the effects on adjacent properties, the environment, and the visual quality of the community of siting, developing, operating, and maintaining these facilities”.
- Public desires greater clarity in standards, further limitations on cell towers in residential areas and greater design considerations than currently provided under Camas Municipal Code, CMC 18.35.
- 2017 Washington State Legislation could impact the effectiveness of additional regulations tied to DAS or small cell technologies

Options

Staff is looking to the Planning Commission and City Council for direction. The following three (3) options are provided for discussion and consideration. Staff recommends Option 2.

1. NO ACTION. Conclude the moratorium and rely on the existing code.

2. NEW CODE. Direct Staff to prepare a draft Ordinance for consideration in a public hearing to: a) Address concerns of the community as summarized in this presentation; b) Address and promote DAS, Small Cell and 5G technologies; and c) be reviewed for consistency with FCC and other legal requirements.

3. HOLD OFF. Direct Staff to hold off on preparation of a Draft Ordinance until the 2017 Washington Legislative Session is concluded or until no legislation on small cell or DAS is pending and to incorporate any changes into a draft Ordinance. This option would likely require an extension to the moratorium that is set to expire August 7, 2017.

Next Steps

- March 6, 2017 – City Council workshop.
- May 16, 2017 – Planning Commission hearing to consider draft amendments to the Camas Municipal Code.
- June 19, 2017 – City Council hearing
- July 3, 2017 -Ordinance Adoption.