



Planning Commission Staff Report

August 23, 2017
Item 5.a.

SUBJECT: P17-0817

APPLICANT: City of Pleasanton

PURPOSE: Consider an amendment to the Pleasanton Municipal Code to amend Chapter 18.110 Personal Wireless Service Facilities to allow for small cell wireless systems in the Hacienda Business Park where the systems are concealed

LOCATION: Hacienda Business Park

**GENERAL PLAN/
SPECIFIC PLAN/
ZONING:** Various

EXHIBITS: A. [Draft Amendments to Chapter 18 of the Pleasanton Municipal Code](#)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending approval of P17-0817 to the City Council with the proposed amendments shown in Exhibit A.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Planning Commission is being asked to review proposed amendments to Chapter 18.110 of the Pleasanton Municipal Code (Personal Wireless Service Facilities) and recommend approval to the City Council. These code amendments are intended to improve cellular coverage and capacity by allowing small-cell wireless technology to be deployed in the Hacienda Business Park.

BACKGROUND

The Hacienda Business Park Owners Association (“Hacienda”) owns and maintains all of the streetlight poles located in the public right-of-way throughout Hacienda. About a year ago, Hacienda was approached by Philips Lighting North America Corporation (“Philips”) with a proposal to improve cellular coverage and capacity throughout Hacienda by introducing small-cell technology within the streetlights in the public right-of-way. Philips and Hacienda subsequently entered into an agreement whereby Philips has agreed to replace up to one hundred of the existing streetlight poles with new “smart poles.” Like the existing poles, the new smart poles will utilize LED lighting but with the added benefit of concealing “small cell” wireless systems within the smart poles. The primary purpose of small cell facilities is to supplement the

broader macro cell facilities by filling gaps in cellular coverage and also providing increased network capacity where coverage already exists.

DISCUSSION

“Small cell” facilities are commonly placed in the public right-of-way on light poles, traffic signals, or on new poles. Small cell facilities typically provide a coverage radius of approximately 500 to 1,000 feet (or one to two city blocks.) Small cell facilities complement and supplement the broader macro cell facilities¹ in that they can fill gaps in coverage and also provide increased network capacity where coverage already exists. Whereas network coverage refers to whether a user’s device can locate a signal from an antenna, network capacity refers to whether the located signal can perform to the level demanded by the device (allowing cellular customers near a small cell site to experience an increase in speed and reliability especially when uploading and streaming content.)

Philips Lighting North America recently entered into a Lease Agreement with the Hacienda Business Park Owners Association for the right to replace up to one hundred existing streetlight poles with “smart poles.” Per the agreement, Philips has the right to replace existing light poles with smart poles and to lease the space within those smart poles to wireless providers such as AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile and Sprint. Once the smart pole is installed, title to the smart pole reverts back to Hacienda and Philips retains the leasing rights. (Through a separate agreement between the City and Hacienda, the lease revenue paid to Hacienda by Philips will be equally split between the City and Hacienda. That agreement will go to the City Council for approval at the same meeting as the proposed amendments to the wireless code are reviewed by Council.)

Planning staff has reviewed various design options for placing small cells within the public right-of-way in Hacienda and believes that the “smart pole” designed by Philips is the most appropriate design for the Hacienda Business Park. Typically, wireless carriers propose attaching small cell equipment to the side of an existing light or traffic pole and placing the power components either on the pole or in a freestanding cabinet. (See photo simulation on the left below.) The benefit of the smart pole is that it allows all of the necessary components (e.g., cabling, two radios, power meter, and battery backup) to be concealed inside the pole. (See photo simulation on the right below.) While the diameter of the smart pole and its base are larger than the existing light poles in Hacienda, staff believes that the smart pole is a better choice for Hacienda than having unsightly cabling and equipment attached to the pole and/or being placed in a freestanding cabinet in the right-of-way. (See photo simulations below of a smart pole (right) and of a typical small-cell installation (left).)

¹ A “macro cell” is a free standing tower that is used for large coverage radius of up to two or three miles. In Pleasanton, there are approximately thirty macro cell sites. Two sites are located on towers (e.g., the tower at 3830 Old Santa Rita Road), other sites are concealed or camouflaged on tall buildings, on water tanks, or with the use of faux trees. There are approximately a half dozen macro-cell facilities on city-owned property but the majority of facilities are located on private property.



Proposed Code Amendments

The proposed amendments to the City’s wireless ordinance will allow small-cell wireless systems to be placed within Hacienda if the equipment for the small cells is concealed within streetlight poles. (The proposed amendments are attached as Exhibit A.) The amendments make clear that the Community Development Director is responsible for ensuring that the smart-cell systems are designed in a manner that conceals the wireless equipment and that the design and location of the new poles are appropriate. The amendments also clarify that the small-cell systems will not be subject to the 200-foot separation requirement (from residences, parks, etc.) because the equipment will be concealed from view.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this code amendment has been published in The Valley Times and was noted in the Pleasanton Weekly as an upcoming agenda item for the August 23, 2017, Planning Commission meeting. At the time this report was prepared, staff had not received comments pertaining to these amendments.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Amendments of this nature pertaining to minor alterations in land use regulation are categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, section 15061(b)(3)). Therefore, no environmental documentation accompanies this report.

CONCLUSION

The proposed changes to the Pleasanton Municipal Code are intended to improve cellular coverage and capacity within the Hacienda Business Park. Staff believes that the proposed Code amendments will result in improved coverage for residents, businesses, and visitors while at the same time maintaining the aesthetic qualities that the citizens of Pleasanton desire.

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