



Memo

To: Tracey Douglas, City Administrator
From: Lesley Riddle, Director of Public Works
CC: Hal Metzler, Deputy Director of Public Works
Date: 10/24/2022
Re: Draft City Ordinance 5G Permits

With the introduction of new global wireless internet service several years ago, local municipalities began to research the impact of the new communications hardware being deployed on existing infrastructure. 5G internet, the latest internet technology, is so named as it is the fifth generation of mobile communications. High-speed internet provides users with a seamless and faster internet capacity; "This next generation of technology promises consumers faster data rates with lower delays in transmitting data. It also promises more capacity for a more efficient network. 5G is being designed with flexibility in mind, to support future services and applications that may not even exist today" (fcc.gov/5G). Several years ago, the City of Hyattsville enacted an emergency ordinance about this technology to address the growing concerns from residents and staff. Two years ago, the City Council approved a contract with our current engineering firm, JMT, to assist City staff with researching and creating a more reasonable ordinance that considers the benefits and challenges with 5g installations within the public right of way.

City staff working with JMT reviewed several existing ordinances of local municipalities with up-to-date regulations related to 5G installations. A draft ordinance was crafted and reviewed by the City Attorney for legal sufficiency. The draft ordinance addresses residents' concerns while considering unnecessary regulations that would unfairly affect the communications industry and their capacity to upgrade our existing systems. The City's existing regulations do not sufficiently address our permit process for right of way (ROW) access to and for 5G installations and does not include the impact of radio frequency or electromagnetic waves on the greater environment.

When the City initially enacted the current code language, the size and mode of the equipment was very bulky and impacted both the pole equipment and the equipment installed on the ground. Currently, the 5G equipment is much smaller and typically will only be installed on the existing PEPCO poles and existing infrastructure. With smaller equipment impact, the overall aesthetic impact to the city should be minimal and the draft code changes give City staff an appropriate vehicle for review and compliance. Overall, city staff feel that the draft code for 5G regulations will meet the City's needs for both current and future installations of 5G in the City ROW.

References:

Federal Communications Commission; America's 5G Future
<https://www.fcc.gov/5G>