



Small Cell Wireless Facilities

The City of Gig Harbor is managing requests from wireless providers and wireless infrastructure companies to install small cell wireless facilities in the public right-of-way (ROW) . This document answers some frequently asked questions about small cell deployment in Gig Harbor for providers.

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What is the City of Gig Harbor's role in small wireless facility deployments?

The City performs two roles regarding small wireless deployment in Gig Harbor: one as a permitting authority and the other as an asset owner. The City's small wireless facilities regulations were adopted in 2019 and are currently codified in [GHMC 12.22](#) (Small Wireless Facility Deployment) and [GHMC 17.61](#) (Communications Facilities).

The City's small cell regulations address public safety and aesthetic values by:

- i. Requiring providers to obtain a franchise agreement approved by City Council ordinance, which sets forth the general terms and conditions of the provider's use of City ROW (requiring insurance, bonding, etc.);
- ii. Requiring providers to obtain a small wireless facility permit for each site installation, including the submission of detailed engineering project plans for review by city staff to ensure compliance with City regulations; and
- iii. Establishing design requirements relating to aesthetics and public safety ([GHMC 17.61](#)) The City also plays a role in small cell deployment in its capacity as an asset owner. The City owns and maintains thousands of city streetlight poles. Allowing wireless providers to lease space on city streetlight poles for the attachment of small cell facilities will reduce the number of new poles being installed within the right of way.

After the equipment is installed and operational can the City test the RF emissions coming from the equipment?

Yes, per Section 15.8(b) the City can periodically inspect and test the Franchisee's equipment. This includes RF emissions. The City would not be reimbursed for this periodic inspecting and testing.

Are new poles allowed per existing/proposed Franchise Agreements?

New poles for small wireless facilities are not allowed unless they cannot be located on an existing utility pole or existing light pole (and other exceptions). The FA (Sec. 6.1(a)) says no new poles can be erected unless permitted by the City through referenced federal, state, and local laws. [GHMC 17.61.050](#) discusses new poles for small wireless facilities.

What 3rd party reviews are allowed/considered?

Generally, the City can require a 3rd party technical review for any criteria identified in the small wireless permitting process. Per [GHMC 17.61.110\(A\)](#) "The costs of the technical review shall be paid by the provider." This includes if a new pole is required per [GHMC 17.61.050\(A\)\(1\)](#).

Will the City receive a lease payment/fee from the small wireless provider to place equipment on City streetlight poles per [GHMC 12.22.030\(B\)](#)?

No. The City can only recover the application costs and any direct and actual costs incurred by the City.

Can multiple small wireless providers place their equipment on the same pole?



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Neither GHMC nor the FA prohibit placement of multiple providers on a single pole. However, it would be a challenge to fit the equipment from multiple carriers on a single pole, especially with the design limitation of 28 cu. ft.