

## LOCATION CRITERIA FOR CELL TOWERS

---

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council directed Administration to evaluate the feasibility of identifying locations for cell towers at early planning stages. The intent of the study was to examine, in collaboration with stakeholders, whether The City can designate cell tower sites in future communities, providing the public with more information.

The report on Cell Tower Location Criteria and Principles was considered by Council 2014 February 24. Administration was directed to return to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development no later the end of 2014 Q4 with a recommendation on including cell tower location criteria and principles within the New Community Planning Guidebook.

In consultation with Administration and stakeholders from the wireless service industry (the proponents) who are members of The City's Telecommunication Ad Hoc Committee, it was determined that the location criteria for cell tower placement in Calgary would be more appropriately placed in the *The City of Calgary Telecommunication Antenna Structures Siting Protocols* rather than the *New Community Planning Guidebook*.

### ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SPC on Planning and Urban Development recommend Council direct Administration to:

1. Incorporate the proposed location criteria into the *Telecommunication Antenna Structures Siting Protocols* as detailed in Attachment 1; and
2. Amend the *New Community Planning Guidebook* to include a reference to and a brief explanation of the *Telecommunication Antenna Siting Protocols*.

### RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPC ON PLANNING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, DATED 2014 OCTOBER 31:

---

That the Administration Recommendations contained in Report PUD2014-0783 be approved.

### PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

On 2014 February 12 Council approved PUD2013-0713 directing Administration to return to the SPC on Planning and Urban Development no later than the end of Q4 2014 with a recommendation on including the cell tower location criteria and principles within the New Community Planning Guidebook, as per report PUD2014-0492.

At their 2012 September 04 meeting, Council approved NM2012-40 Planning for Cell Towers moved by Alderman Pootmans and seconded by Alderman MacLeod, "that Administration be directed to study and evaluate criteria that would enable The City to identify appropriate locations to accommodate cell towers at the early planning stages of development and that a report be prepared for the Standing Policy Committee on Planning & Urban Development no later than Q2 2013".

## LOCATION CRITERIA FOR CELL TOWERS

---

The *Telecommunication Antenna Structures Siting Protocols* (LPT2011-38) was implemented by Council in 2011 May. These protocols primarily focus on cell tower sites located within existing communities. The purpose of the *Telecommunication Antenna Structures Siting Protocols* is to establish procedures for The City to influence the placement of proposed telecommunication antenna structures. The Protocols also help stakeholders understand the implementation methods, processes, procedures and criteria.

### BACKGROUND

#### *Approval Process*

The federal Minister of Industry is the approving authority under the *Radiocommunication Act* to administer the orderly development and operation of telecommunication antenna structures. While The City has no approval authority, as per Industry Canada, it is allowed input into the federal process (see Attachment 2, Section 2).

#### *City Contribution*

Development Authorities are well qualified to explain to proponents of cell towers the particular amenities, sensitivities, planning priorities and other relevant characteristics that may be affected by the placement of cell towers. By working together, The City and proponents can find solutions to address reasonable and relevant concerns, or, as an option, alternative antenna system siting arrangements. The City may assist proponents who are planning to modify or install antennas and supporting structures, while at the same time give due consideration to local land-use plans, publicly sensitive areas and specific environmentally sensitive areas.

#### *City Evaluation*

The City examines proposed submissions for cell towers based on specific physical criteria. This includes such things as the proposed location of a cell tower and aspects of its design, including, but not limited to (Attachment 2, Section 4.0):

- Height
- Colour
- Type
- Number of antennas to be mounted on the structure
- Screening of any equipment
- Design and materials to be used for any equipment shelter and or cabinets
- Potential for co-locating other proponents' antennas on the structure
- Compliance with The City's *Telecommunication Antenna Structures Siting Protocols*

In this regard, The City has the ability to receive, analyze, evaluate, negotiate and express its support (concurrence) or lack of support (non-concurrence) for a telecommunication antenna structure proposal. It cannot, however, prevent a telecommunication antenna structure from being installed within the city even if it finds it cannot support a particular proposal.

### INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Telecommunication industry representatives use the existing protocols to influence their location decisions. They support having criteria set by The City and recognize that these criteria should reflect both existing and greenfield areas. The representatives' preference, however, is that all

## LOCATION CRITERIA FOR CELL TOWERS

---

of these criteria are collected and maintained in one document. Administration considered Council's request to include the criteria in the *New Community Planning Guidebook*. However, for ease of use, transparency and consistency, Administration recommends that all the criteria be incorporated into the *Telecommunication Structures Siting Protocols*.

The proposed additions to the *Telecommunication Antenna Structure Siting Protocols* are included as Attachment 1. The protocols outline the standards and directives Administration will use when commenting on telecommunication antenna structure placement in Calgary. The protocols will continue to provide all interested parties with the guidelines necessary to assess potential sites.

With respect to the *New Community Planning Guidebook*, the location criteria for cell towers in these areas can be referenced with a brief explanation and an advisory for interested parties to review the specific details in Section 4.0 of the *Telecommunication Antenna Structure Siting Protocols*. To further assist readers in this regard, The City's website link to the protocols could be provided.

### Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Administration undertook engagement and research on the subject of cell tower technology with the ad hoc telecommunication ad hoc committee, industry stakeholders and other City business units.

### Strategic Alignment

The proposed program is aligned with guiding policies contained in City Wide policies for a prosperous economy within the Municipal Development Plan.

### Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

This report was reviewed for alignment with The City's Triple Bottom Line policy. Criteria for cell towers within new communities supports planning policy, research and analysis, initiative and strategies needed to improve the overall quality and function of information and communication technologies within Calgary.

#### Social

Creating criteria for locating a tower, or new cell technology, on a site that is more acceptable and predictable to the citizens of Calgary may improve Calgarians' quality of life. By identifying these locations, Calgarians will be able to make a more informed choice regarding where in the community they may wish to live and purchase a dwelling accordingly. In addition, the location criteria for cell towers will present wireless service providers with a clearer understanding of where in a newly developing community The City may be likely to support a submission for their infrastructure.

#### Environmental

The proposed criteria will assist in preserving views and vistas of both natural and man-made features as telecommunication antenna arrays and towers can be directed away from important or significant environmental, historical or cultural elements. In these cases, it can provide The

## LOCATION CRITERIA FOR CELL TOWERS

---

City with better ability to negotiate for more innovative tower designs and camouflaging when telecommunication antenna structures are proposed in close proximity to these features.

Economic (External)

Calgary businesses and citizens require and expect dependable wireless telecommunication.

### Financial Capacity

#### Current and Future Operating Budget:

No implications are identified.

#### Current and Future Capital Budget:

No implications are identified.

### Risk Assessment

Stakeholders have identified lengthy public engagement sessions as costly, burdensome, and potentially confusing. Early discussions may mitigate possible conflict and provide for better and accepted cell tower locations. The amended protocols will help to mitigate the risk of raising expectations that The City has more control over location of cell towers than is authorized under the *Radiocommunication Act*. If the recommended protocols are not adopted there are risks of inconsistency and lack of transparency for proponents and the public.

### REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

Integrating the locational criteria (Attachment 1) into Section 4.1 and 4.2 within the existing *Telecommunication Antenna Structures Siting Protocols* (Attachment 2) will provide clearer criteria on both encouraged and discouraged telecommunication antenna structure locations at the outset of the development process can serve to strengthen a community's reception of cell tower proposals.

### ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Proposed addition to Telecommunication Antenna Structures Siting Protocols
2. Telecommunication Antenna Structure Siting Protocols