

6. OLD BUSINESS

1. Presentation of a Report on Wireless Service in the City of Lake Forest.

STAFF CONTACT/INTRODUCTION:

Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development (810-3504)

PRESENTATION: Adam Parrish, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.

PURPOSE AND ACTION REQUESTED: Presentation of a report and recommendations from Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. relating to the coverage and quality of wireless service in the community.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: In November 2024, the City Council tabled consideration of a recommendation from the Plan Commission relating to amendments to the wireless infrastructure provisions in the City Code. After hearing considerable testimony in opposition, the Plan Commission recommended against amending the Code to identify a portion of the Telegraph Road train station parking lot as a permitted location for a telecommunication tower. The Commission recommended further study to verify whether, in fact, there is a deficiency in wireless service coverage in the area or in other parts of the community, and if so, recommended further study around the available technologies for enhancing service.

In April 2025, the City Council authorized the City Manager to engage a consultant from an independent engineering firm, Kimley-Horn, not a tower building company or wireless service provider, to conduct a study of wireless service in the community. The consultant was charged with the following:

- Conduct an analysis of the quality and adequacy of wireless service throughout the community.
- If deficiencies are found, identify options for improving the coverage and quality of wireless service considering all available technologies, types of infrastructure, and feasible locations.
- Review of appropriate and available roles for the City in facilitating wireless service improvements throughout the community.

Kimley-Horn has completed the necessary research and the report summarizing the findings, including service coverage maps for the three major wireless carriers is included in the Council packet beginning on **page 131**. A representative of Kimley-Horn will review and interpret the maps at the Council meeting. In summary, the coverage study revealed a deficiency in wireless service for all three carriers in the vicinity of the intersection of Waukegan and Everett Roads. The report acknowledges that the lack of telecommunication infrastructure in this area is impacting the ability of wireless infrastructure in other areas of the community to provide the intended coverage and reliability in areas they are intended to serve.

The report speaks about the technology available to address the deficiency and offers recommendations for steps the City can take to encourage wireless providers to invest in the community to provide enhanced service. Amending the Zoning Code to streamline the process for telecommunication companies that may be willing to invest in additional telecommunications infrastructure in the community is a key recommendation.

COUNCIL ACTION: If determined to be appropriate by the City Council:

- 1) **Accept the report as presented by Kimley-Horn and acknowledge the deficiency in wireless service coverage in the 4th Ward, specifically in the vicinity of Waukegan and Everett Roads.**
AND
 - 2) **Direct the Plan Commission to reconsider a Code amendment identifying one or more permitted locations for a telecommunications monopole or stealth tower within the search ring identified in the report with the full understanding that subsequent to any amendment, any proposal coming forward would be required to demonstrate completion of all required studies and compliance with all applicable regulations.**
2. **Consideration of a Recommendation from the Plan Commission of an amendment to Section 159.154, Personal Wireless Service Facilities Overlay District, of the City Code as it Pertains to the City's Compost Center at 1381 Kennedy Road.**

*PRESENTED BY Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development
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PURPOSE AND ACTION REQUESTED: Council consideration of a previously tabled recommendation from the Plan Commission is requested.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: As noted in the previous agenda item, in November 2024, the Plan Commission held a public hearing to consider amendments to provisions in the Zoning Code that designate specific areas of the City as permitted locations for cell towers and antennas. In a 4 to 2 vote, the Plan Commission voted to recommend approval of an amendment designating a portion of the City's compost center on Route 60 as a permitted location for a stand-alone tower.

Currently, two wireless service providers, AT&T and T-Mobile have antenna arrays mounted on top of the City's water tower. Cables to support the existing antennas run through the cylinder that extends from the ground upward to the water tank. The cables share that tight space with the riser pipe that directs water to the tank and make access for maintenance of the water tower challenging. Ground equipment to support the antennas is located at the base of the water tower.

A third carrier, Verizon, has expressed interest in locating at the compost center. However, the water tower, a critical piece of City infrastructure, is at capacity and cannot support a third wireless carrier. Designating the buildable portion of the compost center site, the portion that is outside of the designated floodway, for a stand-alone cell tower or monopole, will provide the opportunity to not only add a third carrier at this location improving wireless coverage and quality to some areas of the community, but also to relocate the AT&T and T-Mobile equipment off of the water tower to a stand-alone tower. Importantly, although a cell tower at the compost center will improve wireless service in some areas, it will not adequately address the coverage deficiency that has been identified in the vicinity of the Everett and Waukegan Roads intersection.