



FAQ's

Master License Agreements & Pole Licensees

Small Cell Installations in the City's Rights-of-Way

What are small cells?

Small cells are small antennas placed on light poles or other infrastructure that provide faster data coverage and capacity for mobile phone and device users.

Which poles will be used?

Carriers typically choose to locate along heavily traveled corridors such as Greenback Lane, Sunrise Boulevard, Auburn Boulevard, and Antelope Road. The Master License Agreement will allow carriers to place antennas on City-owned street light poles. The General Services Department estimates there are approximately 378 streetlights along these corridors. Small cells will be allowed on standard street light poles; decorative light poles will not be eligible.

Do these systems generate noise or light?

No. The antennas themselves do not generate noise, light, or vibration. Noise is typically created by cooling fans; however, the proposed equipment enclosures use passive cooling, without cooling fans. There are no lights used by the equipment or antennas.

Do these proposals go through design review?

Yes. The Planning Division has extensive design guidelines for these small cells to ensure they are thoughtfully integrated into our community's streetscapes.

Does the City receive revenue?

Yes. Wireless providers choosing to install on a City light pole, will pay \$2,000 per year, per pole. This annual fee will automatically increase each year by 2%.

How long does it take to process an application?

Typically, once an application is complete, 45 days is needed to process the application. Due to the significant amount of staff time needed for this program, especially in the program's infancy, staff time is cost recovered through deposits collected from the carrier.

Would the actual pole be replaced?

Not typically. In some limited instances, a pole that is worn, damaged, or structurally substandard may need to be replaced. In cases of replacement, the carrier will be responsible for the cost of the replacement pole.

What exactly is proposed on the pole?

Generally the installations will include an antenna mounted near the top of the pole (above the light). The antennas will be concealed in a shroud and two equipment boxes will be mounted midway down the pole. In addition, a small radio-frequency information and identification sticker would be placed near the antenna.

Who pays for the increased electrical power?

The carrier. Since the City typically pays SMUD a flat rate for energy use for each street light, SMUD and the City will have to renegotiate for the increase in power usage of each location. SMUD has agreed to direct bill the carrier for the cost increase.

What is the range of these systems?

That depends on a number of factors (e.g. nearby buildings blocking signals or the presence of trees), but on average, these systems have an approximate range of 150 to 500 feet, due to their low mounting height and low power output (either 66, 100, or 174 watts).

Will these small cells replace the use of antennas on rooftops or communication poles?

No. These systems are generally intended to complement the existing network of rooftop and communication pole sites thought the City. While most areas in Citrus Heights have good (mobile) voice coverage, wireless carriers are typically proposing these sites to complement the larger network system and offer improved high-speed data coverage for mobile users with these smaller facilities closer to sidewalk and street level. While each carrier has different goals and technologies, the use of small cells on light poles may lessen the demand for the overall number of larger rooftop or communication poles.

Will these antennas become obsolete as technology changes?

One thing for certain, technology will change. To prevent the City from becoming proliferated with obsolete equipment, the Master License Agreement and associated pole licenses will have a 10-year term. At the end of the term, the carrier will be required to obtain a new Master License Agreement and pole license for those locations still in use. The Master License Agreement also has a clause requiring carriers to remove antennas and associated equipment if at any point they become not in use for more than 60 days.