

Wireless Master Plan - FAQ

- **Why is the City of Fort Collins creating a Wireless Master Plan?**

New technologies, changes in federal and state regulations, and increasing demand for wireless service mean changes for the types and locations of future wireless telecommunications infrastructure in Fort Collins.

The Wireless Master Plan is designed to help the community proactively plan for these changes by identifying areas in the community where future infrastructure is likely to be proposed, minimizing redundant installations, and updating Fort Collins' policies and Land Use Code standards for wireless infrastructure.

- **I'm hearing a lot about 5G and small cells – what are they?**

5G represents the next evolution of wireless technology, which many wireless carriers are beginning to roll out. Over time, existing wireless infrastructure and equipment in the community is likely to be upgraded to 5G or include new 5G equipment and antennas.

Small cells are smaller, lower-powered radio equipment designed to serve more discrete areas within the community, especially compared to a 'macro site,' such as a taller wireless facility that are generally spaced several miles apart. Recent federal and state level legislation requires local jurisdictions to permit small cell equipment along public rights of way.

- **Are there health impacts associated with wireless telecommunications and radiofrequency (RF) emissions?**

Numerous studies have been completed exploring the link between exposure to radiofrequency (RF) emissions from wireless equipment and cell phones and potential health impacts, and a large majority of studies do not conclusively link exposure levels at or below federal standards with adverse health impacts. Online information about these studies and their findings can be found online at sources such as the American Cancer Society, World Health Organization, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

- **Who regulates and monitors RF emissions?**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is responsible for regulating and setting safe standards for exposure to RF emissions. As part of 1996 Wireless Telecommunications Act, state and local jurisdictions are unable to regulate or consider the health or environmental effects of RF emissions in their decision-making for wireless telecommunication infrastructure, although they can require projects to certify their equipment meets federal standards.

- **What types of regulations can the City establish for wireless telecommunications?**

The City is able to set standards and regulations for general locations where infrastructure can be located, as well as physical and compatibility characteristics, such as aesthetics, screening, property setbacks, or compatibility with nearby historic properties or sensitive natural features.

- **What types of wireless telecommunication infrastructure is common in Fort Collins? Where are they located?**

Wireless infrastructure can be found all over Fort Collins, although current standards generally limit installations to industrial, commercial, or mixed-use zone districts. Wireless infrastructure is diverse and can range from older unscreened antenna poles and towers, to stealth installations such as fake trees or silos, to building and roof-mounted equipment.

There are nearly 100 sites approved for wireless equipment throughout the community and in the adjacent Growth Management Area. *See map of installation sites below.*

