



## SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR Wireless Communication Facilities

City of San Diego  
Development Services Department  
1222 First Avenue, MS 301, San Diego, CA 92101-4101

INFORMATION  
BULLETIN

**536**

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This information bulletin describes the procedures and permitting requirements for [Wireless Communication Facilities](#) (WCF) and other FCC-authorized communication services. If a WCF is located in the Downtown Community Plan planning area, please contact Civic San Diego at (619) 235-2200 to process your discretionary application.

A few factors determine the required permits and process level for a WCF. For a WCF not subject to the Federal Spectrum Act (sometimes referred to as "Section 6409(a) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 [47 U.S.C. 1455]"), the proposed location of a WCF primarily determines the required permit(s) and process level, as described in the WCF Regulations, Land Development Code (LDC) Section 141.0420, and in conjunction with the "Use Regulation Tables" in Chapter 13.

Some projects may qualify for processing under provisions of the Spectrum Act, if certain conditions are met. To be considered for processing under the Spectrum Act, the applicant is required to submit specific information for the City to evaluate whether the application qualifies for processing under the Spectrum Act, as detailed later in this bulletin. This includes projects in the public right-of-way processed with a Right-of-Way permit. Spectrum Act projects are Process 1 approvals. The City of San Diego reserves the right to rescind any approval made under Section 6409(a) of the Spectrum Act, should any portion of Section 6409(a) of the Spectrum Act, or the FCC's interpretation thereof, be deemed unconstitutional by a court of law, the FCC or any other competent authority.

Council Policy 600-43 identifies the least and most preferable areas for locating WCF. LDC Section 141.0420 lists specific design requirements for WCF. In addition, the WCF Guidelines provides helpful information on the design and development of WCF.

If a WCF is proposed on City property, contact the [Real Estate Assets Department](#) at (619) 236-6020

### Documents referenced in this Information Bulletin

- [San Diego Municipal Code, \(SDMC\)](#)
- [Land Development Code, \(LDC\)](#)
- [Project Submittal Manual](#)
- [Information Bulletin 501, Fee Schedule, Construction Permit-Structures](#)
- [Information Bulletin 502, Fee Schedule for-Construction Permits - Grading & Public-Right-of-Way](#)
- [Information Bulletin 503, Fee/Deposit Schedule for Development & Policy Approvals/Permits](#)
- [Information Bulletin 512, How to Obtain-Public Noticing Information](#)
- [Information Bulletin 580, Potential Historical Resource Review](#)
- [Information Bulletin 581, Designated Historical Resource Review](#)
- [Ownership Disclosure Statement, DS-318](#)
- [Stormwater Applicability Checklist, DS-560](#)
- [General Application, DS-3032](#)
- [Deposit Account/Financially Responsible Party, DS-3242](#)
- [Wireless Communication Facilities Questionnaire, DS-420](#)
- [Climate Action Plan Consistency Checklist](#)
- [City Consent Application](#)
- [Wireless Communication Facility Guidelines](#)
- [Council Policy 600-43](#)
- [Land Development Manual, Project Submittal Requirements](#)
- [Information Bulletin 101, Building Valuation Schedule](#)
- [Owner-Builder Verification, DS-3042](#)

prior to submitting an application to the Development Services Department (DSD).

#### I. WHAT IS A WCF?

WCF is defined as the antennas, support structures, and other equipment or apparatus necessary for providing personal wireless services and information services (LDC Section 113.0103). Satellite antennas are not defined as WCF. Refer to LDC Section

141.0405 for more information. The LDC requires that WCF use all reasonable means to conceal or minimize their visual impacts through integration. Integration with existing structures or among other existing uses shall be accomplished through the use of architecture, landscape architecture, and siting solutions (LDC Section 141.0420).

## II. REVIEW PROCESS

All WCF permit applications are required to be submitted for review. Appointments are required and can be made by calling (619) 446-5300.

All applications must include a completed WCF Questionnaire, which clearly identifies the shot-clock under which the applicant is requesting processing. If a determination is made that a different shot-clock applies, the applicant will be informed of that determination in the review comments. All applicable shot-clocks are tolled, while the City waits for resubmission of applications that were incomplete, as long as the City has provided timely written notice identifying the items or information that are required for the application to be processed.

If the applicant requests processing under the Spectrum Act, but it is determined that the application is not a Spectrum Act eligible WCF, the application will be denied, the fees will not be refunded, and the applicant will be required to submit a new application for the appropriate type of permit.

In an effort to process applications in a timely manner, a hearing date (if applicable) will be scheduled when the applicant resubmits the application in response to the City's initial review comments. If there are any outstanding issues, the applicant can proceed to the hearing with a recommendation for denial from staff, voluntarily enter into a tolling agreement and continue to work with staff to resolve the issues, or withdraw the application.

Preliminary Reviews are optional and are offered for applicants that would like to

submit questions and receive written comments from the City regarding how WCF regulations apply to the project. See Information Bulletin 513, "Preliminary Review." Preliminary Reviews are not submissions of applications, and the written comments provided in response thereto, are not notices of incompleteness.

## III. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECTRUM ACT AND CONSTRUCTION PERMIT APPLICATIONS.

Follow the Project Submittal Manual: Section 2 for Construction Permits – Structures or Section 3 Construction Permits - Grading Permits and Public Right-of-Way.

Ensure plans are adequately scaled and dimensioned to justify WCF questionnaire responses.

In addition to the Project Submittal Manual requirements, provide one copy of each item listed below:

### A. Wireless Communication Facilities (WCF) Questionnaire (DS-420)

**B. Applicant Correspondence.** A letter detailing the proposed modifications.

### C. Previously Approved Permit and Exhibit "A".

**D. Photographic Survey.** (Required only for Spectrum Act applications). Provide a photographic survey of the proposed project site, with a key map. Photographs must be taken from the project boundaries at four or more locations, with on and off site views, including any slopes. Include photos of the project site at a distance close enough to adequately show site conditions. The number of photographs required will vary depending on the size of the project; however, the quantity must be sufficient to adequately view the entire site. Photos must be current; Google Street View is not acceptable. ROW Sites Only: Provide a photo survey of existing light standards within a 3-block radius.

- E. Photo Simulations (in color).** Must be included as sheet (s) in the construction plan set (not as a separate document). The photo simulation illustrates the proposed antenna facility and equipment. Show the existing view and proposed view for each vantage point. The existing and proposed photos must be the same size. Include enough photo simulations to accurately depict the proposed facility. This will most likely include the facility as viewed close-up and at a distance. If no exterior changes are proposed, provide a current photo of the site with a statement identifying that, "there are no exterior changes proposed".
- F. Letter of Compliance/Radiofrequency (RF) Compliance Report (RF Report).** (Required only for Spectrum Act applications). RF emissions are regulated by the Federal Government. Refer to [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov) for more information. The City requires that WFC comply with the FCC's standards for RF radiation and collects a cumulative RF Report to demonstrate compliance with Federal regulations prior to permit approval. A Letter of Compliance or RF Report is required at the time of initial submittal. If a letter is initially submitted in lieu of an RF Report, the letter must be on wireless carrier company letterhead, acknowledge that a complete cumulative RF report is required prior to a project approval, and it must be signed by a licensed RF engineer. For projects proposing no modifications other than adding a generator to an existing site, an RF Report is not required, unless there is none on file for the original project.
- G. Letter of Authorization from Legal Property Owner.** (Required only for Spectrum Act applications on private property). Must be imaged on plans, not provided as a separate document (do not staple to plans).
- H. City Consent Application.** (Required only for Spectrum Act applications on City Property). Must be imaged on plans, not provided as a separate document (do not staple to plans). (Not required for the initial construction permit application).
- IV. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LIMITED USE/SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMANCE REVIEW (PROCESS ONE)**  
IF APPROVED, THE WCF APPROVAL NOTES ARE VALID FOR ONE YEAR FROM THE DATE OF THE APPROVAL NOTES, EXCEPT IF: 1) emergency legislation is enacted by City Council; or 2) there is a change in the project scope.
- Provide one copy of each, unless otherwise indicated.
- A. WCF Questionnaire (DS-420).**
- B. General Application (DS-3032).**
- C. Letter of Authorization.** (Required for Private Property).
- D. City Consent Application.** (Required for City Property or in the Right-of-Way).
- E. Letter Detailing Scope of Work.** (Provide one additional copy if they are located on City Property).
- F. Previously Approved Permit and Exhibit.** (Required only for SCR applications).
- G. Photographic Survey.** Provide a photographic survey of the proposed project site, with a key map. Photographs must be taken from the project boundaries at four or more locations, with on and off site views, including any slopes. Include photos of the project site at a distance close enough to adequately show site conditions. The number of photographs will vary depending on the size of the project; however, the quantity must be sufficient to adequately view the entire site. Photos must be current; Google Street View is not acceptable. ROW Sites Only: Provide a photo survey of existing light standards within a 3-block

radius. (Provide one additional copy if the project is located on City property).

**H. Plans (11 x 17).** (Provide one additional copy if the project is located on City property).

**I. Photo Simulations (in color).** The photo simulation illustrates the proposed antenna facility and equipment. Show the existing view and proposed view for each vantage point. The existing and proposed photos must be the same size. Include enough photo simulations to accurately depict the proposed facility. This will most likely include the facility as viewed close-up and at a distance. The photo simulations will be included as part of the project approval (Exhibit "A") and be used during the review, approval, construction and inspection phases of the project. (If no exterior changes are proposed, provide a current photo of the site with a statement identifying that, "there are no exterior changes proposed." Provide one additional copy if located on City property).

**V. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PROCESS 2, 3, 4, AND 5 APPLICATIONS**

Provide one copy of each, unless otherwise indicated.

**A. WCF Questionnaire (DS-420).**

**B. General Application (DS-3032).**

**C. Ownership Disclosure Statement (DS-318).** (Required for Private Property).

**D. City Consent Application.** (Required for City Property or in the Right-of-Way).

**E. Climate Action Plan Consistency Checklist.**

**F. Grant Deed.** (Not required for right-of-way or City-owned property).

**G. Stormwater Requirements Applicability Checklist (DS-560).**

**H. Applicant Correspondence.** Letter detailing scope of work. (Provide one additional copy if the project is located on City property).

**I. Previously Approved Permit and Exhibit "A".** (Optional).

**J. Photographic Survey.** Provide a photographic survey of the proposed project site, with a key map. Photographs must be taken from the project boundaries at four or more locations, with on and off site views, including any slopes. Include photos of the project site at a distance close enough to adequately show site conditions. The number of photographs will vary depending on the size of the project; however, the quantity must be sufficient to adequately view the entire site. Photos must be current; Google Street View is not acceptable. ROW Sites Only: Provide a photo survey of existing light standards within a 3-block radius. These photos will be used to determine whether the proposed design is consistent with the neighborhood character.

**K. Photo Simulations (11" x 17").** Provide 4 color copies. The photo simulation illustrates the proposed antenna facility and equipment. Show the existing view and proposed view for each vantage point. The existing and proposed photos must be the same size. Include enough photo simulations to accurately depict the proposed facility. This will most likely include the facility as viewed close-up and at a distance. The photo simulations will be included as part of the project approval (Exhibit "A") and be used during the review, approval, construction and inspection phases of the project. (If no exterior changes are proposed, provide a current photo of the site with a statement identifying that, "there are no exterior changes proposed." Provide one additional copy if located on City property).

**L. Letter of Compliance/Radio Frequency (RF) Compliance Report (RF Report).** RF emissions are regulated by the Federal Government. Refer to [www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov) for more information. The City requires that WCF comply with the FCC's standards for RF radiation and collects a cumulative RF Report to demonstrate compliance with Federal regulations prior to permit approval. A Letter of Compliance or RF Report is required at the time of initial submittal. If a letter is initially submitted in lieu of an RF Report, the letter must be on wireless carrier company letterhead, acknowledge that a complete cumulative RF report is required prior to a project approval, and it must be signed by a licensed RF engineer. For projects proposing no modifications other than adding a generator to an existing site, an RF Report is not required, unless there is none on file for the original project.

**M. Noise Report.** Required for projects adjacent to residential uses when air conditioning units or other noise generating equipment are proposed.

**N. Site Justification Report.** Coordinate the information contained in this report with the Justification Map and Coverage Map. This report must justify the need or requirement for the proposed WCF location and design. Include justification that explains why the proposed site was selected, and why other potentially more preferable sites were not selected. Demonstrate in writing why the alternative sites did not meet the coverage objectives.

**O. Justification Map.** On the map, identify the zones, coverage search ring, alternative sites, the selected site, and all existing and approved WCF (include City site name) within a one mile radius. Ensure that zones are easily identifiable and that a legend is provided. Be sure to coordinate the Justification Map with the Site Justification Report. Provide a scale and north arrow. Identify major roads and landmarks.

**P. Coverage Map.** Provide maps that identify the existing and proposed coverage. Identify major streets and landmarks and include a legend. Identify existing and approved WCF by site name.

**Q. Historic Resources.** Projects located on premises where there is a structure 45 years or older, are located on a Designated Historic Resource, or are located in a Historic District are required to comply with LDC Section 143.0212 (Historical Resources Regulations). See Information Bulletins 580 and 581 for additional information.

**R. Plans.** Provide four (4) copies of plans (11" by 17" size), consistent with the items listed below. If project is distributed to Park & Recreation or Historic review staff, provide additional copies of plans.

**1. Site plan.** A site plan is a comprehensive, fully dimensioned drawing which shows the general layout of the property and/or building in which the WCF is located. The site plan must be drawn to scale and legible when reduced to an 11" by 17", and to include the following information:

- a. Show and label all property lines, including distances.
- b. On premises containing environmentally sensitive lands (ESL), illustrate the boundary lines of those that apply, such as: steep hillsides, sensitive biological resources, Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), Multiple Habitat Preservation Areas (MHPA), 100-year floodplains, sensitive coastal bluffs, etc.
- c. Dimension and label zone setbacks.
- d. Show and label any existing easements and identify the type. If none, note on plans.
- e. When parking is proposed to be removed, show all off-street parking spaces, label disabled spaces and provide parking calculations.



- f. Show location of existing buildings and structures. Include use of all existing buildings and structures.
  - g. Show and dimension any proposed structures including antenna support structure and associated equipment shelter, cabinet or fencing.
  - h. Show location of the coaxial cable from the equipment room/power source to the antenna. (Note: No "dog-houses" are allowed; cables must be internally routed).
  - i. Show any other existing WCFs onsite and identify the provider. If none, please note.
  - j. Identify proposed locations of all transmitters and provide transmitter frequencies and power levels.
- i. List the parcel size, gross floor area, and floor area ratio (if applicable).
  - j. Existing and proposed uses on the premises.
  - l. Provide a statement on the plans indicating that the wireless communication facility complies with federal standards for radiofrequency in accordance with the Telecommunication Act of 1996 and subsequent amendments and any other requirements imposed by state or federal regulatory agencies.

**2. Development Summary.** Provide, in a table format, the following information on the first sheet of the plans:

- a. Provide a bullet point narrative that details the project's complete scope of work, including all existing and proposed improvements, any proposed development regulation deviations, and the required permits/approvals.
- b. List all existing WCFs on the site and identify the provider. If none, state on plans.
- c. List all prior discretionary permits pertaining to this project.
- d. List the project team. Include the names and phone numbers of all consultants including engineers, architects, landscape architects, and designers.
- e. Provide the legal description and Assessor Parcel Number(s) (APNs) for the property that the development is proposed on.
- f. Provide the legal property owner's name and address.
- g. Show the type of construction per the California Building Code.
- h. Show the zoning designation and any overlay zones.

**3. Method of Attachment/Cabling.**

- a. Provide dimensioned details of antennas including size, downtilt, and method used to attach the antennas to the structure. If proposing skirts or any other concealment/integration elements, include details illustrating all components of the proposed design.

**4. Elevations.** This is a dimensioned drawing of each face of the building or antenna support structure and equipment shelter. Include the following information on the elevation drawings:

- a. Each elevation of the building or structure must be accurately scaled and fully dimensioned. This includes equipment shelters/buildings.
- b. Indicate existing grades and building or structure heights, as defined by LDC Section 113.0270. Also identify the maximum height of the proposed facility utilizing Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL) height.
- c. Show and label existing and proposed architectural details and location of all windows.
- d. Show and label existing and proposed exterior materials.
- e. When the coaxial cable cannot be located within the interior of the building, identify location of cable

tray and illustrate how it will be integrated within the existing exterior building materials.

- f. If the antenna is the highest element on the elevations, identify the top of structure height, not the RAD center of the antenna.

**5. Roof Plan.** For roof top installations, provide a fully dimensioned plan view of the existing roof top. Show locations of existing WCFs and identify the provider(s).

**6. Floor Plan.** Required when the equipment is located within an existing building or structure. Provide floor plans for each floor affected, indicate floor level, and label each room according to its existing and proposed use.

**7. Landscape Plan.** A Landscape Plan is required when a project is proposing faux landscape, adding ground-mounted equipment, or when adding additional building mass and bulk. Landscape material and design techniques should be utilized to integrate WCFs with the surrounding environment to improve views from neighboring properties and the public right-of-way. A Registered Landscape Architect is highly recommended to prepare plans. When faux landscape is proposed, the landscape plan also needs to demonstrate that existing and proposed landscape material will be able to screen and integrate the proposed faux landscape, in accordance with the WCF Regulations. (Faux landscape is permitted when existing or proposed living landscape material, of a similar size and species, is provided.) Provide the following elements on all Landscape Plans:

- a. **Plant Legend.** Provide the botanical name, common name, form, function, container size, and mature height and spread.
- b. **Limit of Work.** Provide a line to

delineate the limit of disturbance.

- c. **Existing Plant Material.** Identify all trees, shrubs, and ground cover within and adjacent to the limit of work and as applicable to the project. Include botanical and common names, caliper size (for trees), and height and spread (for shrubs). Identify landscape material to be removed and to remain.
- d. **Trees and other landscape proposed for removal must be replaced in-kind.** In many cases, existing landscape is required by the LDC in certain locations and may not be removed without impacting previous approvals.
- e. **Maintenance Note.** Identify who will be responsible for maintaining proposed landscape.
- f. **Irrigation Note.** Identify how proposed plant material will be irrigated and by whom.
- g. **Consistency with Site Plan.** Clearly identify the property line and ensure Landscape Plan is consistent with Site Plan.
- h. **Brush Management.** If the property is adjacent to native or naturalized vegetation, brush management may be required. The plans will need to provide Brush Management Zone 1 and 2 boundary lines and applicable notes. Proposed plant material and irrigation must be consistent with Brush Management regulations.

## VI. FEES

### A. Administrative Fees

The following administrative fees apply to all projects and are paid at the time plans are submitted to the Development Services (DSD), unless otherwise indicated below. These fees are in addition to the plan review fee or deposit required for the processing of the project.

#### 1. Mapping Fee (Process 1-5)

This fee is charged at submittal when there are plans, drawings, maps or other geographical documents utilized

for project review.

Mapping Fee.....\$10

**2. Project Close Out Fee (Process 1-5)**

This fee is charged at submittal to pay for permit recordation and project closeout after final decision, hearing or appeal is completed.

Project Close Out Fee.....\$556

**3. Records Fee**

This fee is assessed for all projects at issuance to recover the cost of imaging and archiving the documents in Records.

Substantial Conformance Review (Process 1).....\$45  
 Less than 75 pages.....\$90  
 76 to 1,000 pages.....\$515  
 Each additional 500 pages over 1,000.....\$250

**B. Plan Review**

The following plan review fees are required at the time of project submittal and are based upon the approval being requested. For your convenience, the Development Services Department offers online payments through Open DSD. Payment may also be made in person by cash, check, debit card, Visa or MasterCard. Checks shall be in the exact amount, drawn on US banks, and made payable to the "City Treasurer." Due to space constraints, we are unable to store submitted plans awaiting fee payment. Please be pre-pared to pay the plan review fees at the time of project submittal.

**Note that plan check fees and other administrative fees are non-refundable. See Refund Policy noted within Refund Application Form (DS-721) for additional refund information.**

**1. Building Permit**

See Information Bulletin 501, Fee Schedule for Construction Permits-Structures.

**2. Public Right-of-Way Permit**

See Information Bulletin 502, Fee/Deposit Schedule for Grading/Right-of-Way Permits and Mapping Actions.

**3. Limited Use Plan Review/ Substantial Conformance Review (Process1)**

The fees in Table 536A below are charged for review of Wireless Communication Facilities permitted as a limited use in accordance with Process One in the zones indicated with an "L" in the Use Regulations Tables of the Land Development Code. The limited use review includes plan review for conformance Land Development Code Section 141.0420.

Substantial Conformance application includes a review of the revised project against the approved exhibits, permit conditions, environmental documentation, applicable land use policies and the public record for the prior permit.

**TABLE 536A/Limited Use and Substantial Conformance Review Fees**

| Approval Type  | Fee            |
|--|----------------|
| WCF Limited Use Plan Review Fee  | \$2,026        |
| WCF Substantial Conformance Review Fee   | \$2,026        |
| Historic Resources Review Fee - Collected when the project requires historic resource review. A minimum of 1-hour is collected at the time of initial submittal. Staff may charge additional hours during review and issue a supplemental invoice as necessary | \$154 per hour |
| Wireless Communications Facilities (WCF) on City Property - Collected when WCF is on City Property.  | \$698          |

**4. Discretionary Review Fees (Process2 through 5)**

Table 536B lists the discretionary review fees for Wireless Communication Facilities. These fees are for public noticing, plan review, environmental initial study and the public hearing process (except appeals). Note: If the project and/or the environmental determination of a flat fee project are appealed, a \$2,000 deposit will be required to continue processing the project to a final decision.



**TABLE 536B/Discretionary Review Fees**

| <b>Approval Type</b>  | <b>Fee</b>     |
|---|----------------|
| A Wireless Communication Facility - Process 2 fee will be collected at the time of submittal for completeness review, along with the environmental, historic, and administrative fees.  |                |
| Wireless Communication Facility - Process 2   | \$6,188.00     |
| Environmental Initial Study/Exemption Fee <sup>1</sup>  | \$959          |
| Historic Resources Review Fee <sup>2</sup>  | \$154 per hour |
| Wireless Communications Facilities (WCF) on City Property <sup>3</sup>  | \$698          |
| During completeness review, the approval process will be confirmed. If the decision process changes, a supplemental invoice will be issued for the correct process listed below, with a credit applied for the Process 2 fee paid. Note: Where the project includes both a Process 4 SDP and Process 4 PDP, the highest fee will apply. |                |
| Wireless Communication Facility - Process 3   | \$7,736.00     |
| Wireless Communication Facility - Process 4 SDP   | \$8,258.00     |
| Wireless Communication Facility - Process 4 PDP   | \$8,845.00     |

<sup>1</sup>If the environmental initial study is extended due to staff requests for additional information, an additional extended initial study fee of \$1,918.00 will be required at the time of resubmittal. If the initial study or the extended initial study result in any environmental determination other than an exemption (e.g, Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration), a \$2,000 deposit account will then be required to continue processing the environmental document.

<sup>2</sup>This fee will be collected when the project requires historic resource review. A minimum of 1-hour is collected at the time of initial submittal. Staff may charge additional hours during review and issue a supplemental invoice as necessary.

<sup>3</sup>Wireless Communications Facilities (WCF) on City Property is assessed an additional plan review fee.