

TOWN *Of* PARADISE VALLEY



STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor Bien-Willner and Town Council Members

FROM: Jill Keimach, Town Manager
Lisa Collins, Community Development Director
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DATE: September 8, 2022

DEPARTMENT: Town Manager
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AGENDA TITLE:

Discussion and Direction to Staff and Planning Commission for Town Facilitated Cell Coverage Applications to Close the Gaps in Cell Coverage.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

Since 2018, the Town has focused on four goals to improve cell coverage in Paradise Valley. Three of those goals have been completed; this Study Session provides the potential for implementing the remaining goal of providing the greatest coverage and capacity with the least visible infrastructure. After several years of technical and collaborative efforts between the Town; the Town's technical consultant, EWS; and the carriers; we have prioritized five sites that could most effectively improve cell coverage in PV.

BACKGROUND:

On February 22, 2018, the Council established the Cellular Service Task Force and in July, 2018 the Town of Paradise Valley conducted a request for information in an effort to achieve several goals associated with improving cellular service throughout the Town, including outdoors, in vehicles, and in buildings. The Town Council identified these goals as a high priority and established a Cellular Service Task Force headed by then Vice Mayor Bien-Willner. The goals included 1) Improvement of voice service (fewer dropped calls); 2) Preserve and maintain the Town's aesthetics; and 3) Provide the greatest coverage and capacity with the least visible infrastructure; and 4) Provide infrastructure for future services.

The Town collaborated with cellular carriers to accomplish these goals and created a Cell Task Force of resident experts to assist on an informal basis.

Goal 1 initially started with information to Paradise Valley residents on cellular boosters to improve in-home cellular coverage provided through the Town's website, coffee with a cop, the Town of Paradise Valley Independent and a residential brochure.

Goal 2 to preserve and maintain the Town aesthetics has been advanced with Crown Castle and the Town's DAS (Distributed Antenna System) program which was designed to be incorporated within faux saguaro cacti using a 2017 standard detail application. The Town's aesthetics regulations further require antennae to be incorporated into the architecture of buildings or on top of the Town's few traffic signal standards. The approved antennae location was expanded to include small wireless facilities on the streetlight poles along Scottsdale Road on June 13, 2019.

Goal 3 to provide the greatest coverage and capacity with the least visible infrastructure has been under discussion and design since 2019, but slowed when the carriers prohibited travel during the pandemic. The carrier travel restriction has recently been lifted so the potential sites were visited in June, 2022.

Goal 4 to provide infrastructure for future services has incrementally been improving with the installation and/or repair of fiber during large road construction projects, including the length of Lincoln Drive, parts of Tatum Boulevard, and Mockingbird Lane.

The coverage maps were completed in March 2019 and updated in May 2021. This was completed since there have been significant ownership and therefore, operational, changes between the mappings. Those changes and progress included:

1. AT&T deployed FirstNet Public Safety system
2. T-Mobile purchased Sprint assets, reallocating PCS bandwidth for more capacity
3. T-Mobile deployed N600 Low Band spectrum for coverage
4. Crown Castle in process to add new wireless facilities
5. Each carrier has completed site adds and system modifications

All potential houses of worship, resorts, water tower and other Town-owned sites have concurrently been reviewed and analyzed to determine the cost effectiveness of the improvements needed to close the remaining coverage gaps.

Sites narrowed down that are the most cost effective:

1. Sanctuary Resort
2. Paradise Valley Country Club
3. Fire Station #91 (Tatum Boulevard)
4. Cosanti
5. Top of Invergordon

Each site along with the associated code regulations will be discussed as part of the Council Study Session.

NEXT STEPS:

Council to develop a Statement of Direction (SOD) to guide the Planning Commission's review of this project. Since the Town has been facilitating this effort, the staff would also like to know if the Council would like to waive the normal CUP fee of \$5,665 for each site (typically required at CUP submittal) or require the carriers to reimburse the Town when they use these sites and the Town's entitlements.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

If the Council decides to waive the application fee of \$5,665 for up to five sites if they are used within a year, the budgetary impact to the Town would be up to \$28,325. If the Council decides not to waive the fee, the carrier would be charged that amount when they decide to use the site (or at CUP submittal).

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide direction to staff on whether the Town should:

1. Waive the \$5,665 application fee for up to a year after final Town approval for each cell site to encourage implementation by several carriers
2. Complete a Statement of Direction to focus the Planning Commission's review of these five sites.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- A. Staff Report
- B. Presentation