

A Brief History of WCF Regulation in Olympia

- 1. *Moratorium:*** In June 2005, in response to neighborhood concerns over siting a new WCF at 1501 Capitol Way, adjacent to the Historic South Capitol Neighborhood, along with numerous other new WCF's being proposed throughout Olympia, the City Council instituted a moratorium on new WCFs that lasted to March, 2006. The moratorium was instituted because the Council "became concerned that economic recovery, the consolidation of telecommunications companies, and the availability of new technology had led telecommunications companies to prepare for a new round of facility construction, and those facilities had the potential to adversely impact the City of Olympia under the City's obsolete zoning and telecommunications regulations."
- 2. *Master Plan and Ordinance Overhaul:*** In drafting the City's 2006 ordinance, with the assistance of a group of neighborhood leaders, the City hired a consultant to craft a new ordinance and to draft a Wireless Telecommunications Master Plan for Olympia. The Master Plan supports the goals of the ordinance by providing the data, the maps, and a set of strategies to "reduce tower infrastructure by improving efforts to morph wireless deployments from various service providers, thereby minimizing tower proliferation by increasing shared sites."

The Master Plan acknowledges that it addresses then current 1G and 2G technologies and that 3G and other future technologies may require additional wireless facility locations to meet coverage and network capacity objectives.

The drafting of the City's 2006 ordinance was spearheaded by a group of neighborhood leaders. Olympia overhauled its telecommunications ordinance in 2006 to create a more comprehensive method to review, evaluate and permit sites for constructing and co-locating new WCFs.

- 3. *Current Status*** - The existing 2006 Antennas and Wireless Communication Facilities (AWCF) ordinance continues to be in force. In the past couple of years, the growing demand for wireless services has been met by siting new or upgrading antennas on existing facilities. There has been only one new tower associated with CAPCOM 9-1-1 Service along Pacific Avenue.
- 4. *Increasing Service Requirements.*** With the industry shift away from landlines to cell phones, and with the dramatic increase in the use of a variety of wireless systems to transmit enormous amounts of data, wireless carriers are now looking to meet the growing demand for service by siting more facilities in residential neighborhoods to address coverage and capacity. The current code generally favors city-owned water tower facilities in siting. City revenue from leases for WCFs provided the Olympia Water Utility approximately \$260,000.00 in 2013. This revenue helps keep water utility rates lower.

5. *Regulatory Framework.*

Federal, State and local government each have a role in regulating WCF's. Over the years, addressing the impacts has shifted from local control and permitting toward more exemptions from the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and more federal control. For example, prior to 2006, the Federal government established and regulated associated health standards related to WCF's and local government is barred from addressing health concerns. Since 2006, federal and state government continues to enact laws that generally make it easier to site new facilities to expand their coverage and capacity. Examples of recent changes to federal and WA State law have been to shorten the time allowed for local government to review permits and revise definitions that expand the ability to site or upgrade WCF on existing structures.