

§ 160D-933. Construction of new wireless support structures or substantial modifications of wireless support structures.

(a) Any person that proposes to construct a new wireless support structure or substantially modify a wireless support structure within the planning and development regulation jurisdiction of a local government must do both of the following:

- (1) Submit a completed application with the necessary copies and attachments to the appropriate planning authority.
- (2) Comply with any local ordinances concerning land use and any applicable permitting processes.

(b) A local government's review of an application for the placement or construction of a new wireless support structure or substantial modification of a wireless support structure shall only address public safety, land development, or zoning issues. In reviewing an application, the local government may not require information on or evaluate an applicant's business decisions about its designed service, customer demand for its service, or quality of its service to or from a particular area or site. A local government may not require information that concerns the specific need for the wireless support structure, including if the service to be provided from the wireless support structure is to add additional wireless coverage or additional wireless capacity. A local government may not require proprietary, confidential, or other business information to justify the need for the new wireless support structure, including propagation maps and telecommunication traffic studies. In reviewing an application, the local government may review the following:

- (1) Applicable public safety, land-use, or zoning issues addressed in its adopted regulations, including aesthetics, landscaping, land-use based location priorities, structural design, setbacks, and fall zones.
- (2) Information or materials directly related to an identified public safety, land development, or zoning issue including evidence that no existing or previously approved wireless support structure can reasonably be used for the wireless facility placement instead of the construction of a new wireless support structure that residential, historic, and designated scenic areas cannot be served from outside the area or that the proposed height of a new wireless support structure or initial wireless facility placement or a proposed height increase of a substantially modified wireless support structure or replacement wireless support structure is necessary to provide the applicant's designed service.
- (3) A local government may require applicants for new wireless facilities to evaluate the reasonable feasibility of collocating new antennas and equipment on an existing wireless support structure or structures within the applicant's search ring. Collocation on an existing wireless support structure is not reasonably feasible if collocation is technically or commercially impractical or the owner of the existing wireless support structure is unwilling to enter into a contract for such use at fair market value. Local governments may require information necessary to determine whether collocation on existing wireless support structures is reasonably feasible.

(c) The local government shall issue a written decision approving or denying an application under this section within a reasonable period of time consistent with the issuance of other development approvals in the case of other applications, each as measured from the time the application is deemed complete.

(d) A local government may fix and charge an application fee, consulting fee, or other fee associated with the submission, review, processing, and approval of an application to site new wireless support structures or to substantially modify wireless support structures or wireless facilities that is based on the costs of the services provided and does not exceed what is usual and

customary for such services. Any charges or fees assessed by a local government on account of an outside consultant shall be fixed in advance and incorporated into a permit or application fee and shall be based on the reasonable costs to be incurred by the local government in connection with the regulatory review authorized under this section. The foregoing does not prohibit a local government from imposing additional reasonable and cost-based fees for costs incurred should an applicant amend its application. On request, the amount of the consultant charges incorporated into the permit or application fee shall be separately identified and disclosed to the applicant. The fee imposed by a local government for review of the application may not be used for either of the following:

- (1) Travel time or expenses, meals, or overnight accommodations incurred in the review of an application by a consultant or other third party.
- (2) Reimbursements for a consultant or other third party based on a contingent fee basis or a results-based arrangement.

(e) The local government may condition approval of an application for a new wireless support structure on the provision of documentation prior to the issuance of a building permit establishing the existence of one or more parties, including the owner of the wireless support structure, who intend to locate wireless facilities on the wireless support structure. A local government shall not deny an initial development approval based on such documentation. A local government may condition a development approval on a requirement to construct facilities within a reasonable period of time, which shall be no less than 24 months.

(f) The local government may not require the placement of wireless support structures or wireless facilities on local government owned or leased property but may develop a process to encourage the placement of wireless support structures or facilities on local government owned or leased property, including an expedited approval process.

(g) This section shall not be construed to limit the provisions or requirements of any historic district or landmark regulation adopted pursuant to this Article. (2019-111, s. 2.4; 2020-3, s. 4.33(a); 2020-25, s. 51(a), (b), (d).)