

# San Mateo Citizens for a Safe Environment

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## Via Electronic/Email Delivery

**Rick Bonilla, Mayor, City of San Mateo**  
**Diane Papan, Deputy Mayor, City of San Mateo**  
**Maureen Freschet, Council Member, City of San Mateo**  
**Joe Goethals, Council Member, City of San Mateo**  
**Eric Rodriguez, Council Member, City of San Mateo**  
**Larry Patterson, City Manager**  
City of San Mateo  
330 W. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403

**Re: STRONGER ORDINANCE NEEDED TO PROTECT CITIZEN SAFETY**

**DEAR COUNCILMEMBERS,**

San Mateo City Council will finally consider a draft ordinance regulating cell towers in the public right-of-way on Monday, June 18. Every part of San Mateo will be inundated with excessive, unnecessary, and possibly harmful cell towers unless City Council promptly acts to strengthen the draft ordinance to protect citizen safety first. Cell towers in residential areas disturb the appearance and fabric of our community and are eyesores that will reduce property values and tax revenues. Furthermore, it is clear that overcrowded wooden utility poles pose a very real public safety danger, just look at the news headlines regarding PG&E's liability for the Wine Country Fires.

The City should strive to comply with laws, but also retain as much local control and discretion as is legally permissible. The primary focus of the wireless ordinance must be to protect the public. There is time to amend the draft ordinance to incorporate public comments and concerns. San Mateo taxpayers deserve the strict protections that other cities afford their residents. The most concerning provisions of the drafts are listed below. Please note that this list is not exhaustive:

1. Proposed towers must be necessary to "close a substantial gap in service." It is clearly in the public interest to minimize the number of cell towers in the City, and to require the least intrusive means possible in order to protect the aesthetics of our neighborhoods. We deserve this protection. If there is no 4G coverage gap, there is no public need for another tower.
2. There are no technical standards or safety testing results for 5G service because this technology is still under development. The ordinance must specifically require a new application and review process, including notification to residents, if 4G towers are to be used for 5G in the future.

3. The design and engineering standards should address only design and/or engineering. Any other requirements or information regarding meetings and notice, or non-design standards must be inserted directly into the Municipal Code. The design and engineering standards must also be incorporated by reference into the Code and must not be amended without City Council approval.
4. The ‘limited exceptions’ section must be deleted. Approving the “least non-compliant configuration” is an alarming slippery slope.
5. Neighborhood meetings with cell tower applicants (whether before or after an application is filed) must be scheduled at City Hall, on the record, with a transcript and video made available for citizens who are unable to attend. City staff must be required to attend such a meeting and prepare a written summary for citizens.
6. The draft is limited to wireless communications facilities in the public right-of-way only. It does not address wireless facilities on other public property. It should be expanded to protect our entire community.
7. Technical standards should be scrutinized and compared with other cities to ensure that San Mateo requires the smallest possible footprint for the equipment. For example, 6 cubic feet for poles and 14 cubic feet for above-ground cabinets have been required by other cities.
8. Mock-ups of towers must be made available for citizens to review at City Hall. This includes mock-ups of utility poles with multiple towers and equipment boxes. Having telecom companies bring a mock-up to a neighborhood meeting is nonsensical since most towers are proposed on wooden utility poles.

This is a serious public health and safety matter. Our group doesn't have the deep pockets or endless supply of inside and outside attorneys as the telecoms. However, we are passionate about this issue because we live, work and raise our children in San Mateo. We will not be intimidated by the telecoms and their clear profit motives. Please hear our concerns and incorporate stronger provisions in the drafts in order to fully protect our children and families.

Best regards,



Danielle Moskowitz

President, San Mateo Citizens for a Safe Environment

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cc: Various Concerned Citizens