



Cotati City Council Agenda Staff Report

Item type: REGULAR AGENDA (ACTION)
To: City Council
Subject: **UPDATE ON OUTREACH TO CELLULAR PROVIDERS**
Date: October 8, 2024
Written by: Damien O'Bid, City Manager

Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council receive a report on the status of outreach to cellular providers. No action is requested.

Background

During Strategic Planning for the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget, the City Council expressed concern about the state of broadband, calling out poor cellular reception as a particularly acute issue in Cotati. As part of the final project list, the City Council directed staff to look into "Countywide Broadband Improvements" and come back to City Council with background on the issue and potentially some recommendations.

On May 14, 2024, the City Council received an update on the status of broadband in Cotati. With the recent updates to the municipal code to align it with federal regulations and expand the allowable opportunities for cellular facilities, the City Council requested a status report to assess progress in approximately 120 days.

Analysis/Discussion

Following the meeting on May 14, 2024, City staff reached out to the cellular providers that operate in Sonoma County, including Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile and Comcast, as well as Crown Castle, a third-party cellular infrastructure provider that operates cellular facilities nationally.

Staff subsequently engaged in dialogue with Verizon, AT&T and Comcast staff to gauge interest. Both Verizon and AT&T engaged with their network teams to determine if the Cotati area is a priority area for infrastructure. To date, there has not been a conclusive determination by either

of these cellular providers. Comcast did not express any interest/need in the Cotati area.

Crown Castle has expressed interest in expansion of cellular facilities in the Cotati area. Currently, staff are working with Crown Castle representatives on potential sites that they are considering for new facilities.

Finally, the City is currently processing a minor use permit application for T-Mobile to place cellular facilities on the roof of the Energy Health Club on East Cotati Avenue. The director level decision to permit the facility has been appealed to the Planning Commission, which will hear the appeal on October 7, 2024. The City Council should refrain from discussing this project, as it is possible that a Planning Commission decision could be appealed to the City Council. Any pre-judgment or statements that could be perceived as pre-judging the issue would likely require recusal of that City Council member in an appeal hearing.

Financial Considerations

There are no direct financial impacts related to a discussion of the status of cellular provider outreach.

Environmental Issues

The proposed discussion has no potential to impact the environment. Where it can be determined with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA review. This general rule can be applied to activities which could be subject to the CEQA process, but which logic dictates should not be subject to CEQA review. Therefore, based on the information provided above, the proposed resolution is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 14.03.021 of the CEQA Guidelines in that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant impact on the environment.