

Office of the County Auditor
Auditor's Analysis

Council Resolution No. 15-2022

Introduced: January 4, 2022

Auditor: Melanie A. Bishop

Fiscal Impact:

The total fiscal impact of this legislation cannot be quantified because the County does not have an estimate of how many wireless antennae or streetlight attachments will be installed on County streetlights in the future.

However, an overview of the anticipated fiscal impact from each fee change is as follows:

- The new \$1 fee for wireless communication providers is not expected to cover the costs incurred by the County to review and execute each carrier's annual right-of-way agreement. However, the County will also collect a \$270 pole fee that each entity will pay per streetlight they install their wireless antenna on. This pole fee will be collected to cover the County's costs of facilitating routine and emergency maintenance of the antenna.
- The Streetlight Attachments permit fee is being increased from \$1,800 to \$3,000. According to the Assistant to the Director of the Department of Public Works, typical costs associated with the County's review have historically exceeded \$3,000. However, the Assistant to the Director indicated that the wireless communication providers and utility companies have stated that they will navigate the permit process more efficiently in the future to reduce the County's review costs, allowing the new fees to cover the cost.

NOTE: The revenue derived from all of these fees will be recognized in the County's General Fund.

Purpose:

The purpose of this legislation is to make changes to the County's "Right-Of-Way Utility Construction Permits" fee schedule. These changes include:

- Establishing a \$1 annual fee for certain wireless communication providers to enter into a right-of-way agreement with the County. These wireless communication providers use public streetlights (which must be permitted to a public utility company) to house their wireless antennae.
- Increasing the permit fee for a streetlight attachment from \$1,800 to \$3,000 so the fee approximates the County's cost of administering its review.

Other Comments:

Regarding the \$1 fee for wireless communication providers, the Administration has noted that:

- The County has not yet entered into any right-of-way agreements executed with these entities and the entities have not installed any wireless antennae on County streetlights to date.
- The passage of this legislation would result in wireless antennae being installed to support 5G wireless service in the County.
- These antennae are not allowed to be installed in residential neighborhoods.

Regarding the increased review fee for streetlight attachments, the Administration has noted that there have been 21 instances of this fee being paid in the past five fiscal years.