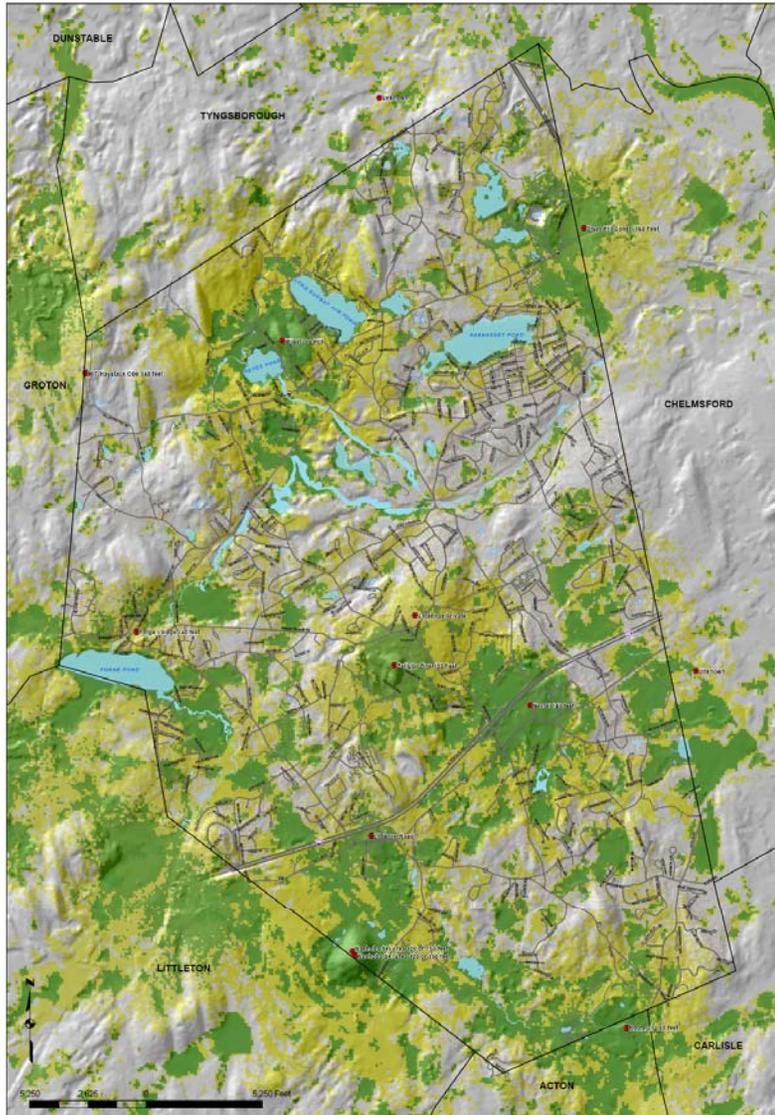


Wireless Communications Facilities – Zoning and Regulation



Existing Wireless Communication Facilities (WCF) Coverage
Town of Westford, Massachusetts

Wireless coverage by ATT, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon depicted by signal strength.

DRAFT

The Town of Westford makes no warranty or representation as to the accuracy, timeliness or completeness of any of the data. The Town of Westford shall have no liability for the data or lack thereof or any decision made or action taken or not taken in reliance upon any of the data.

The wireless coverage maps were produced by NetScout, LLC under contract to the Town of Westford. The best available information was used to illustrate the current wireless coverage in Westford. The coverage shown on this map is not intended to be a guarantee.

DRAFT Feb. 24, 2011



Existing wireless coverage in Westford comes primarily from stand-alone towers, a “monopine” and collocation on Water facilities. Evaluation of other collocation opportunities is underway.

Master Plan excerpts:

- The Master Plan does not reference this policy.

Policy Challenge

- Federal law states that local regulation “shall not prohibit *or have the effect of prohibiting* personal wireless service facilities” (1996 Telecom Act)
- “Pressure points” in wireless coverage are primarily in areas that are not zoned for new towers, and required setbacks limit collocation opportunities.
- Current zoning pushes applicants to pursue use variances, which provide less local control and predictability than a Special Permit process with clear siting and design criteria

What could be done?

- Goal is to provide more local control and predictability within context of Federal law

How to do it? Key Policy Questions

- Is it broadly agreed that allowance of cellular facilities in all zoning districts - with defensible design and locational standards - is preferable to the current system of regulation?

June 23, 2011



Wireless Communications Facilities – Collocation / Use of Public Land



If properly designed, a “monopine” that is obvious from up close blends in well when viewed from a distance. (Source: Isotrope LLC)



WCF on water tank in Medfield. (Source: Isotrope LLC)



Three “stealth” WCF are located in Lexington’s town center. (Photos: Chris Kluchman AICP, Town Planner)



A school “cupola” in Westwood. (Isotrope LLC)

A flagpole serves as a WCF. (Mike Flanary)



A false WCF “chimney” installed next to a real one. (Source: Isotrope LLC)



Rooftop antennae in Ontario, Canada. (Source: Mike Flanary)



The center pole, above, is a WCF on Feeley Field, Sudbury (Photo: Mike Flanary)

Policy Challenge

- Town is in a reactive position relative to the wireless industry, rather than setting out its own long-term vision for compliance with Federal law.

What could be done?

- In addition to zoning amendments, make selected publicly owned sites known to have value for PWSF available for long term lease subject to a public RFP process with site specific design criteria to ensure compatibility with neighborhood character

How to do it? Key Policy Questions

- Is there broad support for making one or more public site(s) available, if preceded by a legitimate, inclusive public process?
- Should initial efforts focus on managing RFP for a single site to establish a sound public process, understanding that the industry may propose towers on privately owned sites in the meantime?
- Is it appropriate to bring such an initiative forward concurrently with proposing revisions to the existing WCF bylaw, or should this effort wait until an amended bylaw is approved by Town Meeting?

June 23, 2011

