



WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES

WHAT ARE WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES?

- Also called WCFs, these include antennas, small cell installations, cell towers, and related equipment used for 4G, 5G, and other wireless signals.
- “Small wireless facilities” are typically smaller installations placed closer to the public right-of-way (e.g. on utility poles, streetlights) rather than on large towers.

PURPOSE

This handout outlines the permitting process and requirements for applicants proposing wireless communications facilities (WCFs) in the City of Novato. It applies to towers, antennas, small cells, and related equipment on public or private property.

These rules ([Novato Municipal Code Division 19.38](#) and [Ordinance No. 1654](#)) aim to regulate towers, antennas, and wireless communications facilities to minimize negative aesthetic, safety, economic, or environmental impacts.

- The rules ensure siting, design, and operation standards while allowing providers to serve Novato efficiently and safely.

LEGAL CONSTRAINTS

- While Novato has some control over location, design, aesthetics, and permitting, federal and state laws set limits (e.g., on fees, shot clocks for review, what kinds of bans are allowed).
- The city cannot block wireless deployment outright where it’s needed to fill “significant gaps” in service, as defined by law.

Type of Facility:	Permit Required:
New tower or monopole	Use Permit
New facility on a building	Use Permit
Co-located on approved site	Zoning Clearance
Small cell in public ROW	Small Cell Permit (Ordinance No. 1654)
Modification of existing facility	Admin or Planning Review

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

All Planning applications must be submitted directly through [Novato Permits Portal](#), our online portal at [Application Forms | City of Novato, CA](#). A Novato Permits Portal account is required and can be created using the online portal prior to applying.

- 1) Planning Application
- 2) Cost Recovery Agreement - for projects that require a deposit.
- 3) Title report dated within the last six months
- 4) Application Fee(s) as listed in the [City of Novato Master Fee Schedule](#).
- 5) Once an application is submitted through the [Novato Permits Portal](#), an invoice will be created within approximately one (1) week and will be viewable on your account. You will then be able to pay through the portal by credit card or e-check (fees apply for both). Alternatively, you can mail or drop off a check to the City's Administrative Offices at the following address:

City of Novato
Attn: Planning Division
922 Machin Avenue
Novato, CA 94945

****Please include your application number and/or project address on the check.**

- 6) Written statement describing the characteristics of the proposed use, including but not limited to:
 - a. Detailed description of the type of wireless facility and associated equipment
 - b. Maintenance plan
 - c. If the applicant requests review pursuant to Section 6409(a) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (codified as 47 U.S.C. § 1455(a)), the applicant must provide written information demonstrating how the proposed project would not exceed any applicable Federal Communications Commission (FCC) thresholds constituting a "substantial change" and would therefore qualify as an "Eligible Facilities" request. If the above is not submitted, the application will not be reviewed as a Section 6409(a) "Eligible Facilities" request.
- 7) A site plan, scaled and dimensioned which includes the following:
 - a. Scale, north arrow, and legend.
 - b. Vicinity map showing the project's relationship to adjacent streets and buildings.
 - c. Dimensioned property lines, streets (with center lines) and easements (existing and proposed).
 - d. Identify all creeks and waterways and 'top of bank' and the required 50-ft. setback, if applicable.
 - e. Location, diameter, and dripline of all existing trees proposed to be removed that are 6-inches or greater in diameter, as measured 24 inches above finished grade with an 'X' if the tree is to be removed.
 - f. Identify all structures to be demolished or otherwise removed
 - g. Location and outside dimensions of all buildings and structures
 - h. Location of all walkways, trails, and outside stairs and landings
 - i. Existing and proposed utilities
 - j. All property lines, street names and significant easements (Note property line dimensions must match those shown on the County Assessor's Map and Tract/Parcel Map for the parcel).
 - k. Existing and proposed antennas and supporting enclosures / equipment. Plans shall identify any and all ancillary equipment required to support the WCF, including, but not limited to, emergency generators, air conditioning equipment, cables, and power sources. Plans must also identify the height of all rooftop- and exterior ground-mounted equipment.
 - l. Any landscaping that would be disturbed, replaced or added to screen at-grade equipment / enclosures.
 - m. All fence/enclosure heights.

- n. Location and type of all exterior lighting including street lighting if applicable.
 - o. Location and size of all mechanical and utility equipment including power and telephone equipment, meters, and transformers.
 - p. Location of all buildings with 600' of the installation, identified by general use
- 8) Elevation drawings, scaled and dimensioned which include:
- a. Existing and proposed architectural elevations showing height and width of all exterior walls, including outside finished grade lines labeled north, south, east, and west.
 - b. Existing and proposed elevations, including antennas/transmission equipment, support structure(s), equipment pads, enclosures, cabinets, pedestals and/or vaults. Existing and proposed elevations must be shown on the same sheet and aligned one above the other to more clearly show the area of work.
 - c. Depiction of all existing and proposed rooftop equipment/enclosures showing that all proposed equipment would be located behind and below a roof screen and/or parapet.
 - d. Information regarding colors, materials, and finishes of any proposed wireless facility installation.
 - e. A description and dimensioned graphics of all antennas and supporting equipment at each location (existing and proposed). One set of typical graphics can be submitted and noted at each location on the plans.
 - f. Type of exterior treatment, materials and colors for new or modified roof screens (if applicable).
 - g. Indicate the maximum height above finished grade of structures.
 - h. Design of all new fencing and enclosures.
 - i. Type, size, appearance, material, lighting, and location of all signage.
- 9) Color photo simulations of cumulative existing and proposed conditions, with a site map showing the location, and direction to the site, from which each photo simulation was rendered
- 10) Identify the number, type, and model of all proposed antenna(s) and accessory equipment and provide cut sheets that contain the technical specifications for all proposed antennas and accessory equipment, which includes without limitation the manufacturer, model number and physical dimensions.
- 11) RF compliance report (predicted & cumulative)
- 12) For nonpreferred siting locations, provide an alternative sites analysis explaining why other sites were not feasible
- 13) Structural safety certifications (ANSI/IEEE/FCC)
- 14) Submit an acoustic analysis prepared and certified by an engineer for the modified wireless facility involving the placement of new equipment demonstrating compliance with the City's noise ordinance (NMC Section 19.22.070). The acoustic analysis must also include an analysis of the manufacturers' specifications for all existing and proposed noise-emitting equipment and a depiction of the proposed equipment relative to all adjacent property lines. In lieu of an acoustic analysis, an applicant may submit evidence from the equipment manufacturer that the ambient noise emitted from all existing and proposed equipment will not, both individually and cumulatively, exceed the applicable limits.
- 15) For any proposed installation in which any tree(s) would be required to be removed, an arborist report, prepared by an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist, must be submitted. The arborist report shall include information regarding the type, number, and condition of any tree(s) proposed to be removed, and must include information regarding recommended replacement location(s) and species.
- 16) Submit evidence of the wireless provider's regulatory status under federal and California law to provide the services and construct the small wireless facility proposed in the application.

If the application is for a facility that will be located within the public right-of-way, the applicant shall certify the wireless provider is a telephone corporation or state the basis for its claimed right to enter the right-of-way, and provide a copy of its certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN), if a CPCN has been issued by the California Public Utilities Commission.

Once the above information is received, it will be distributed to other City departments and necessary governmental agencies for review. Results of this review may necessitate conditions of approval for the proposed activity. The review period for most requests is approximately two weeks.

For more information, please contact the Planning Division at: 415-899-8989 or planning@novato.gov