

City of Takoma Park, Maryland

Office of the City Council

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November 15, 2019
The Honorable Nancy Navarro
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: ZTA 19-07 Telecommunications Towers – Limited Use

Dear President Navarro:

We write today regarding ZTA 19-07, (Telecommunications Towers – Limited Use).

First, we agree with the sponsors that we should retain municipal and county control over local small cell regulation because local jurisdictions will be most effective at and able to reflect the needs of residents, and that we need to actively oppose state and FCC efforts to preempt local authority in this area.

However, we must also express concerns with the current ZTA.

Given the work the City of Takoma Park has done in this area over the last year, we are disappointed that there was not an opportunity for consultation with local jurisdictions prior to the drafting of this legislation.

As you move forward, we urge the Council to work with all stakeholders - including local officials, community leaders and residents - to put in place legislation that reasonably balances the environmental, aesthetic, and quality of life concerns of residents with the needs of applicants.

We are also concerned that ZTA 19-07 would make sweeping, unwarranted changes to current County zoning policy. As we understand it, the current draft would allow small cell antennas and associated equipment to be placed throughout residential areas with little oversight. It would also greatly limit any opportunity for professional review to ensure that wireless facilities comply with approved community master plans, and with county and municipal historic, environmental and aesthetic requirements.

The City of Takoma Park has spent a great deal of time considering the impact of small cells on our community and we are greatly concerned that ZTA 19-07 would severely limit our City's ability to be part of the process in approving the placement of small cells in our community.

We believe a more holistic approach to drafting small cell legislation is needed. To that end, we urge the Council to work with the County Executive and local jurisdictions, officials, community leaders and residents to draft legislation that reasonably balances the environmental, aesthetic, and quality of life concerns of residents with the needs of applicants.

Sincerely,

The Takoma Park City Council

Kate Stewart, Mayor
Peter Kovar, Ward 1
Cindy Dyballa, Ward 2
Kacy Kostiuik, Ward 3
Terry Seamens, Ward 4
Jarrett Smith, Ward 5
Talisha Searcy, Ward 6

CC: Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich
Members of the Montgomery County Council