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City Council to consider 5G cell tower designs, approval of city budget

By TRAVIS CRUM The Herald-Dispatch Mar 25, 2019 Updated 23 hrs ago



Huntington City Hall

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HUNTINGTON — Huntington City Council members on Monday night will discuss the second reading of an ordinance to adopt design standards for proposed AT&T 5G cell towers across the city.

AT&T's 5G technology is coming to Huntington, making it the first city in the state to have the technology. Because the technology is strictly regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, city council members will not have a say in where the towers are placed throughout the city.

Instead, council members will only have an option to develop and implement design standards for how the towers should look. They may ensure the towers support a particular look of a neighborhood. They may ensure the towers are not impeding traffic or pedestrians, obstructing the line of sight, and that they are compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act standards. The towers also can't be higher than 50 feet and need to be placed approximately 500 feet apart, which is the length of the average city block.

Assistant City Attorney Ericka Hernandez said the ordinance will allow the Planning and Zoning Commission to design standards for the "small-scale" cell phone towers before AT&T places 30 to 40 of them across the city. The towers are smaller than regular "microtowers" that some cell phone providers use, but need to be placed closer together than other towers.

The city must implement design standards by April 15, or the city loses the right to have any input on the designs.

Several council members expressed concern for the lack of say in the towers' placement, but also said they would be concerned not to have a say in the towers' designs.

The 5G technology is useful for first responders in high-density areas because if there is a disaster, first responders would have prioritized cell service.