

Wireless Siting Reforms Drive Investment and Deployment Across the U.S.



24%

increase in total number of active cell sites since 2018 when pivotal state and federal siting reforms were implemented.

(CTIA Annual Survey)

5G wireless networks are a platform for economic growth and innovation. Since 2018, the year 5G launched, wireless providers have invested \$190B in powering America's world-leading wireless networks, and today they cover more than 330 million people. America's 5G progress has been aided by key policy actions by the federal government, as well as nearly two-thirds of states passing small cell legislation.

Looking forward, policymakers should continue to remove barriers to wireless deployment for both mobile and 5G for home broadband service to bring connectivity to all Americans.

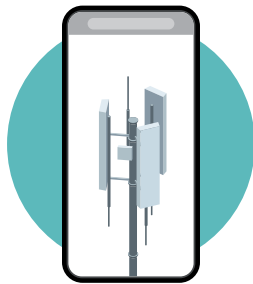
FCC Siting Reforms Balance Need for Wireless Deployment While Maintaining Local Autonomy

The FCC's 2018 reforms, which are binding nationwide, clarified how small wireless facilities can be deployed in public rights-of-way and on publicly owned structures in those rights-of-way, striking a balance between preserving local autonomy and the need for efficient rollout of 5G infrastructure. Specifically, those reforms:

- Built on the efforts of many states that already passed small cell legislation by providing a national framework of siting practices to reflect and accelerate the deployment of modern wireless infrastructure.
- Clarified that while localities have the right to review and approve a siting application, rules that would effectively ban wireless deployments are prohibited, and localities must act on applications within certain timeframes.
- Respected the important role that states and localities play in the siting process and ensured they would be able to recover reasonable costs incurred in supporting wireless infrastructure deployment.

Siting Reforms Are Unlocking Powerful 5G-Driven Benefits

These federal guardrails and state and local siting reforms are speeding up 5G deployment as they help provide clarity to municipalities and siting applicants alike. The number of operational cell sites has grown 24% since pivotal state and federal siting reforms were implemented in 2018.



258x
growth in mobile
data since 2010

Other agencies have also streamlined policies affecting wireless deployment. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation amended its siting guidance for communications deployments to speed network infrastructure rollout, and the Bureau of Land Management revised its rules to streamline, standardize, and enhance the transparency of the application process.

These policies and the infrastructure deployments that result help meet consumers' growing demand for wireless data—which is up 258x in the U.S. since 2010.

And in rural and hard-to-serve areas, these reforms and resulting deployments help bridge the digital divide. 5G home broadband service is providing a competitive new option for high-speed internet service in many communities.

Industry, States, and Localities Work Together on Mutually Agreeable Siting Policies

As policymakers and industry work to bring connectivity to all Americans, removing barriers to wireless deployment for both mobile and fixed wireless services, such as 5G home broadband, is essential.

The 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, through its Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, provides \$42.5 billion in grants for states and territories to fund broadband infrastructure projects.

To make effective use of funding, states should look to a mix of broadband solutions—including 5G home broadband services—that work best for their unique circumstances and priorities. They should also take specific steps to speed deployment, including encouraging coordination across agencies to leverage established permitting processes and avoid duplication, as well as directing agencies to follow federal permit review deadlines and helping localities act quickly on permitting BEAD projects.

Beyond BEAD, states, local governments, and wireless providers should continue to work together to implement mutually agreeable siting policies consistent with the FCC's 2018 reforms and applicable state laws—the nation's largest providers have already entered into thousands of agreements with localities. And states should continue to review their wireless siting policies beyond the FCC's baseline framework to compete for 5G investment capital.