

Our Society was first informed about plans to replace the existing tower at the summit of Mt. Douglas on Oct 23, 2023, four months after contractors were informed, and that the replacement tower would be constructed not near the existing tower but instead in the Churchill Drive summit parking lot.



The project appeared on the October 30 Council consent agenda to approve proceeding with this tower replacement without further Council involvement. We did make a presentation at that Council meeting and are very appreciative that Council listened, removed the item from the consent agenda and passed the motion: **"That Council direct staff to report back to Council on the design and location of the Communication Tower prior to final approval of the design."**

**This tower replacement represents a 50 year decision, never-the-less there currently are time constraints on this project suggesting that Council needs to consider this process now to avoid an undesirable result.**

We therefore wish to express our concerns and suggestions to Council before any final design approval report comes forward. We fully support the tower replacement project. However, given this highly visible location in Saanich, we must carefully consider ways to minimize the visual impact as much as possible. More and more people are enjoying this natural setting and beautiful views of the largest natural park in Saanich. Preserving the values that residents cherish about this Park is paramount, as the new structure will become a prominent part of the park landscape for generations to come.

Not only would this parking lot location be an eyesore, eliminate a significant number of parking spaces, it would destroy the iconic view as one approaches the summit along Churchill Drive. When inquiring about locating the replacement tower near the existing tower using a crane we were told this was not possible because it required barging a crane from the mainland.

**Our concern is that, based on the October 30 motion, the report to Council will only include one proposal, the parking lot installation location and not provide any alternatives for Council's consideration.** We maintain that Council must hear two proposals: the current parking lot proposal **and a second proposal with installation near the existing tower.**

Locating the new tower near the existing tower using a crane will be significantly better aesthetically.

Advantages of the existing tower location:

- Accessible by crane.
- Visually and aesthetically superior to parking lot location
- Tower can be 30m instead of 40m: Tower costs increase with square of height; 40m tower could be almost twice the cost of 30m tower.
- Tower with top 6m whip is within zone height restrictions.

Disadvantages of the parking lot location include:

- It will be an eyesore.
- Requiring a 40m tower instead of a 30m tower. Extra 10m adds major cost for tower & base.
- 40m tower plus 6m whip exceeds 42m zone height restriction.

- It is necessary to cut a hole in the underground building for cables.
- Trenching and blasting a trench in the parking lot for conduits.
- This location will remove a significant percentage of the few parking spaces and inevitably exacerbate the existing issue of vehicles parking along the summit approach of Churchill Drive, posing a safety risk to pedestrians and cyclists.
- More disruption during construction and permanent people-gathering space loss

With these factors in mind, we sought advice from a local crane company that had previously done work in the park. They stated there would be no difficulty in using local cranes for construction of a new tower near the existing one. They noted there is a clear path for the crane operation that will not impact any trees and the crane can easily access the solid rock base just north of the current tower.

Therefore, we request Council to **direct staff to include in their upcoming report, a solution for the replacement tower to be located near the existing tower** in addition to the parking lot solution. Council can then balance the aesthetics, prices, advantages, disadvantage of each option and choose the best solution for the park and for the municipality.