

The PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy wants to bring to Council's attention the Saanich document [Mount Douglas Communications Facility, Guiding Principles for Development and Operations](#).



The [Mount Douglas Communications Facility, Guiding Principles for Development and Operations](#) was established in conjunction with our Society in 2015 by the then Director of Legislative Services. It follows principles expressed by Council from when the site was first constructed.

Notable principles in this Saanich document:

- “The development and operation of the Communications Facility will be carried out in a manner that acknowledges the natural setting.”
- “Do not increase the height or visibility of any replacement antenna tower from that which currently exists.”
- “The visibility of the antenna tower will be considered prior to any new or modified equipment installations.”
- “The Communications Facility is surrounded by Mount Douglas Park and therefore collaboration with the Parks Division and other Saanich departments and divisions will always be a consideration in the development and operation of the Facility. **The Friends of Mount Douglas Park Society is a non-profit organization which has as one of its goals the protection and enhancement of the natural values of the Park and therefore the Lands Division will inform the Society of work to be undertaken at the Communications Facility with a potential external impact.**”

The current PKOLS Mount Douglas communication tower replacement project has not followed these established guiding principles for the tower, for its visibility, nor for consultation. Instead, to satisfy requests from commercial cell users of the tower, a Request for Proposal (RFP) was generated with replacement tower specifications we are told that exceed what can be constructed near the existing tower.

- Commercial users lobbied for a substantially stronger tower so they could mount larger antenna equipment on the tower
- The RFP that was created failed to consider the long established balance between the natural park setting and the communications facility and specified a tower too big for the summit location. From the RFP:
  - "Multiple cellular service providers and public safety organizations wish to upgrade their antennas necessitating the addition of larger and heavier panel antennas. Furthermore, they wish to mount their radio units very close to these same antennas on the mast. The weight and wind-loading proposed by these current and pending users exceeds the safe working limits of the existing mast and have been denied to date. "
  - "Designed loading capacity for the new mast/tower is to be at least double that of the existing mast."
- In June 2023 tower contractors advised Saanich the RFP specified a tower too big to be installed on the summit near the existing tower

- **At this point, the tower specifications should have been changed to allow a summit installation,** but instead the tower location was changed to the parking lot, ignoring the natural park setting.

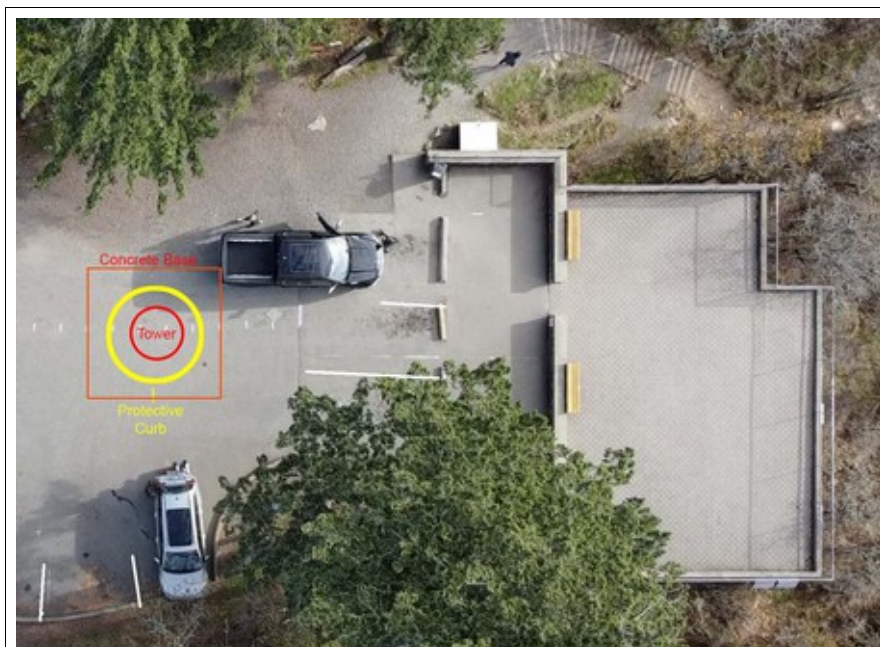
As it now stands, unless Council intervenes, the replacement tower

- Will be 40m tall instead of 30m., doubling the tower price and weight.
- Will be located in the south-centre of the summit parking lot, eliminating several of the few summit parking lot spaces, impedes vehicle turnaround space.
- Will exceed the P-9 zone tower height restrictions. It's disappointing that there is the assumption they will simply go to Council for zone height exemption.
- Will be an eyesore from all Saanich, but especially destroying the iconic view as one approaches via Churchill Drive.
- Will require surrounding concrete barriers for protection from cars, further limiting parking and hindering turnaround space.
- Will be a graffiti magnet, a climbing challenge. Hopefully no surrounding chainlink fence!

Note this is not about 911 CREST as their needs can easily be met with a smaller tower. This large tower is designed for the wishes of the commercial users.

It is not too late to rectify this.

**The PKOLS-Mount Douglas Conservancy requests Council intervene and direct staff to take steps that will result in this replacement tower constructed “as close to the existing tower as possible, no further than 6m or 20ft [from] the existing tower” as originally specified in the RFP.**



Summit Parking lot tower location



View from Churchill Drive