

Crown Castle Temporary Wireless Communications Facility Relocation Questions and Answers

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Background:

Since 2016, WSDOT has been working to acquire the property where the Montlake Boulevard Market and 76 gas station are located. The property is needed to construct various permanent project improvements for the SR 520 Program. WSDOT is working with the tenants located on the property to relocate their businesses, which includes four wireless-service providers.

A company named Crown Castle currently operates a wireless-communications structure – called a “monopole” – on the Montlake property. The pole serves two wireless carriers. There are also two facilities on the roof of the market building that serve two additional wireless carriers. These wireless-communications facilities need to be removed from the property as it is needed for SR 520 construction purposes. In order to maintain emergency 911 service as well as uninterrupted wireless phone and data service for the Montlake neighborhood, the southern portion of the University of Washington campus and the SR 520 corridor, Crown Castle is working with WSDOT to remove its wireless equipment from the Montlake Market property. A new, temporary wireless structure is planned for the nearby WSDOT Peninsula construction staging area. The new structure will be able to accommodate all four wireless service providers (AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon) that currently use the Montlake Market property.

Crown Castle's plan is to construct a 125-foot-tall temporary structure near the driveway to the WSDOT Peninsula staging area (located south of SR 520, and east of the Montlake neighborhood), in the southwest portion of the property. The new, temporary structure's design is intended to resemble a tree to better blend into the surrounding area. This new “monofir” is expected to be located at the WSDOT Peninsula location throughout the completion of SR 520 construction, at which point WSDOT will work with Crown Castle to relocate its facility to a new permanent location, off the WSDOT Peninsula. At that time, WSDOT also intends to enter into a property transfer agreement with Seattle Parks and Recreation upon completion of SR 520 construction.

Crown Castle is currently seeking a conditional-use permit from the city of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) for the new temporary facility proposed for the WSDOT Peninsula. Below are frequently asked questions and answers regarding the relocation process and Crown Castle's proposed temporary facility.

1. Question: If it's possible that the Montlake Market can be preserved, why are you moving forward with relocating the wireless-communications facility?

Answer: WSDOT is continuing to move forward with the acquisition of the property where the Montlake Market and 76 gas station are located. The property is needed to construct various permanent project improvements for the SR 520 program.

WSDOT is also continuing to address a provision in the state Legislature's 2018 supplemental transportation budget (Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6106) regarding the Montlake Market. The proviso states:

“The legislature recognizes the department [WSDOT] must acquire the entirety of parcel number 1-23190 for construction of the project. The department shall work with its design-build contractor to ensure to the maximum extent practicable that the building housing any grocery store or market currently located on parcel number 1-23190 will be preserved. The legislature recognizes the city of Seattle has requirements in the project area that the department must address and that those requirements may affect the use of parcel number 1-23190 and may affect the ability of the department to preserve any

grocery store or market currently located on the property. The department shall meet and confer regularly with residents in the vicinity of the parcel regarding the status of the project and its effects on any grocery store or market currently located on the property. The legislature strongly encourages the city to utilize maximum flexibility in how the department meets the city's requirements and to be an equal partner in efforts to preserve any grocery store or market on parcel number 1-23190."

We have been working to review technical requirements for the SR 520 Montlake Project that have a direct impact on the Montlake Market building. At this time, WSDOT has not found a way to build the project and preserve the market building. After WSDOT selects a design-build contractor this fall, we will work with the contractor to evaluate potential options that may allow preservation of the Montlake Market building.

Regardless of whether the Montlake Market building can be preserved, the existing wireless-communications facilities located on the property need to be removed due to safety concerns, access restrictions and maintenance needs during SR 520 construction activities.

2. Question: Why was the WSDOT Peninsula chosen as the temporary relocation site?

Answer: To find a site that met the needs of all parties, Crown Castle conducted a site alternatives analysis to identify the least intrusive option for this temporary relocation. Important factors when identifying potential replacement sites included:

- Ensuring adequate coverage for emergency services.
- Ensuring adequate coverage for the wireless carriers' networks and avoiding coverage gaps.
- Constructing the new facility outside of most Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA).
- Constructing the new facility in an area that would not interfere with SR 520 construction activities.
- Accessibility to existing fiber-optic cable needed to operate the facility.
- Minimizing and avoiding impacts to historic resources.

Crown Castle analyzed a number of private and commercial sites in the Montlake area. The residential nature of the Montlake neighborhood and the lack of available commercial properties that could provide adequate service coverage in the area made finding a new site challenging. Despite exhaustive efforts, a replacement location on private property could not be secured.

WSDOT worked with Crown Castle to evaluate potential relocation options within WSDOT right of way. Viable options within state right of way were limited, as many potential sites were located in an ECA, would not provide adequate service coverage, or were needed for SR 520 construction purposes. Installing the temporary facility next to an existing staging area at the WSDOT Peninsula was the only available option.

3. Question: Why is this a temporary relocation? How long will the wireless facility be located at the WSDOT Peninsula?

Answer: As described in question 2, Crown Castle was unable to secure a permanent relocation site at this time, and WSDOT is currently unable to offer a permanent relocation site on its right of way due to the needs of the SR 520 Program. WSDOT and Crown Castle are preparing a lease for the temporary wireless-communications facility to remain at the WSDOT Peninsula property through completion of SR 520 construction activities (approximately 10 years). Prior to termination of the lease, WSDOT will work with Crown Castle to find another suitable location for the wireless-communications facility, including options within WSDOT right of way that are no longer needed for the SR 520 Program. We anticipate that there will be additional viable locations for a permanent facility within WSDOT property once WSDOT is no longer using all available right of way for SR 520 construction purposes.

4. **Question:** Is WSDOT planning on transferring the WSDOT Peninsula to Seattle Parks and Recreation to integrate into the Arboretum? Can that still happen with a temporary wireless facility located on the site?

Answer: WSDOT intends to enter into a property transfer agreement with Seattle Parks and Recreation upon completion of SR 520 construction, allowing the city to enhance and integrate the area as part of a future Arboretum North Entry project. WSDOT also has an agreement with Seattle Parks and Recreation regarding final design and construction of park improvements for the WSDOT Peninsula that would require the wireless-communications facility to be removed from its temporary location. As such, WSDOT and Crown Castle are developing a lease agreement for the temporary use of the WSDOT Peninsula site with the intent to relocate the temporary facility off the WSDOT Peninsula upon completion of the SR 520 project, and in advance of a future property transfer to Seattle Parks and Recreation.

5. **Question:** What will the temporary wireless facility look like?

Answer: Crown Castle is proposing that the new, temporary structure's design resemble a tree to better blend into the surrounding area. Below is a conceptual rendering of what this 125-foot-tall "monofir" might look like. Crown Castle's proposal to install a structure that better blends into the surrounding area is consistent with city of Seattle requirements to reduce visual impacts.



6. **Question:** What are the construction effects of the temporary facility?

Answer: The monofir will be constructed during weekday daytime hours in accordance with city of Seattle noise standards. Construction is expected to begin in 2019 and last approximately six months, with intermittent periods of no construction activity.

Neighbors can expect to see construction equipment such as excavators, cranes, trucks, and concrete pumpers during this work. Construction activities and equipment will be contained within the WSDOT Peninsula construction staging area, and workers will utilize best management practices to minimize construction effects. Neighbors should not expect to feel any vibrations from these construction activities, nor will the work be especially noisy and require any noise variances.

Construction of the new facility will also require the removal of one dead tree, currently located within WSDOT's construction staging area.

7. Question: What are the operational effects of the facility after construction is completed? Will there be any noise effects and/or visual screening?

Answer: After construction is complete, the only operational noise from the facility will come from cooling fans. In accordance with city of Seattle requirements, Crown Castle is proposing to install a 10-foot-tall concrete wall around the wireless facility to keep operational noise levels within the allowable limits per city of Seattle code. Crown Castle's proposed plan includes painting the concrete wall hunter green, and planting vegetative screening around the wall. The vegetative screening is intended to fully cover the wall, although portions of the wall may be visible when the vegetation is first planted. Technicians from Crown Castle and each wireless carrier will also visit the site periodically.

8. Question: What permits and environmental review were completed for this wireless communications facility?

Answer: Crown Castle is seeking an administrative conditional-use permit and a building permit from the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections. WSDOT has also completed a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reevaluation that includes a Section 106 cultural and historic resources process with the concurring parties. In accordance with our Section 106 Programmatic Agreement, WSDOT consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer and other concurring parties regarding potential impacts to historic properties. The Federal Highway Administration signed and approved WSDOT's NEPA reevaluation on Sept. 4, 2018. The SR 520 website contains the [reevaluation](#) (pdf 35mb).

9. Question: How can I provide input on the proposal?

Answer: The Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) is accepting comments on Crown Castle's conditional-use permit application. The application can be found on the SDCI's [Seattle Services Portal](#) (Record #3032615-LU). The public comment period is Oct. 11-24.

Comments can be provided in the following ways:

- Mail: SDCI/PRC, P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019
- Email: PRC@seattle.gov

The SDCI will review public comments, and may ask Crown Castle to provide additional information in response while reviewing the permit application.