

SMALL CELL FAQs

- What is Small Cell?
 - Small Cell is a term to describe the antennae and equipment telecom providers plan to install in public space in order to meet the growing demand for cell phone, tablet, and other connected devices people use as part of their everyday lives.

- Why is Small Cell needed? And why in District of Columbia public space?
 - The introduction of smart phones and other wireless devices and the explosion of their use in the past decade have driven technological advances in the telecommunication infrastructure as demand strains the existing infrastructure. From the needs of individual users to be connected, through the importance of disseminating emergency information to the public and between first responders, reliable wireless telecommunications have become a universal element of everyday life.
 - To address the growing demand for wireless technology across the United States, cellular providers propose to increase the capacity of their networks by deploying Small Cell, a new lower-powered antenna technology, to reduce data traffic load on roof mounted equipment and larger cell towers. This new technology requires infrastructure to be installed in closer proximity to the users on the ground; this infrastructure will affect the aesthetics of public spaces.

- What is DDOT's role in the Small Cell program?
 - DDOT performs two roles in the Small Cell program: one as permitting authority and the other as asset owner.
 - DDOT has the authority to process and issue permits for uses of public space. This authority is exercised either directly for certain uses, or delegated to it by the Public Space Committee (PSC) for other uses. In the case of Small Cell infrastructure, DDOT will exercise delegated authority provided applicants abide by guidelines adopted by the PSC.
 - DDOT owns and maintains tens of thousands of streetlights across the District. These assets are ones that telecom companies would like to use for installation of Small Cell equipment when available. As the asset owner DDOT has the authority to exclude the use of certain assets, set limits on the uses of other assets, and review every public space permit application to ensure it complies with the general standards and limits DDOT establishes as well as with any conditions or limits specific to a particular asset.

- What are the Small Cell Guidelines?

- Intended to provide clarity and transparency to all stakeholders regarding the deployment of Small Cell equipment, the Small Cell Guidelines (Guidelines) cover the general standards and aesthetics for the design and installation of Small Cell technology across the District of Columbia. They are comprehensive in nature while recognizing the unique characteristics and history of the District of Columbia. The Guidelines cover the different areas of the District while keeping generally applicable standards based on the type of infrastructure installed.
- How were the Guidelines developed?
 - The Guidelines have been drafted with input from a variety of government stakeholders, including staff of the District Department of Transportation (DDOT), the Office of Planning (OP), the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). They were informed through best practices research, technical specifications from telecom providers, and reference to the standards and conditions established for other uses of public space.
- Are the Guidelines the only document governing Small Cell deployment in the District?
 - No, there are many documents that govern Small Cell deployment in the District. The Guidelines and the Master License Agreement are specifically tailored to this deployment. They reference other applicable standards such as the Standard Specifications for Highways and Structures, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the Comprehensive Plan for the District, among others. Additionally both documents specifically note that Small Cell providers must abide by all other applicable regulatory and licensing requirements.
- What is the Master License Agreement?
 - The Master License Agreement (MLA) is a document all Small Cell providers must execute with the District of Columbia before they can submit a public space permit application. The MLA sets certain terms, conditions, and requirements on MLA holders and articulates specific limitations and prohibitions that the MLA holder must abide by in order to install equipment in public space. It does not authorize the actual installation of equipment in public space. That requires a separate public space permit. Information on the MLA can be found at <https://octo.dc.gov/page/small-cells>.
- What is the process for the Guidelines to be adopted?
 - These are only draft Guidelines, meant to serve as a starting point for the conversation regarding the deployment of this next generation of utility

infrastructure. They require the careful and thoughtful input of the citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders of the District in order to be the best and most authoritative Guidelines to ensure that the deployment of Small Cell technology is seamlessly woven into the unique character of the District of Columbia. After gathering the input from all stakeholders the Guidelines will be reviewed and adopted by the Public Space Committee.

- How will the Public Space Committee adopt the guidelines?
 - As with all actions of the Public Space Committee (PSC), it will conduct its business in a public meeting, consistent with the Open Meetings act. The PSC will hold a public meeting on Monday, October 15th in room 200 of 1100 4th St SW. The meeting time will be set to allow people to participate with minimal disruption to their daily schedules. The meeting notice will be published in the DC Register on Friday, September 7th.

- How do I comment on the Guidelines?
 - Comments on these Guidelines should be provided via email to PublicSpace.Committee@dc.gov. In the subject line please include the title: Small Cell Guidelines Comments. Comments may also be mailed to the Public Space Committee, c/o DDOT Public Space Permit Office, 1100 4th St SW, Room 360, Washington DC, 20024. On the outside of the envelope please note that it includes comments on the Small Cell Guidelines.

- What is the deadline to provide comments?
 - To ensure a complete record for the Public Space Committee meeting on Wednesday, October 15th, written comments should be provided by Sunday, October 5th. People can attend the meeting and provide comments on the record at the meeting.

- Can I provide comments at the Public Space Committee meeting?
 - Yes, the public is encouraged to attend the meeting. Those interested in providing comments on the record at the meeting should send an email to PublicSpace.Committee@dc.gov requesting to be allowed to present testimony at the meeting. While the PSC may allow people who have not signed up in advance the opportunity to speak on the record at the meeting, preference will be given to those who sign up in advance.

- Do I need to provide my comments in writing before the meeting if I intend to speak at the meeting?

- No, written comments do not need to be provided in advance. Attendees are encouraged to do so in order to provide PSC members a chance to review the comments along with the witness on the record.