

Tokyo Tower vs. Super Tower

Crossed Signals?

As an object of destruction for Mothra and Godzilla, a Mecca for tourists, and a landmark in numerous Japanese film and television dramas, Tokyo Tower is an icon. It is a key symbol of post war reconstruction and global aspirations. This slightly larger than the original replica of the Eiffel Tower has been the key T.V. and FM radio retransmission facility for Tokyo since it was completed in 1958 at a cost of some Yen 2.8 billion.

The tower occupies a larger land parcel that has various recreational facilities closer to ground level and observatory decks at 150 and 250 meters respectively. On clearer days, both Mt. Fuji and a panoramic view of greater Tokyo can be enjoyed from these observatories. It was the tallest self supported iron structure in the world at completion and is comparatively light at 4,000 tons versus the 10,000-ton Eiffel Tower. The location on a prime and central Tokyo block sets it apart from many other towers globally.

The relatively flat topography of the Kanto plain and low-rise sprawl of Tokyo has allowed Tokyo Tower to remain central to signal transmission for nearly fifty years. Even the growing popularity of cable, satellite and broadband medias have not displaced terrestrial broadcast in Japan.

Recent events have placed Tokyo Tower at a crossroads. Over the last decade, relaxed development standards have led to the construction of super high-rise condominiums and office

blocks in many neighborhoods throughout the Tokyo metropolitan area. In recent years, the areas immediately around Tokyo Tower in Minato-ku (ward) have become crowded with 30-54 story towers standing as high as 248 meters (813 feet).

At 333 meters tall (1,091 feet or about 10 meters higher than the Eiffel Tower), Tokyo Tower is beginning to experience issues in clearly transmitting signals through the maze of new buildings to areas further out and to low-rise properties in the shadows of the larger centrally located buildings.

The national government has recently mandated an end to all analog T.V. transmissions by 2011 in a switch to digital terrestrial broadcast. Although digital broadcasting is still in its infancy, it is expected to be widespread by the Beijing Olympics in 2008 if issues of interference from analog signals can be overcome. Nearly all television sets on sale today in Japan have the capability to receive digital broadcasts, in some cases in addition to analog signals. Mobile phones are also expected to gain the ability to commonly receive digital T.V. signals in the near future. Nagoya and Osaka are currently further along than Tokyo in the move towards digital delivery.

Broadcasters intend to increase their output from the Tokyo Tower to 700 watts from the current 15.5 watts. Digital broadcast capabilities have already been integrated. Work is underway to change the analog frequencies to prevent radio



Tallest Towers

Rank	Name	Year	Country	m	ft.
N/A	Tokyo Super Tower*	2010*	Japan	600*	1,969*
1	CN Tower	1976	Canada	553	1,815
2	Ostankino Tower	1967	Russia	540	1,772
3	Oriental Pearl Tower	1994	China	468	1,535
4	Borj-e Milad	2003	Iran	435	1,427
5	Menara Kuala Lumpur	1995	Malaysia	421	1,381
6	Tiajin Radio and T.V.	1991	China	415	1,362
7	Central Radio and T.V.	1992	China	405	1,329
8	Kiev TV Tower	1973	Ukraine	385	1,263
9	Gerbrandytoren Lopik	1961	Netherlands	375	1,230
10	Tashkent Tower	1985	Uzbekistan	375	1,230
19	Tokyo Tower	1958	Japan	333	1,091

* Not Fixed

and T.V. interference and an increase in the number of Tokyo area households with access to digital signals from under 250,000 to over 6,000,000 is eminent. Nationwide, households capable of receiving digital broadcasts will increase from 27,000,000 to 37,000,000 before the end of 2006.

NHK (the Japanese Public Broadcast entity) and all commercial networks are focused on the full implementation of digital broadcasting, as are electronics manufacturers anxious to capture the 'replacement' business for televisions and peripheral equipment such as DVD recorders and home theater systems.

Since 2003, a number of the key broadcasters have been promoting construction of a Super Tower of 600-700 meters (1,968 - 2,297 feet) tall to replace Tokyo tower. This in turn has touched off a battle between 15 of Tokyo's local wards, cities and neighboring prefectures to host this new

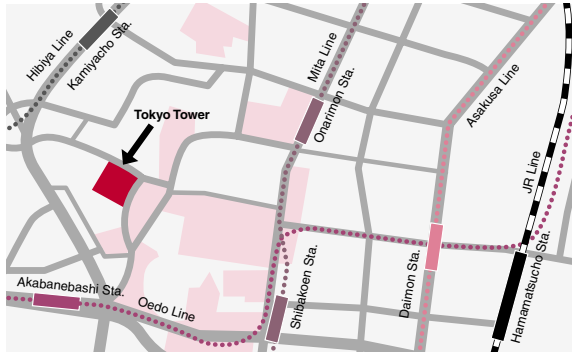
tower. Minato-ku is also keen not to lose a landmark and is reviewing ways to secure an alternative within the ward or to support Tokyo Tower continuing operations. Lower land prices, local subsidies and the ability to relax height restrictions make some suburban areas more competitive than central Tokyo. Financing the tower will likely be a joint public and private effort as the cost is estimated to be in the Yen 50-65 billion range or 18-24 times the cost to construct Tokyo Tower in 1958.

The recent frontrunners for the new Super Tower appear to be Sumida-ku (ward) and Saitama Prefecture although many others have their hat in the ring. Tobu Railway is a major proponent of the Sumida-ku bid as they have significant operations and land in the vicinity. The site is near four rail line junctions, enjoys reasonable access to the domestic (Haneda) and international (Narita) airports and has proximity to key tourist destinations including Asakusa, Kokugikan (national sumo arena) and the Tokyo Edo

Statue of Liberty

Tokyo Tower

Tokyo Tower



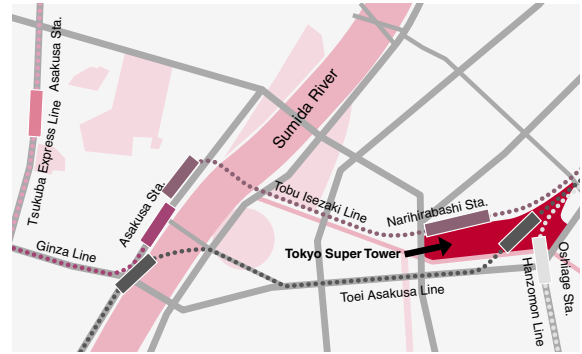
Museum. Tokyo station is only 5 km from the site. There are several other large scale commercial and infrastructure projects underway in the area.

Local government officials, commercial organizations and shop owners are key proponents of each proposal, as they believe the construction and tourism values are substantial. Whether tourists will flock to outer wards of Tokyo or neighboring prefectures is less clear as are the potential negative impact for residential areas near the project site. A final decision on the location is expected in late 2006.

Japan conceded aspirations to construct the tallest building in the world with the completion of the 73 story, 296 meter (971 feet) Yokohama Landmark Tower in 1993. Several countries in Asia and the Middle East have since climbed to the top of that competition. The Super Tower would allow Japan to regain a foothold in cutting edge structural engineering. It would likely become the tallest freestanding tower in the world.

Tokyo Tower remains viable based upon combined revenue of broadcast fees, observation deck visitors and other tourism activities including the recreational facilities and the sale of all varieties of souvenirs. When a Super Tower

Tokyo Super Tower – Sumida Site



is constructed, the potential decline in broadcast fees and tourist traffic may impair the operations of Tokyo Tower.

The Tokyo Tower site encompasses some 14,973 sm (3.7 acres or 161,172 sf) of land, The surrounding area includes a number of temples, parks and hotels. In recent years numerous high-end office and residential projects have been completed nearby. The current plan is for Tokyo Tower to be renewed for digital broadcasts and to serve as a back up to the Super Tower. If the project was no longer viable, Tokyo Tower might well be redeveloped into some combination of office, residential and commercial facilities in combination with large adjacent sites and perhaps by acquiring air rights from area developments, which are permanently low-rise.

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Position Paper
Issued: October 2005