



# MEMORANDUM

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DATE: September 10, 2008  
For September 25, 2008 Hearing

TO: Peter M. Gavin  
Zoning Examiner

FROM:   
Albert Elias, AICP  
Urban Planning & Design  
Director

SUBJECT: SPECIAL EXCEPTION LAND USE – URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN  
REPORT  
SE-08-29 AT&T – Ironwood Hill Drive, RX-2 Zone (Ward 1)

**Issue** – This is a request by Steve Olson, on behalf of the property owners, Son Life Corporation, for approval of a special exception land use for a wireless communication facility. The special exception site is located west of Shannon Road on the south side of Ironwood Hill Drive (see Case Location Map). The preliminary development plan (PDP) proposes the placement of a new wireless communication facility consisting of a 50-foot tall tower disguised as a palm tree, and a 1,000 square-foot equipment compound, enclosed by an 8-foot high block wall. A communications use of this type is subject to Section 3.5.4.20.F.1 of the *Land Use Code (LUC)*.

#### 3.5.4.20 Communications.

F. The following requires approval as a special exception land use through a Zoning Examiner Full Notice Procedure, Sec. 23A-50 and 23A-53. The Zoning Examiner may forward the request to the Design Review Board (DRB) for design review and recommendation. (Ord. No. 9967, §3, 7/1/04)

1. Wireless communication antennae, provided:

- a. The antennae are mounted on a new tower and the tower and antennae are concealed or disguised, or the antennae are collocated on an existing structure.
- b. The tower and antennae are architecturally and/or environmentally compatible with the surrounding structure(s) and general area.
- c. A new tower is set back at least two (2) times the height of the structure from the boundary of any property zoned residential or office.
- d. The tower and antennae are fifty (50) feet or less in height.

A public hearing before the Zoning Examiner is required. The Zoning Examiner will render a decision to grant the use with or without conditions, or to deny the use.

**Department of Urban Planning and Design Recommendation** – The Department of Urban Planning and Design recommends approval of the special exception request, subject to the attached preliminary conditions.

## **Background Information**

Existing Land Use: church

Surrounding Zones and Land Uses:

North: Zoned CR-2 (County); residential

South: Zoned RX-2; residential

East: Zoned R-1; residential

West: Zoned RX-2; residential

Previous Cases on the Property: none

Related Cases:

SE-01-18 Nextel – 4725 E. Pima Street, R-1 Zone A special exception land use request for the placement of a cellular communications monopole with an overall height of 50 feet disguised as a palm tree at an existing church. The site is located at the northeast corner of Swan Road and Pima Street. On July 19, 2001, the Zoning Examiner approved the request.

SE-07-22 T-Mobile – 29<sup>th</sup> Street, SR Zone A special exception land use request for the placement of nine wireless antennae inside a fiberglass chimney structure, fifteen feet in height, and mounting it on top of an existing church. The site is located east of Houghton Road and north of 29<sup>th</sup> Street. On November 28, 2007, the Zoning Examiner approved the request.

**Applicant's Request** – The applicant requests approval for the placement of a new wireless communication facility consisting of a 50-foot tall tower disguised as a palm tree, and a 1,000 square-foot equipment compound enclosed by an 8-foot high block wall.

## **Planning Considerations**

Land use policy direction for this area is provided by the *Tumamoc Area Plan* Subarea 1 and the *General Plan*. Subarea 1 of the *Tumamoc Area Plan* states this area is to be developed at low densities to preserve the wash systems. *General Plan* policy supports the provision of new telecommunications facilities if they are located, installed and maintained in a manner that minimizes visual impacts and preserves views.

The *Plans* support the requested land use when design elements and buffering techniques are implemented to mitigate potential impacts on established neighborhoods. The proposed wireless communication facility responds to the characteristics of the surrounding area by using a stealth design that is compatible with the surrounding vegetation.

The lease area for the wireless communications facility is located just south of the basketball court on the church property. The site is surrounded by residential uses. Vehicular access to the

rezoning site is proposed from Ironwood Hill Drive. Ironwood Hill Drive, a designated scenic route with an existing and future right-of-way width of 150 feet on the *Major Streets and Routes Plan* map, is north of the special exception site.

The proposed wireless communication facility will not generate additional vehicle trips per day. Field inspection by staff indicates there are currently no billboards on the rezoning site.

### **Design Considerations**

**Land Use Compatibility** – The proposed 50-foot monopole disguised as a palm tree will include two antennas per sector with three sectors for a total of six antennas. The exterior of the pole will be clad in imitation palm tree bark to accomplish a natural appearance. The design compatibility report indicates that there are approximately twenty palm trees ranging from fifteen to fifty feet in height located within 1,600 feet of the special exception site. The report also states that the monopole is compliant with the 400-foot Scenic Corridor Zone setback requirement. The applicant will need to clearly show the setback from the Scenic Corridor Zone on the development plan. The proposed ground equipment area is located fifty-six feet north of the monopole. The associated equipment cabinets will be housed in a 750 square-foot leased area that will be screened via a block wall enclosure and painted to match the adjacent church building. This location takes advantage of the terrain of the site to better conceal the enclosure.

**Drainage/Grading/Vegetation** – The site lies within the Silvercroft Wash watershed, a designated balanced basin. The floodplain ordinance requires that discharges from developed sites be no greater than existing conditions for the 2-, 10- and 100-year events. There is no specified minimum lot size or development size for applicability of balanced basin requirements. However, the minimal imperviousness associated with this proposal does not warrant the imposition of detention/retention requirements. The proposed facility is to be located on a minor ridge which delineates the boundary between drainage that flows northeasterly from that which flows southeasterly. The minor watercourse that crosses the proposed gravel access road is non-regulatory (100-year discharge is less than 100 cfs).

**Road Improvements/Vehicular Access/Circulation** – Access to the facility will be provided via an existing driveway off of Ironwood Hill Drive. The portion of the driveway within the right-of-way should be paved. The gravel access road should be constructed to ensure that drainage is not captured within the access road, to avoid washing gravel and sediments into the Ironwood Hills Road right-of-way.

**Performance Criteria** – The applicant’s proposal requires approval as a special exception land use through a Zoning Examiner Full Notice Procedure, and must meet the following performance criteria as stated in Section 3.5.4.20.F.1 of the *LUC*. Following each criterion, in italics, are the applicant’s response regarding compliance.

3.5.4.20.F.1. Wireless communication antennae, provided:

- a. The antennae are mounted on a new tower and the tower and antennae are concealed or disguised, or the antennae are collocated on an existing structure.

*Comment: The antennae are mounted on a new tower disguised as a palm tree. The antennae are concealed inside the branch canopy of the palm tree.*

- b. The tower and antennae are architecturally and/or environmentally compatible with the surrounding structure(s) and general area.

*Comment: The design of the tower as a palm tree is architecturally and environmentally compatible with the general area. Context for the monopalm design is provided by existing live palm trees in the area. Within 1,600 feet of the proposed monopalm location there are approximately twenty palm trees ranging in height from fifteen feet to fifty feet. The palm tree design is a common stealth application.*

- c. A new tower is set back at least two (2) times the height of the structure from the boundary of any property zoned residential or office.

*Comment: The new tower is setback at least 2:1 times the height of the structure from the boundary of any property zoned residential or office.*

- d. The tower and antennae are fifty (50) feet or less in height.

*Comment: The tower and antenna are fifty feet in height.*

*Staff comment: The proposal is in compliance with the LUC Performance Criteria for the special exception land use.*

**Conclusion** – The proposed special exception land use for a stealth monopole can be supported and is in general compliance with applicable policy and the intent of the *General Plan*, the *Tumamoc Area Plan*, and the performance criteria. Subject to compliance with the attached preliminary conditions, approval of the special exception request is appropriate.

## Preliminary Conditions

PROCEDURAL

1. A development plan in substantial compliance with the preliminary development plan dated July 23, 2008, and supporting materials, is to be submitted and approved in accordance with Section 5.3.8 of the *Land Use Code*.
2. The property owner shall execute a waiver of potential claims under A.R.S. Sec. 12-1134 for this zoning amendment as permitted by A.R.S. Sec. 12-1134 (I) in the form approved by the City Attorney and titled “Agreement to Waive Any Claims Against the City for Special Exception Land Use”.
3. Historic or prehistoric features or artifacts discovered during future ground disturbing activities should be reported to the City of Tucson Archaeologist. Pursuant to A.R.S. 41-865 the discovery of human remains and associated objects found on private lands in Arizona must be reported to the Director of Arizona State Museum.
4. Any relocation, modification, etc., of existing utilities and/or public improvements necessitated by the proposed development shall be at no expense to the public.
5. “Safe by Design” concepts shall be incorporated in the development plan for review by the Tucson Police Department.
6. Five years are allowed from the date of initial authorization to implement and effectuate all Code requirements and conditions of the special exception land use.

LAND USE COMPATABILITY

7. The top of the stealth (palm tree design) monopole shall not exceed fifty feet in height.
8. Maximum diameter of the monopole shall not exceed 18 inches.
9. A maximum of six (6) antenna panels painted to match the palm fronds as appropriate. The antenna panels shall not visually extend above or below the imitation palm fronds.
10. The pole shall be clad in imitation palm tree bark.
11. There shall be no exterior wiring, visible footpegs, portals, cabling or cable shrouds, or other unnatural appearing features. The imitation bark shall continue to ground.
12. The masonry screen wall designed to screen the telecommunication ground equipment shall be graffiti resistant, textured and painted to match existing buildings in the surrounding area.
13. All walls visible from a public right-of-way and/or adjacent to existing residential development, are to be graffiti-resistant and incorporate one or more visually appealing design treatments, such as the use of two or more decorative materials like stucco, tile, stone, or brick; a visually

Preliminary Conditions

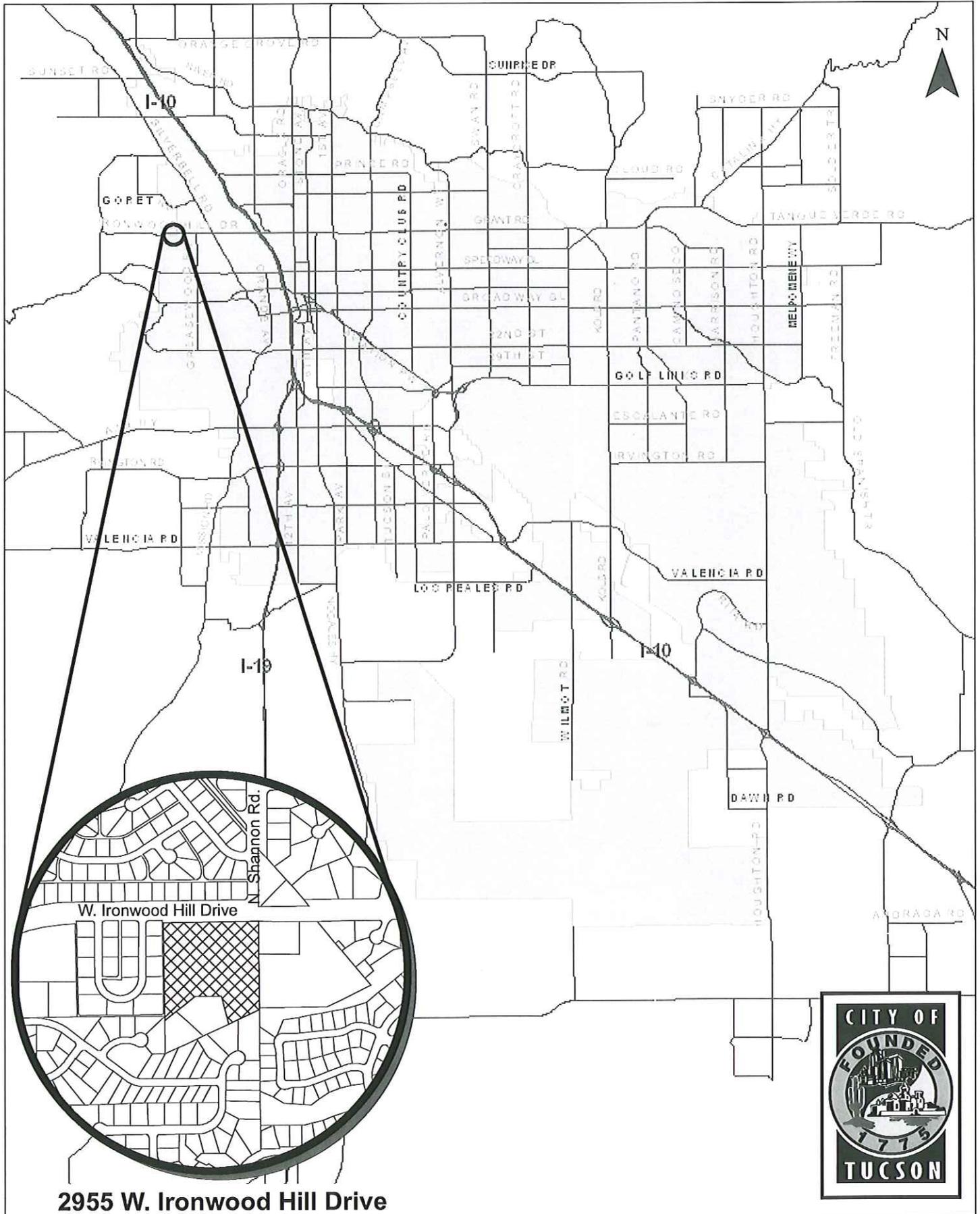
interesting wall surface; varied wall alignments, (jog, curve, notch, setback, etc.); and/or trees and shrubs in voids created by the wall variations.

14. Six (6) inch wide fence block or greater shall be used for perimeter walls.

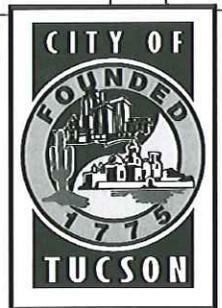
DRAINAGE/GRADING/VEGETATION

15. Should buffelgrass be present on the site, a buffelgrass mitigation management plan shall be created for the site as a component of the Native Plant Preservation Plan portion of the Landscape Plan.

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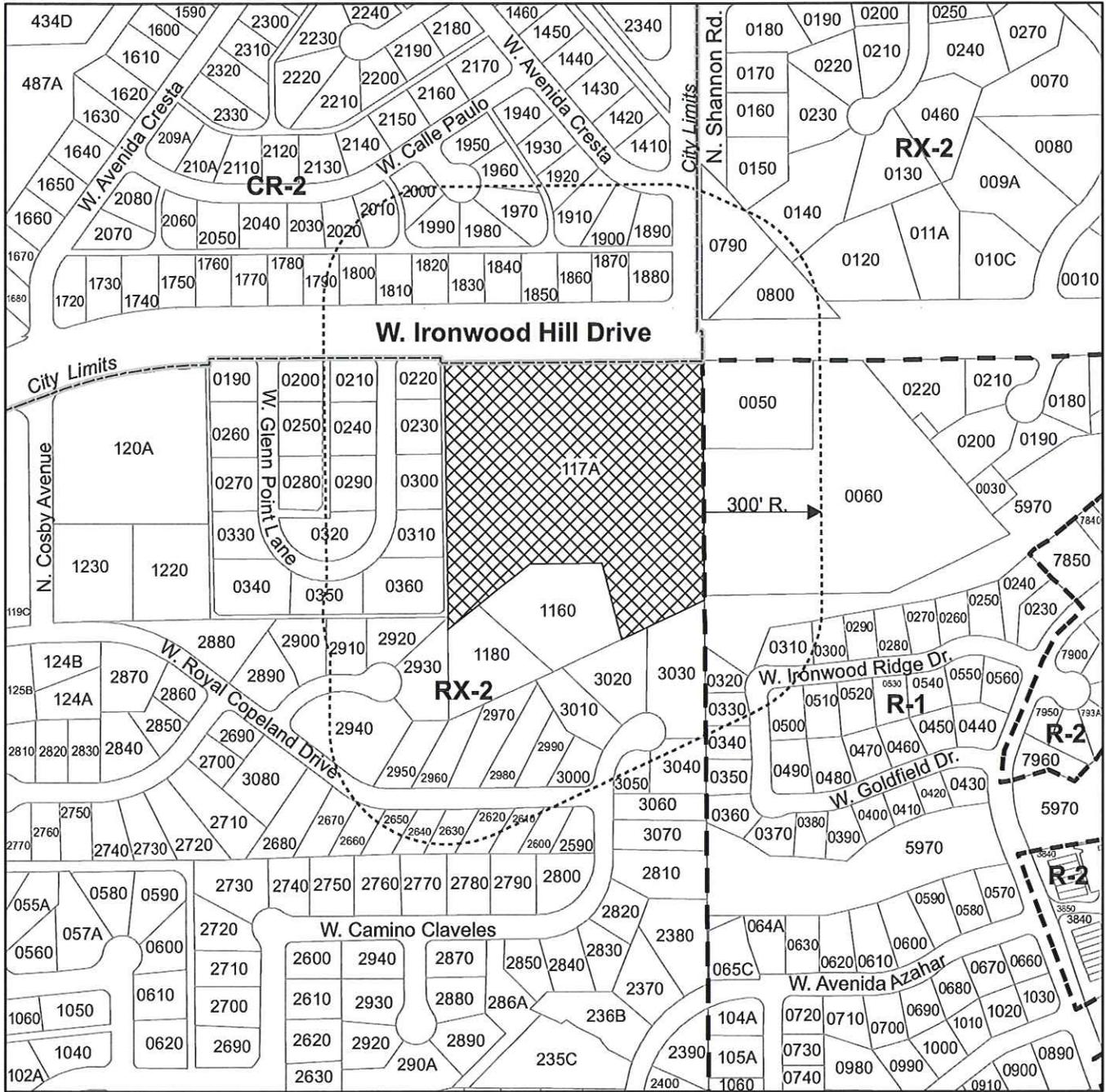


2955 W. Ironwood Hill Drive



# SE-08-29 AT&T - Ironwood Hill Drive

## Special Exception - Full Notice Procedure



0 200 400  
Feet

1 inch = 400 feet

Area of Special Exception Request

**RX-2** Zoning of Requested Area

Notification Area (300 foot radius)

Zone Boundaries

City Limits

Neighborhood, Area Plan(s): Tumamoc Area Plan  
 Address: 2955 W. Ironwood Hill Drive  
 Base Maps: Sec.05 T.14 R.13  
 Ward: 1





W. Avenida Cresta  
W. Calle Pinaro  
N. Shannon Road  
W. Ironwood Hill Drive

W. Iron Ridge Drive

W. Glenn Point Ln

W. Royal Copeland Drive

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August 2008 Aerial