



# ZONING EXAMINER

## REPORT TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

January 4, 2016

**SE-15-78 Verizon – Craycroft Boulevard**  
**Public Hearing: December 17, 2015**

### **BACKGROUND**

This is a request by Adam Brixius of Pinnacle Consulting, on behalf of Verizon Wireless, for approval of a wireless communication facility (WCF). The special exception site is located approximately 170 feet south of the Rillito River multi-use path and 520 feet west of the Craycroft Road. The preliminary development plan (PDP) proposes a wireless communication tower with twelve antenna panels concealed within an artificial pine tree (monopine), 70 feet in height. The facility will be placed within an approximately 852 square foot lease area in the southwestern portion of the 2.72 acre site.

Land use policy direction for this area is provided by *Plan Tucson*.

### **PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY (Minutes Attached)**

Glenn Moyer, Planning and Development Services Department, presented the staff report with a recommendation for approval. Mr. Moyer also commented that no written approvals and no written protests were received. Adam Brixius, the applicant's agent, presented the rezoning request and agreed to the recommended staff conditions of rezoning.

### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

This is a request by Adam Brixius of Pinnacle Consulting, on behalf of Verizon Wireless, for approval of a wireless communication facility (WCF). The special exception site is located approximately 170 feet south of the Rillito River multi-use path and 520 feet west of the Craycroft Road. The preliminary development plan (PDP) proposes a wireless communication tower with twelve antenna panels concealed within an artificial pine tree (monopine), 70 feet in height. The facility will be placed within an approximately 852 square foot lease area in the southwestern portion of the 2.72 acre site.

The special exception site is currently developed as a single-family residence with multiple buildings in the SR low density residential zone. To the east across Craycroft Road are residential lots in the SR low density residential zones, to the south is an educational use developed in the SR low density residential zone, to the west is an educational use developed in the SR low density residential zone, and to the north is a recreational use in the SR low density residential zone. The nearest single-family residential zoned and developed land is located to the east, approximately 740 feet away.

Vehicular access to the wireless communications facility is through an existing curb cut from Craycroft Road. The access easement to Craycroft Road shall be recorded and sequence number provided prior to, or at, permit submittal stage. According to the Major Streets and Routes Plan, Craycroft Road is designated as an arterial street south of the

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Rillito River and a scenic arterial north of the Rillito River. The Pima Association of Governments estimates that the proposed development will not generate additional measurable vehicle trips per day.

Land use policy direction for this area is provided by *Plan Tucson*. The rezoning site is located within an existing neighborhood as identified on the Future Growth Scenario Map of *Plan Tucson*. Existing neighborhoods are characterized in *Plan Tucson* as largely built-out residential neighborhoods and commercial districts in which minimal new development or redevelopment is expected in the next few decades. The goal is to maintain the character of these neighborhoods while accommodating some new development and encouraging reinvestment, services, and amenities that contribute to further neighborhood stability. Policy LT28.1.2 requires that, if possible, wireless communication facilities be located, installed and maintained to minimize visual impacts and preserve views. The applicant states that the proposed wireless communication facility will help improve telecommunication services in the surrounding neighborhoods.

The proposed monopine will include four antennas per sector with three sectors for a total of twelve antennas. The monopine will be set back approximately 520 feet from Craycroft Road, approximately 170 feet from the Rillito River Park, and approximately 34 feet from the property line of the Castlehill Country Day School. A monopine was chosen because of the presence of several Aleppo pine trees within relatively close proximity to the site.

The monopine will be visible from the surrounding educational uses and residential developments, as well as from adjacent streets. The proposed stealth monopine provides concealment and reduces the visible impacts to the area. The nearest residence is east of the site in the SR low density residential zone, approximately 740 feet from the proposed location of the monopine. There are some desert trees, pine trees, and desert shrubs in the general area. These trees allow the monopine to blend in when viewed from a distance. Any existing on-site palm tree, native tree, or landscape planting disturbed during the monopine or ground equipment installation should be replaced to enhance stealthing provided by the monopine design. Additionally, new pavement or roof materials shall also be in accordance with the UDC and heat island mitigation.

The applicant proposes to place the monopine and ground equipment in an 852 square foot lease area in the southwest portion of the parcel, which is currently a parking area. Ground equipment will be housed inside a 21'4" x 40' equipment shelter located on a concrete slab. The ground equipment shelter will be painted and textured to match existing buildings or surrounding architectural style. Required additional vegetative screening will further mitigate its visual impact.

In terms of wireless communication facilities, a stealth application is one that disguises the appearance of the pole and antennas to look like an element of the built or natural landscape, which could typically occur at the chosen location. A stealth application should be as close as possible in scale and appearance to the object it is disguised as, with no obvious unnatural elements. The success of a stealth application is dependent on the ability of the design and construction of the cellular site to fit into its surroundings to such a

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degree that it is not noticeable. Scale and proportion, site design, color, and materials, are particularly important in stealth applications insofar as they contribute, or do not contribute, to the ability of the facility to be as unobtrusive as possible. To ensure a successful stealth monopine at this location, the following standards are recommended:

- The monopine shall not exceed seventy (70) feet in height;
- The pole shall be covered with cladding (bark) from the top to bottom of pole, and painted to resemble a live pine;
- The monopine shall include at least three (3) branches per foot with antenna socks;
- Replacement of lost/damaged branches to be completed within ten working days of observation and branches and socks shall be colored to match live pines as closely as possible;
- All cables shall be run inside the pole, with no foot pegs other visible appurtenances;
- All wire ports shall be concealed behind the antennas and all equipment shall be mounted behind the antenna panels;
- Antenna panels shall be painted with a light/shade pattern to better camouflage them;
- Ground equipment to be screened by existing masonry wall (provide elevation of street views).
- Maximum antenna size is ninety-nine (99) inches in length, eighteen (18) inches in width, and eight (8) inches in depth.

The applicant's proposal requires approval as a Mayor and Council Special Exception and must meet the Use-Specific Standards of UDC Sections 4.9.13.O and 4.9.4.I.2, .3, and .7. The Mayor and Council may forward the request to the Design Review Board for design review and recommendation.

**4.9.4.I.7**

- (1) The tower or antennas are not permitted by other provisions of this Section.
- (2) New towers require a minimum separation of one mile from any existing tower, regardless of ownership, unless documentation establishes that no practical alternative exists.
- (3) All appropriate measures shall be taken to conceal or disguise the tower and antenna from external view.
- (4) All appropriate measures shall be taken to reduce the negative proliferation of visible towers and antennae by the collocation of new antennae on existing towers or with the facilities of other providers which are located or planned for development within the proposed service area.
- (5) Notice shall be provided to all agents designated at least 15 days prior to the date of the public hearing before the Zoning Examiner.

**CONCLUSION**

The proposed stealth tower is in compliance with the performance criteria for a wireless communication facility. The Special Exception request is consistent with the policies and intent of *Plan Tucson*, considering the use of a stealth design, in this case a monopine, that will limit the visual impact of the facility. Subject to compliance with the attached preliminary conditions, approval of the requested special exception is appropriate.

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**RECOMMENDATION**

The Zoning Examiner recommends approval of the Special Exception request.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Kinus Kafka  
Zoning Examiner

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Public Hearing Minutes  
Rezoning Staff Report



# MEMORANDUM

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DATE: December 1, 2015  
For December 17, 2015 Hearing

TO: Linus Kafka  
Zoning Examiner

FROM: Jim Mazzocco, Interim Director   
Planning & Development Services

SUBJECT: SPECIAL EXCEPTION LAND USE  
PLANNING & AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT  
SE-15-78 Verizon – Craycroft Road, SR Zone (Ward 2)

**Issue** – This is a request by Adam Brixius of Pinnacle Consulting, on behalf of Verizon Wireless, for approval of a wireless communication facility (WCF). The special exception site is located approximately 170 feet south of the Rillito River multi-use path and 520 feet west of the Craycroft Road (see Case Location Map). The preliminary development plan (PDP) proposes a wireless communication tower with twelve antenna panels concealed within an artificial pine tree (monopine), 70 feet in height. The facility will be placed within an approximately 852 square foot lease area in the southwestern portion of the 2.72 acre site.

A communications use of this type in the SR zone is subject to Sections 4.9.13.O and 4.9.4.I.2, .3, and .7 of the *Unified Development Code (UDC)* and requires approval through a Mayor & Council Special Exception Procedure, Sec. 3.4.4, because the tower height exceeds 50 feet. Documentation provided by the applicant indicates that no practical alternative exists, and measures are being taken to conceal or disguise the tower and antenna from view.

The Mayor & Council Special Exception Procedure requires a public hearing before the Zoning Examiner after which the Zoning Examiner forwards a recommendation to the Mayor and Council for a decision to grant the request with, or without, conditions or to deny the request. The Mayor and Council may also forward the request to the Design Review Board (DRB) for design review and recommendation.

**Planning & Development Services Department Recommendation** – The Planning & Development Services Department recommends approval of the special exception request, subject to the attached preliminary conditions.

## **Background Information**

**Existing Land Use:** Single-family residential use

Surrounding Zones and Land Uses:

North: Zoned SR; recreational use  
South: Zoned SR; educational use  
East: Zoned SR; rural residential use  
West: Zoned SR; educational use

Zoning Descriptions

SR: This zone provides for very low density, large lot, single-family, residential development and suburban ranch uses. Uses that would adversely affect the open space, agricultural, or natural characteristics of this zone shall not be permitted.

Previous Cases on the Property: none

Related Cases:

SE-15-13 Sun State – Tanque Verde Road, C-1 Zone – This was a request for approval of a wireless communication facility concealed within an artificial pine tree 75 feet in height, and associated ground equipment, located approximately 180 feet south of Tanque Verde Road and 208 feet east of Indian Ruins Road. On July 9, 2015, the Mayor and Council adopted Ordinance No. 11289, allowing the special exception.

SE-15-11 Verizon – Swan Road, C-1 Zone – This was a request for approval of a wireless communication facility concealed within an artificial pine tree 60 feet in height, and associated ground equipment, located on the west side of Swan Road approximately 300 feet south of Camp Lowell Road and 150 feet west of Swan Road. On September 9, 2015, the Mayor and Council adopted Ordinance No. 11301, allowing the special exception.

**Applicant's Request** – The applicant requests special exception approval for the placement of a 70-foot high cellular communications monopole disguised as a pine tree with associated equipment in the southwest portion of a parcel currently developed as a single-family residence.

**Planning Considerations**

Land use policy direction for this area is provided by *Plan Tucson*. The rezoning site is located within an existing neighborhood as identified on the Future Growth Scenario Map of *Plan Tucson*. Existing neighborhoods are characterized in *Plan Tucson* as largely built-out residential neighborhoods and commercial districts in which minimal new development or redevelopment is expected in the next few decades. The goal is to maintain the character of these neighborhoods while accommodating some new development and encouraging reinvestment, services, and amenities that contribute to further neighborhood stability. Policy LT28.1.2 requires that, if possible, wireless communication facilities be located, installed and maintained to minimize

visual impacts and preserve views. The applicant states that the proposed wireless communication facility will help improve telecommunication services in the surrounding neighborhoods.

The special exception site is currently developed as a single-family residence with multiple buildings in the SR low density residential zone. To the east across Craycroft Road are residential lots in the SR low density residential zones, to the south is an educational use developed in the SR low density residential zone, to the west is an educational use developed in the SR low density residential zone, and to the north is a recreational use in the SR low density residential zone. The nearest single-family residential zoned and developed land is located to the east, approximately 740 feet away.

The Pima Association of Governments - Transportation Planning Division (PAG-TPD) estimates that the proposed development will not generate additional measurable vehicle trips per day. Field inspection by staff indicates there are currently no billboards on the special exception site.

### **Design Considerations**

The proposed ground equipment is located within an area screened by an eight (8) foot tall masonry wall. A proposed cabinet will be located on a concrete pad. A twelve foot wide access easement for the WCF site will be provided from Craycroft Road. The access easement runs from an existing driveway at the east edge of the parcel. The nearest residential unit is located approximately 740 feet to the east of the proposed WCF site.

Land Use Compatibility – The proposed monopine will include four antennas per sector with three sectors for a total of twelve antennas. The applicant has submitted a photo-simulation of the monopine showing the antennas concealed by the artificial branches of the monopine. The monopine will be set back approximately 520 feet from Craycroft Road, approximately 170 feet from the Rillito River Park, and approximately 34 feet from the property line of the Castlehill Country Day School. A monopine was chosen because of the presence of several Aleppo pine trees within relatively close proximity to the site.

The monopine will be visible from the surrounding educational uses and residential developments, as well as from adjacent streets. The proposed stealth monopine provides concealment and reduces the visible impacts to the area. The nearest residence is east of the site in the SR low density residential zone, approximately 740 feet from the proposed location of the monopine. There are some desert trees, pine trees, and desert shrubs in the general area. These trees allow the monopine to blend in when viewed from a distance. Any existing on-site palm tree, native tree, or landscape planting disturbed during the monopine or ground equipment installation should be replaced to enhance stealthing provided by the monopine design. Additionally, staff recommends any new pavement or roof materials installed shall also be in accordance with the UDC and heat island mitigation.

The applicant proposes to place the monopine and ground equipment in an 852 square foot lease area in the southwest portion of the parcel, which is currently a parking area. Ground equipment will be housed inside a 21'4" x 40' equipment shelter located on a concrete slab. Staff recommends the ground equipment shelter be painted and textured to match existing buildings or surrounding architectural style. Staff also recommends additional vegetative screening to further mitigate its visual impact.

In terms of wireless communication facilities, a stealth application is one that disguises the appearance of the pole and antennas to look like an element of the built or natural landscape, which could typically occur at the chosen location. A stealth application should be as close as possible in scale and appearance to the object it is disguised as, with no obvious unnatural elements. The success of a stealth application is dependent on the ability of the design and construction of the cellular site to fit into its surroundings to such a degree that it is not noticeable. Scale and proportion, site design, color, and materials, are particularly important in stealth applications insofar as they contribute, or do not contribute, to the ability of the facility to be as unobtrusive as possible. To ensure a successful stealth monopine at this location, the following standards are recommended:

- The monopine shall not exceed seventy (70) feet in height;
- The pole shall be covered with cladding (bark) from the top to bottom of pole, and painted to resemble a live pine;
- The monopine shall include at least three (3) branches per foot with antenna socks;
- Replacement of lost/damaged branches to be completed within ten working days of observation and branches and socks shall be colored to match live pines as closely as possible;
- All cables shall be run inside the pole, with no foot pegs other visible appurtenances;
- All wire ports shall be concealed behind the antennas and all equipment shall be mounted behind the antenna panels;
- Antenna panels shall be painted with a light/shade pattern to better camouflage them;
- Ground equipment to be screened by existing masonry wall (provide elevation of street views).
- Maximum antenna size is ninety-nine (99) inches in length, eighteen (18) inches in width, and eight (8) inches in depth,

Road Improvements/Vehicular Access/Circulation – Vehicular access to the wireless communications facility is through an existing curb cut from Craycroft Road. The access easement to Craycroft Road shall be recorded and sequence number provided prior to, or at, permit submittal stage. According to the *Major Streets and Routes Plan*, Craycroft Road is designated as an arterial street south of the Rillito River and a scenic arterial north of the Rillito River.

Use-Specific Standards – The applicant's proposal requires approval as a Mayor and Council Special Exception and must meet the Use-Specific Standards of UDC Sections 4.9.13.O and

4.9.4.I.2, .3, and .7. The Mayor and Council may forward the request to the Design Review Board for design review and recommendation. Below is the applicant's analysis of the performance criteria.

4.9.4.I.7

The following requires approval as a special exception in accordance with Section 3.4.4, *Mayor and Council Special Exception Procedure*. The Mayor and Council may forward the Design Review Board (DRB) for design review and recommendation.

a. Wireless communication antennas, provided:

- (1) The tower or antennas are not permitted by other provision of this Section.

*The 70-foot top of monopine in the SR zone does not conform to any other section of the code because it is not 50 feet or less in height*

- (2) New towers require a minimum separation of one mile from any existing tower, regardless of ownership, unless documentation establishes that no practical alternative exists.

*The nearest existing wireless communications facility (WCF) is approximately 5,000 feet west of the proposed site. This tower was not suitable to fit within the existing sites on Verizon's network and is not collocatable. The search ring to resolve the coverage gap has a radius of approximately 0.25 miles.*

- (3) All appropriate measures shall be taken to conceal or disguise the tower and antenna from external view.

*The tower has been designed as a monopine and will disguise the tower and antennas within the artificial pine branches.*

- (4) All appropriate measures shall be taken to reduce the negative proliferation of visible towers and antennae by the collocation of new antennae on existing towers or with the facilities of other providers which are located or planned for development within the proposed service area.

*The nearest existing WCF is approximately 5,000 feet to the west of the proposed site and is not collocatable. The search ring to resolve the coverage gap has a radius of approximately 0.25 miles. This tower was not suitable to fit within the existing sites on Verizon's network.*

- (5) Notice shall be provided to all agents designated at least 15 days prior to the date of the public hearing before the Zoning Examiner.

*All policies of the Mayor and Council Special Exception Process shall be followed accordingly.*

Staff finds the proposal to be in compliance with the *UDC* Use-Specific Standards.

**Conclusion** – The proposed stealth tower is in compliance with the performance criteria for a wireless communication facility. The Special Exception request is consistent with the policies and intent of *Plan Tucson*, considering the use of a stealth design, in this case a monopine, that will limit the visual impact of the facility. Approval of the request is appropriate subject to the attached preliminary conditions.