



ZONING EXAMINER

REPORT TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

April 21, 2016

SE-16-16 Verizon - Broadway Boulevard

BACKGROUND

This is a request by Shirley Crowder of Centerline Solutions, on behalf of Verizon Wireless, for approval of a wireless communication facility (WCF). The facility consisting of a monopole and ground equipment pad that will be placed in two leased areas of approximately 616 square foot combined in the southwestern portion of the 4.57 acre site.

Land use policy direction for this area is provided by the *Pantano East Area Plan (PEAP)* and *Plan Tucson*.

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY (Minutes Attached)

Planning and Development Services Department (PDSD), presented the staff report with a recommendation for approval at the March 31, 2016 public hearing. Staff also commented that four written approvals and two-written protests were received. The case was continued to April 7 to allow the applicant time to speak to protesting property owners and give more information about the views of the tower from adjoining owners.

At the April 7 public hearing, the applicant offered to lower the height of the proposed tower from 55 feet to 50 feet and to use a variety of oak trees called the live silver leaf oak tree to help screen the tower. The protesting neighbor agreed that the compromise is acceptable if the Special Exception is approved but their protest remains in tact.

FINDINGS OF FACT

This is a request for approval of a wireless communication facility (WCF). The Special Exception site is located approximately 325 feet west of Chimney Canyon Drive and 530 feet south of Essex Village Drive Boulevard and is on a parcel with a single family residence in the SR zone. It is generally about a half mile in a southwestern direction of the intersection of Broadway Boulevard and Houghton Road and approximately 1,000 feet west of Houghton Road.

Surrounding Land Uses – To the north are SR and R-1 single family residences, to the south and east are R-1 single family residences, and to the west is vacant SR land. The Special Exception site as noted has a single family residence. To the southwest is a Tucson Water well site on a separate parcel. The nearest residential unit is located about 165 feet south of the proposed WCF site.

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Site Description – The preliminary development plan proposes a wireless communication tower with twelve antenna panels concealed within an artificial palm tree or monopalm, which was initially proposed as 55 feet in height to its topmost feature (the recommended conditions state 50 feet). The facility consisting of a monopalm and ground equipment pad that will be placed in two leased areas of approximately 616 square foot combined in the southwestern portion of the 4.57 acre site.

Land Use Policy – Land use policy direction for this area is provided by the *Pantano East Area Plan (PEAP)* and *Plan Tucson*. Two commercial land use polices of *PEAP* support commercial uses along arterials and further support commercial uses to be designed to be compatible with surrounding residences.

Plan Tucson identifies the area in the Future Growth Scenario Map as an Existing Neighborhood Building Block. This Building Block supports new services and amenities that further contribute to neighborhood stability. Policy LT28.1.2 requires wireless facilities to be installed and maintained to minimize visual impacts and preserve views. LT28.1.3 also requires well-designed facilities and that any installed facility provide improved wireless services in the surrounding area. The applicant states the facility will improve telecommunication services in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Design - The proposed ground equipment will be screened by an eight-foot wall. There is an access easement to the site from Leland Drive. The proposed tower will be disguised as a palm tree (monopalm). The antennas will be concealed in the artificial branches of the monopalm. The monopalm will be setback from Chimney Canyon Drive by about 325 feet to the east and from Essex Village Drive 530 feet to the north. The monopalm was recommended because of several palm trees to the east of the site. The monopalm will be visible from the surrounding residential development as well as adjacent streets. As noted live silver leaf oak trees will be planted on the site to add natural tall trees with expanded branching patterns to help screen and reduce the impact of the monopalm. A successful stealth design fits into its surroundings to the degree that it becomes part of the natural vegetative setting.

Use Specific Standards. The proposal requires approval as a Mayor and Council Special Exception (Sec. 3.4.4). Additionally, the proposal must comply with Use-Specific Standards Sec.4.9.13.O and 4.9.4.I.2,3, and 7.

Sec. 4.9.4.I.7 allows towers that may not meet the requirements of other wireless communication review processes to be review and approved by the Mayor and Council. In this case, the tower proposal was initially taller than allowed (originally 55 feet now 50 feet per the April 7 compromise) in the SR zone. However, the tower setback for the SR zone to residentially-zoned property is still less than required (100 feet is required and it is about 30 feet from an adjoining SR-zoned City-owned parcel). In addition, it is closer than one-mile to the next tower which the applicant states is not a suitable site for collocation. As part of the

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process, the tower design has, as already been described, using stealth design as a monopalm and surrounding the tower with tall oak trees for screening.

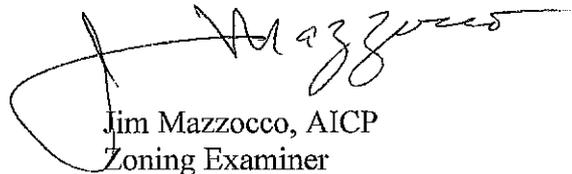
CONCLUSION

The Zoning Examiner has reviewed the evidence and finds the proposed tower to be in compliance with the UDC Use-Specific Standards. 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 the *PEAP* and *Plan Tucson*, considering the use of a stealth design, in this case a monopalm with tall screening trees that will limit the visual impact of the facility. Approval of the request is appropriate subject to compliance with the recommended Planning and Development Service Department conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

The Zoning Examiner recommends approval of the Special Exception request subject to the recommended conditions.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jim Mazzocco, AICP
Zoning Examiner

ATTACHMENTS:

Public Hearing Minutes