	Parks and Recreation Board Report	Agenda Item:
	Date: September 8, 2021 Through: Andrea Moore, Director From: Brandon Erno, Park Planning and Operations Administrator Subject: Take action on proposed Verizon PHO Eastmark Wireless Communications Facility Site	

Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of this report is to provide information and request approval from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board on a communications tower proposed for Basin 116 at 9820 E. Elliot Rd. Staff recommends approval with conditions.

Background

The City of Mesa received the attached application (Attachment A) from Verizon to install a communications tower and equipment enclosure in the northwest corner of Basin 116 near Elliot & Crismon Roads.

Current communication tower locations in parks include:

- Monopalm tower in Harmony Park
- Monopalm tower in Chaparral Park
- Co-location on a soccer field light pole in Hohokam Park
- Co-location on a softball light pole in Skyline Park
- Co-location on a baseball light pole in Gene Autry Park
- Planned monoelm tower in future expansion area of Red Mountain Park

Discussion

The application from Verizon requests approval to construct a 75’ monotree (simulated eucalyptus) pole west of the existing well site on the northern edge of the basin. Communication equipment is proposed to be mounted at 65’ with options available for future additions. It is proposed to have visual masking through rounded leaves, heavy branch coverage, and the tower clad with bark. An equipment enclosure sized 20’x28’ is also proposed with 8’ masonry walls to surround ground-level equipment and the monotree pole. Verizon’s proposal also includes installation of a 4’ landscaped buffer area surrounding the equipment enclosure with desert landscaping selected to match the surrounding basin plantings.

In preparation for this meeting, Verizon sent notices to the nearest five property owners neighboring the proposed site. Property owners were invited to attend today’s meeting and/or to call the City with any questions, comments, or concerns about the tower proposal. A sample copy of the notice is attached (Attachment B).

If the Parks Board recommends approval of Verizon’s proposal, the application will continue through the City’s regular process for special use permit consideration through the Development Services Department. Restoration of surrounding landscaping will be required upon completion of construction.

Alternatives**Additional Design Requirements**

The Parks Board may require Verizon to add or change the aesthetics of the proposed development if additional screening or blending is desired.

Denial

The Parks Board may choose to deny Verizon's request. If denied, this proposed location will not be available for Verizon's use.

Fiscal Impact

Revenue from wireless communication facilities within park properties is restricted for use by the Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities Department for future equipment replacement or improvement projects. The estimated annual revenue for this proposal from Verizon has not yet been finalized.

Concurrence

The current proposal meets the *Wireless Communication Facilities Guidelines for Parks and Recreation Facilities* (Attachment C). Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities staff recommend approval of this proposal and to move forward with the permitting process.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

To: City of Mesa Parks & Recreation Board

Date: August 30, 2021

Re: Proposed Wireless Communication Facility
Verizon Wireless 'PHO Eastmark'

Location: 9820 E Elliot Road, Mesa, AZ 85212 (Basin #116)



Proposed Use

Verizon Wireless is proposing to develop a 70-foot Wireless Communication Facility on City of Mesa Parks and Recreation owned property, located at 9820 E Elliot Road, Mesa, AZ 85212. The proposed WCF consists of a new cellular tower, camouflaged as a broad leaf tree, and enclosed within a 28' x 20' walled compound.

WCF History

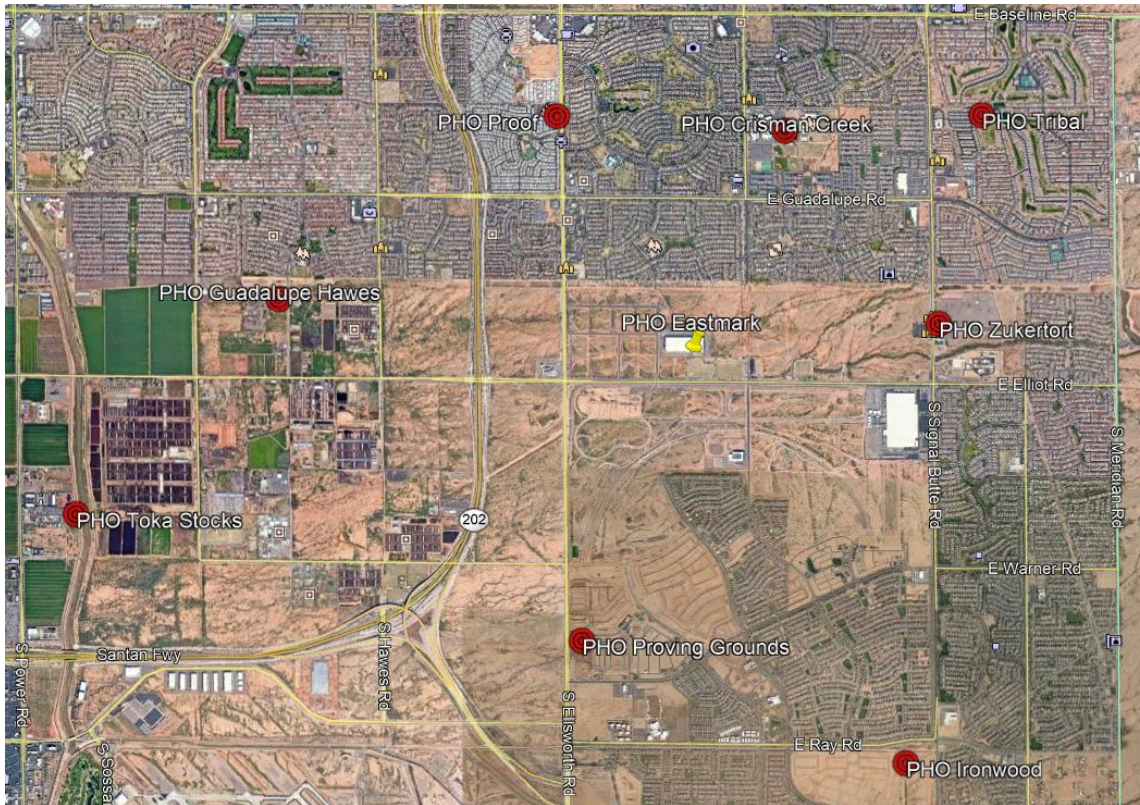
Beginning in 1999, Verizon has attempted to collocate on a proposed site at the southwest corner of Elliot Road and Ellsworth Road. However, the WCF has been unable to obtain zoning approval (PRS20-00830) as the Development Unit Plan for Eastmark Development Unit One has yet to be approved. Verizon users in the area continue to experience dropped calls or no coverage at all. The lack of

Attachment A-Application

Need for Additional WCF

The immediate area has poor quality Verizon cellular voice service (users experience dropped calls or they are unable to initiate voice calls), as well as limited data functioning. The proposed facility will accommodate additional capacity needs, enhance coverage, and fill coverage gaps within the immediate area of the proposed site. The nearest Verizon site is about 6,960 feet or 1.3 miles removed to the north and a similar distance to a site in the east. The need for additional Verizon antennas is anticipated to grow as the Eastmark residential community continues to be built out and as the Elliot Road Technology Corridor develops.

Existing Verizon sites are shown below with red dots. The proposed site is a yellow pin centered below.



Site Description

City of Mesa Retention Basins #116 and #115 are approximately 25.29 acres in total area. The parcel is developed with a City water well site, located about the middle of the two basins, near the north property line. Efforts have been made to site a potential WCF away from the well area to prevent interference with well maintenance. The proposed site is near the only existing building near the park. Such siting is used to reduce the tower's visibility.

Attachment A-Application



Facility Description

The proposed tower is camouflaged as a broad-leaf tree. This was chosen to reduce visibility more than that achieved with a standard painted-monopole or a mono-palm. The faux tree is designed to have rounded leaves and is heavily leafed with branch coverage from about 10 ft above ground level to top of tree. The tower is clad with bark made to simulate a eucalyptus tree. The proposed facility would house one Verizon antenna array. The mono-tree has an overall height of 75 feet including the tower, all antennas, and branches of the faux tree. The top of the supporting structure is 70 feet. The antenna array would have a centerline height of 65 feet and an overall height of 69 feet, leaving the top 6 foot of the tree free of restriction; hence, allowing the treetop to move in a realistic tree-like fashion.

The tower can accommodate a second and possibly third telecommunication array. The Verizon array consists of three sectors with 4 antennas per sector. The antennas will have disguise socks installed, which will further reduce their visibility. Examples of such camouflaging are shown below.

Attachment A-Application



Ground Screening and Camouflaging

All ground equipment, as well as the base of the mono-elm, will be enclosed by a 20-foot by 28-foot compound. The composite masonry unit walls are 8 foot tall (exceeding the 6-foot required height) and will be textured/painted an earth tone color, chosen by the Parks and Rec. The screen wall will completely hide all equipment housed within the enclosure. There will be a 4-ft landscaped buffer area surrounding the compound. Irrigated, desert landscaping will consist of shrubs and bushes chosen to match existing nearby basin plantings. The CMU texture/color choice and the landscaped buffer will diminish the compound's visibility.

Access to the compound is by an 8-foot-wide gated opening, located on the north side, away from the primary portion of the basin/park. The electrical meter is on the western side of the compound, also away from the primary portion of the basin/park. Both measures have been taken to reduce the visual impact of the facility from vantage points within the park/basin.

The site provides a number of advantages for reduced impact. It is in the northwest corner of the basin/park (removed from the primary usable park area), is removed from both abutting streets (reduced visibility), is in an area that is covered with decomposed granite (limited use by park patrons) and is in area with existing trees (also will reduce visibility). The site also abuts the only existing building in the vicinity, the 449,000 sf, 44-ft tall, Niagara Bottling plant/warehouse, which adjunction, diminishes the visual impact of the WCF. The approximate location of the proposed WCF is marked in yellow in the photo below. Constraining factors are the slope and presence of the retention basin, required landscape buffer, and the location of the walking path (about 40 feet from the Basin's north property line).

Attachment A-Application



Directly adjacent to the Basin's north property line is a 15-foot wide, drainage easement per the replat of the Mesa Technology Business Park (Book 1327 Page 16 or Instrument 20170378023). This is shown in the above picture as the depression running parallel to the walking path.

Landscaping

The standard buffer consists of a continuous landscaped strip with a minimum radius of 4 feet around the perimeter of the installation. All existing trees and landscaping are to remain in place. Site is planned in an area covered with decomposed granite and no vegetation. No additional trees are proposed at this time.

Noise

The normal functioning of equipment produces a low hum from small fans, cooling the equipment, which is usually not discernable beyond the block wall of the compound. The WCF does not have an emergency generator, but has a plug for a temporary generator to be connected. The emergency generator would be transported to the site for use only if necessary for the on-going function of the facility.

The noise generated from this site will be extremely limited and well below that of the surrounding properties. No noise from the proposed facility will be able to be heard from the property boundaries.

Impact to Existing Park/Retention Basin

The proposed location of the wireless facility (pole as well as equipment enclosure) will not impact existing landscaping on site. The pole and enclosure will be situated between trees in an area with no landscaping.

No Adverse Effects on Adjacent Properties

The site will not have an adverse impact on the surrounding properties. The proposed facility is located a substantial distance away from any residential properties. The anticipated Eastmark residential area to the South is approximately 1000 feet away. The residential subdivision to the North is approximately 2,170 feet

Attachment A-Application

away. Based on the current use of the property, the design of the facility is intended to maintain the appearance of the surrounding area. The design and the distance away from the open property boundaries will ensure the proposed facility will have virtually no aesthetic impact.

Applicable Regulations

The proposed facility will comply with all local, state, and federal regulations for such facilities and will be maintained in accordance with applicable standards. This compliance includes but is not limited to FCC radio frequency emission standards.

Conclusion

The proposed facility provides concealment, aesthetic, and design considerations, reducing the overall impact on the community. The WCF will promote public safety and community welfare by providing much needed 911 service as well as on-going cellular service. The proposed WCF is needed to fill a significant capacity shortfall and lack of coverage and is the least intrusive feasible means to do so. The WCF is a needed addition to the community without being physically or visually intrusive for the retention basin/park or surrounding properties.

In conclusion, we respectfully request consideration and approval of the proposed Wireless Communication Facility.

Attachment B-Sample Notice

August 30, 2021

«First_Name»«Last_Name»
«Address_Line_1»
«City»«State», «ZIP_Code»

RE: Proposed Wireless Communication Facility at 9820 E Elliot Road, Mesa, AZ 85212 (Basin #116)

Dear Neighbor:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that Verizon Wireless is proposing to construct a new Wireless Communication Facility (WCF) at the city park facility cited above. The proposed WCF would be a stealth, 60-foot tall, mono-elm design. The equipment compound would be a secured facility surrounded with an 8-foot CMU wall similar in style and color to the surrounding uses. An application has been filed with the City of Mesa for a Special Use Permit to accommodate a Wireless Communication Facility.

Our request for a special use permit is in response to a large number of customers that have reached out to Verizon regarding lack of services in the area as well as the surrounding communities that have experienced dropped calls and data issues on their phones. This site will provide improved coverage and capacity for Verizon customers in the surrounding area and it will provide much needed 911 coverage for all cell phones in proximity.

A public Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting will be held to consider this proposal on September 9, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at 708 W. Baseline Rd., Building 4, Mesa, AZ 85210. The Board will consider public comments before voting on the proposed communications facility. The agenda can be viewed online at <https://www.mesaaz.gov/government/advisory-boards-committees/parks-and-recreation-advisory-board>. If the Board votes in favor of approving the communications facility, a public hearing will be scheduled through the Design Review Board for consideration of the Special Use Permit. This letter is being sent to you as part of the required notification process for the City of Mesa. Feel free to distribute this notice to any interested parties.

This letter is being sent to you as a part of the required notification process for the City of Mesa. The Parks and Recreation Board must approve the proposed Wireless Communication Facility in order for the site to be installed. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me via phone or email. My contact information is listed below. You may also reach the City of Mesa's Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities Department at 480-644-3097. Please reference the above case number and site address to expedite a response.

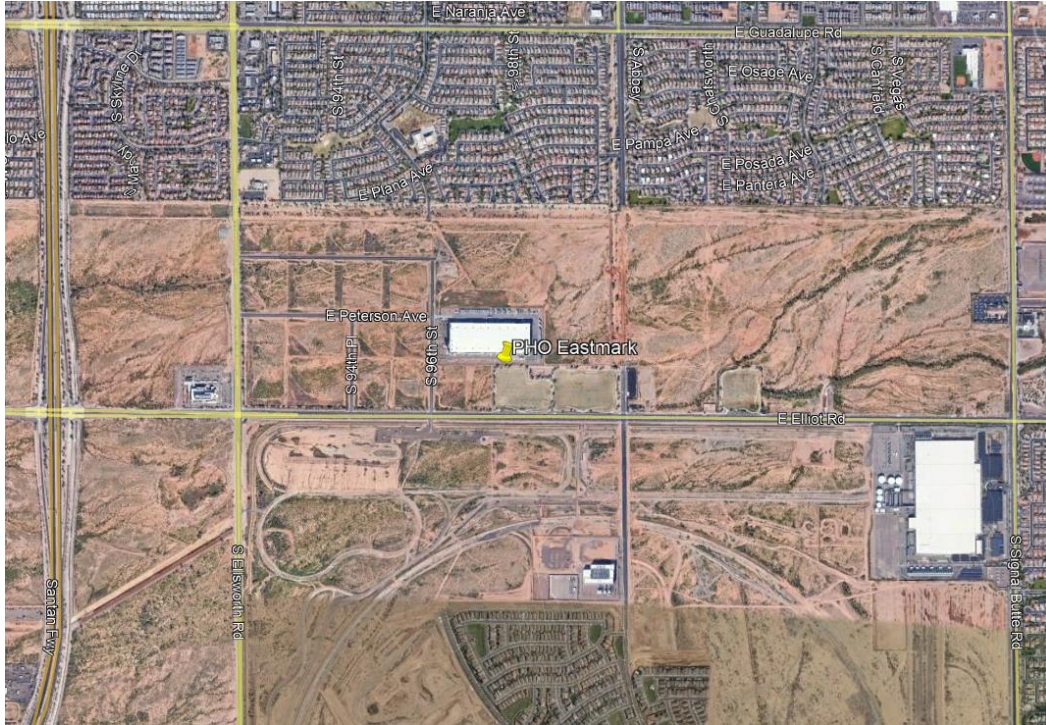
Sincerely,

Linda Grice



10245 E Via Linda #211
Scottsdale, AZ 85258
(602) 620-0866
linda.grice@ydcoffice.com

Location



Monoelm Example



WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS DESIGN AND PLACEMENT GUIDELINES FOR PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

**Mesa City Council
City of Mesa Parks and Recreation Board**

Adopted July 6, 2004

Resolution 8280



1. INTRODUCTION

The popularity of wireless phones and pagers has increased the demand for wireless monopoles and alternative wireless facilities. As the demand for this infrastructure has increased there has been a corresponding rise in requests to place this equipment in residential areas. By and large, residential neighborhoods have opposed the typical industrial or utilitarian appearance of most monopoles. The Communications industry has responded to this challenge by developing alternative designs that blend more easily into the typical landscape or design of a neighborhood. By using these newer, higher quality designs, eligible public park sites and larger retention basins may be used to facilitate wireless communications uses without adversely affecting the aesthetic character of the park sites, retention basins or the surrounding residential areas.

2. PURPOSE AND INTENT

Public parks and storm water retention basins in Mesa are used for public recreation and open space, and the high quality of these facilities reflects their importance to the citizens of Mesa. For this reason, the aesthetics of the parks are an important consideration in the design of any facility, and become especially important if the parks are to be used as possible wireless communications infrastructure sites.

These Guidelines have been developed to assist the City Council, the Parks and Recreation Board, and the Board of Adjustment/Zoning Administrator. This policy statement is designed to guide the placement of wireless communications equipment within City of Mesa public parks and retention basins in a manner that is the most aesthetically pleasing, and hides or disguises the presence of the equipment in the park in the most effective manner without detrimentally impacting the use of the park or retention basin. These Guidelines should also provide direction to the Communications industry regarding the minimum standards expected for placement and design of wireless communications facilities when located within City owned parks and retention basins.

The Guidelines are intended to foster project designs that blend both the elevated equipment and the ground-mounted equipment into the landscaping of the park. Supplemental landscaping may be required if needed to achieve the screening of the facility or to make the facility less noticeable.

3. APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

These Guidelines shall be applied to the site plan and elevation review of any proposal that may involve a wireless communications facility lease site located on a City of Mesa public park, recreational facility or retention basin. The actual leasing arrangements, site engineering, planning and building safety reviews shall follow the procedures described by City of Mesa Management Policy 113. All requirements of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance are also applicable.

4. ELIGIBILITY OF SITE

Park sites that are used for wireless communications facilities shall be free from any warrant or deed restrictions that prevent the use of the park site for commercial communication tower or commercial wireless communication facility uses. Any park site or large retention basin that has any restrictions regarding the leasing or sale of the

property for a commercial use shall be ineligible for consideration as a lease site for a wireless communications facility, unless the restriction makes an exception for commercial communication towers or commercial wireless communications facilities.

All retention basins of less than five (5) acres are also ineligible for consideration.

5. PROCEDURE FOR SITE PLAN AND ELEVATION REVIEW

Initial discussions regarding the possible use of a park site should begin with the Planning Division staff. The Planning staff will then coordinate the initial staff review of the request with the Parks and Recreation Division staff, as well as Communications Division, Engineering Division and Real Estate Division staff for comments. After assuring that the project will meet technical requirements, such as vehicular access, utility and telephone line access and adherence to these Guidelines, the Parks and Recreation staff will place the request as a consideration item on a Parks and Recreation Board agenda. The Board may then vote to approve or deny upon a finding that the proposed facility:

- Will be compatible with these Guidelines; and
- Will be compatible with and not detrimental to surrounding sites; and
- Will not interfere with the present and expected future use of the recreational or open space use of the park or retention basin.

The applicant shall also be required to have a special use permit reviewed and approved by the Board of Adjustment or Zoning Administrator if a special use permit is required, based on the zoning district within which the park site is located. Review of the Special Use Permit would take place after the Parks and Recreation Board has made a decision on the site. All other procedures described by Management Policy 113 shall also be required.

6. NOTIFICATION OF ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS REQUIRED

At least ten (10) business days before the Parks and Recreation Board meeting to consider an application under these Guidelines, the applicant shall provide evidence that notification of the Parks and Recreation Board meeting to adjacent owners of property located within three hundred feet (300') of the park site has been completed. Notification of adjacent property owners may be completed by sending a letter by first class mail, or by circulating a petition among the affected property owners. In each case, such notice shall include the date, time, and place of the Board meeting, the daytime telephone number of the applicant (or representative) and the front desk telephone numbers of the Planning Division and the Parks and Recreation Division Administration offices.

Evidence of notification by first class mail shall consist of a list of owners of property located within the notification radius, a map denoting the location of the properties located within the notification radius, a copy of the letter sent to these property owners, and copies of the same letters sent by first class mail to the Planning Division and Parks and Recreation Division staffs. The postmark date of the letters sent to the City staff shall be considered as the date of notification.

If a Public Hearing is required, based on the requirements of Section 11-13-2(D)2 of the Zoning Ordinance, the applicant shall also comply with Section 11-18-15 of the Zoning Ordinance with regard to Public Notice and Citizen Participation Requirements.

7. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Alternative Wireless Facility (AWF): A wireless communications installation that gives the appearance of a tree, flagpole, cactus or something other than a standard monopole, guyed tower or lattice tower. Examples include faux palm trees, faux pine trees, flagpoles designs or other 'stealth' designs that would hide a wireless communications facility, or give the appearance of blending the facility into the surrounding area

Children's Equipment Play Area: The location within the boundaries of a park designated for play equipment designed for use by children of pre-school and elementary school age. Such equipment would include swing sets, slides and climbing or riding apparatus. It shall not include ball fields, volleyball or basketball courts, or soccer fields. Typically, the play area is delineated by a specified border and contains sand or other inorganic, pervious ground cover that is clearly distinct and different from what is used elsewhere throughout the remaining area of the park.

Co-located Wireless Facility (CWF): Wireless equipment elevated by the use of an existing structure, such as an athletic field light pole, a parking lot light pole, or by placement on the side of an existing building. This term may also be applied to structures used to replace existing facilities for the purposes of elevating wireless communications equipment, provided the replacement structure continues the function of the original structure in addition to providing a platform for wireless communications equipment. It shall not be applied to new structures that are not replacing an existing structure or continuing an existing function.

Setback: The distance of any portion of a structure being used for the wireless communication facility as measured from any adjacent property line or other designated area within the park to the base of the structure.

Standard Wireless Facility: Any standard utility pole, monopole, guyed tower or lattice tower utilized for elevating wireless communications equipment. The structure may be principally made of wood or of metal.

Supplemental Landscaping: Additional plant material installed by the applicant at the request of the Parks and Recreation Board as a means to provide additional long term screening of any wireless communications facility, or used to reduce notice of an alternative wireless facility.

8. CO-LOCATED OR ALTERNATIVE WIRELESS FACILITY DESIGN REQUIRED

- Co-located Wireless Facilities are encouraged to be utilized and should be considered a primary option if available.
- Alternative Wireless Facilities are required for new installations that do not co-locate on existing structures.
- Standard wireless facilities are prohibited.

9. SETBACKS

- A. Interior Property Line Setback: Any new facilities shall maintain a distance from adjacent residential sites of two feet (2') of setback for each one foot of height of the wireless communications facility.
- B. Street Setbacks: Any new facilities shall maintain a distance from the street right-of-way of one foot (1') of setback for each one foot (1') of height of the wireless communications facility.
- C. Children's Equipment Play Area: Ground mounted equipment and the base of the device used to elevate antenna arrays should both be located a minimum distance of two feet (2') for each one foot (1') of maximum wireless communications facility height from any children's equipment play areas.
- D. Co-located Wireless Facilities: Interior Property Line Setbacks, Street Setbacks and setbacks from Children's Play Areas should be considered when choosing and deciding on location of co-located wireless facilities.
- E. Deviations from the strict application of these setbacks may be given in the event that the intent of the setback is being met, the deviation is less than five percent (5%) of the required distance, and a finding is made that the deviation does not affect the compatibility of the facility with surrounding properties.

10. ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPING

The applicant may be required to install additional landscaping as a condition of approval if the Parks and Recreation Board find supplemental landscaping is needed to screen the wireless facility from the view of adjacent lots or streets. Examples of partial screening would include planting additional palm or pine trees adjacent to the wireless communication structures if a faux palm or pine tree is used as an alternative wireless facility.. Examples of perimeter landscaping would include planting trees, such as sissoo trees, mesquite trees, citrus trees and other broad leaf, non-deciduous varieties, to screen the view of the wireless facility from adjacent residential lots.

Supplemental landscaping plants for sites located within the Desert Uplands sub-area shall be limited to species and varieties listed on the adopted plant list for the Desert Uplands sub-area (see Mesa 2025 General Plan for Desert Uplands boundary description and map and the Desert Uplands Development Guidelines).

11. ANTENNA ARRAYS AND ELEVATED EQUIPMENT

- A. Co-located Equipment: All antenna arrays for co-located equipment elevated by athletic or parking lot light poles shall be placed within stacked "canister arrays" that are no wider than and take the basic shape of the pole on which the equipment rests.
- B. Building mounted equipment should be placed at or below the parapet of flat roofed buildings, or against the vertical walls of buildings with pitched roofs (not on the roof itself). In both cases, the antennas should be designed to be integral to the design

Attachment C-Guidelines

of the building, effectively blending the visibility of the antennas into the building background in the least noticeable manner.

- C. Equipment mounted on top of a flat roofed building may be considered, but it is not a preferred option and should be used when other options are not possible or feasible. If used, it shall be screened (antennas to the inside of the screening device) with materials that do not interfere with the receipt and transmission of radio and microwave frequencies. The screening device shall be architecturally integrated into the building design by replicating architectural details, patterns and rhythms of the existing building through appearance and color; or by providing a decorative element that serves to enhance the design of the existing building and by providing an appearance that reflects the color(s) and architectural details of the building on which the facility rests.
- D. Alternative Wireless Facilities: Standard array widths may be used provided the width of the array does not extend beyond the perimeter of the device disguising the array. For example, the array should not extend beyond the width of an artificial palm frond or pine tree branch if faux palm trees or pine trees are used to elevate the array. AWF giving the appearance of flagpoles shall make use of canister arrays that are no wider than the pole on which the array(s) rests.

12. GROUND MOUNTED EQUIPMENT

- A. Where possible, ground mounted equipment should be located adjacent to existing buildings or shelters, so as to minimize any encroachments into open space areas or play fields.
- B. Equipment shelter buildings and exterior cabinets shall be screened from public view with a minimum six-foot (6') high masonry fence surrounding all sides of the facility.
- C. The colors of the equipment shelter, exterior cabinets and masonry screening fences shall be compatible and should match when possible.

13. FACILITY MAINTENANCE

All maintenance of any wireless communication facility, shelter, cabinet, and wall, or any landscaping associated with the wireless communications facility, shall be the responsibility of the wireless communications company. In lieu of physically maintaining the site itself, the wireless communications company may pay associated costs for maintaining the facility, over and above those costs associated with the land lease. Should any landscape plant associated with wireless communication facility wilt and die, including plants required to supplement existing landscaping, the wireless communications company shall be responsible for the replacement cost.