



**PLANNING DIVISION
STAFF REPORT**

Board of Adjustment

January 5, 2022

CASE No.: BOA21-00686	CASE NAME: Crown Castle 831564 Red Mountain Golf
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Owner's Name:	Divot Partners, LLC
Applicant's Name:	Campbell A&Z, LLC
Location of Request:	3940 N. Power Road
Parcel Nos:	141-70-982
Nature of Request:	Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow a wireless communication facility to exceed the height limit in the Single Residence-9 District with a Planned Area Development Overlay (RS-9-PAD).
Zone District:	Single Residence-9 District with a Planned Area Development Overlay (RS-9-PAD)
Council District:	5
Site size:	0.36±
Proposed use:	Accessory Wireless Communication Facility to Golf Course
Existing use:	Golf Course
Hearing date(s):	January 5, 2022/5:30 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Chloe Durfee-Sherman
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

HISTORY

On **February 22, 1983**, the City Council annexed approximately 2335± acres, including the subject site, into the City of Mesa (Ordinance No. 1682).

On **May 2, 1983**, the City Council allowed the development of a master planned, mixed use community and established the zoning of 812± acres of recently annexed land to the M-1 (the equivalent of the current Light Industrial [LI] zoning district) PAD and R1-9 PAD, including the subject site (Case No. Z83-034; Ordinance No. 1704).

On **January 22, 1990**, the City Council approved a modification to the Red Mountain Ranch development master plan and updated the zoning to R1-9-DMP with conceptual zoning, including the subject site (Case No. Z89-036; Ordinance No. 2486).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background:

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) to exceed the height limit in the Single Residence-9 zoning district with a Planned Area Development Overlay (RS-9-PAD) to allow for the placement of an 80-foot-tall wireless communication facility (WCF). The proposed WCF will be a camouflaged, monoecalyptus design, located in the Red Mountain Ranch Golf Course on the west side of Power Road and north of Thomas Road. The proposed WCF will provide continued coverage for nearby residences, businesses, and emergency services.

General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:

The Mesa 2040 General Plan character area designation on the property is Neighborhood. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, the overall goal of the Neighborhood character area is to provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their surrounding community. The proposed WCF will help expand coverage to those who live in the area by complying with the intent of the character area by providing service to nearby populations.

Site Characteristics:

The proposed WCF would be erected within the Red Mountain Ranch Golf Course, which is located west of Power Road and north of Thomas Road. The proposed 2,025 square foot lease site is located south of the golf course lake within one of the “rough” areas of the golf course along Power Road.

Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:

Northwest RS-9-PAD Golf Course/Residential	North RS-9-PAD Golf Course/Residential	Northeast (Across Power Road) RS-90 PAD Vacant
West RS-9-PAD Golf Course	Subject Property RS-9-PAD Golf Course	East (Across Power Road) RS-90 PAD Vacant
Southwest RS-9-PAD/RM-2 Golf Course/Multiple Residential	South RS-9-PAD Golf Course/Residential	Southeast (Across Power Road) RS-90 PAD Vacant

Mesa Zoning Ordinance Requirements and Regulations:

Zoning Ordinance, Section 11-35-5 – Location, Design, and Operation Requirements:

Location Preferences – Section 11-35-5(A)

Section 11-35-5 (A) of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO) provides the location requirements for WCFs. Requirements can be met in a variety of ways with preferences ranked in order from the most preferred (1) to the least preferred (6). The applicants are proposing to use location preference 6 providing a stand-alone, camouflaged, stealth tower in a Single Residence district. More preferable locations include being placed on existing non-residential structures located more than 300 feet from a residential zone, on existing power poles located more than 300 feet from a residential zone, or within an industrial zone and more than 300 feet from a residential zone.

Per the applicant's narrative, the placement of the WCF is limited because each site is a link of chain of sites; therefore, any one link cannot be moved very far in any one direction once a network has been established. It was determined by the applicant that there were only two viable relocation sites within the network "range" that had appropriate zoning, physical space, or landlord interest. However, the alternative location lacked available ground space that would be required for colocation of other carriers. Located within the "rough" of the golf course, the proposed site provided ample ground space for equipment and provided equal or greater coverage in the area, thus making it the preferred site.

Design Preferences – Section 11-35-5(B)

Similarly, design options for WCFs are ranked in order from the most preferred (1) to the least preferred (7). The applicants are proposing a monoeucalyptus design which is a design preference 6 out of 7. Other design preferences included a building mounted antenna or a camouflaged freestanding structure such as a steeple or clock tower. The applicants were unable to use one of the more preferred design preferences because there are no nearby structures tall enough to provide for the desired coverage nor would they be far enough away from any residential areas.

Location of Facilities – Section 11-35-5(C)

The proposed WCF meets all applicable location of facilities standards specified in Section 11-35-5(C). The proposed WCF will not be sited on a ridge line. The proposed facility is a camouflaged design and is located more than 2,000 feet from another freestanding facility. All ground mounted equipment is located in close proximity to the tower. Finally, the facility meets all setback requirements of the zoning district.

Height of Facilities – Section 11-35-5(D)

The applicant is requesting approval of this Special Use Permit to exceed the maximum height (30 feet) in the RS-9-PAD zoning district. The proposed 80-foot monoeucalyptus would allow for three carriers to provide wireless service to the area for emergency, business, and personal use.

Required Separation and Setbacks – Section 11-35-5(E)

The monoeucalyptus design is considered an alternative antenna structure and is required per MZO Section 11-35-5(E) to be setback from any adjacent residential use by a distance equal to the height of the monoeucalyptus plus one (1) foot. The proposed monoeucalyptus will be 80 feet tall and will be over 500 feet from the nearest residence. Additionally, the site will be placed

over 100 feet away from the Power Road right-of-way. The closest WCF is a site that is over 2,000 feet to the south which exceeds the 1,000-foot separation requirement.

Design Standards – Section 11-35-5(F)

Per MZO Section 11-35-5(F), antennas, antenna support structures, and related equipment must be located, designed, and screened to blend with the existing natural or built surroundings. The applicants are proposing a monoecalyptus site that will be clad in artificial tree bark. Additionally, the facility has been designed to accommodate additional carriers, thus minimizing the total number of towers needed in the area. Overall, the proposed WCF will be designed to the extent possible to blend with the surroundings.

Required Signs – Section 11-35-5(G)

A sign will be required to be placed on the gate of the facility that will comply with MZO Section 11-35-5(G).

Required Landscaping – Section 11-35-5(H)

The WCF is located in a way to preserve as many existing trees and shrubs as possible in the natural landscaped areas around the facility.

Operation and Maintenance Standards – Section 11-35-5(I)

The site will be required to comply with operation and maintenance standards per MZO Section 11-35-5(I).

Zoning Ordinance, Section 11-70-5 – Special Use Permit

Per Section 11-70-5 of the MZO, the Board of Adjustment shall find upon sufficient evidence when making a decision on a SUP that:

1. Approval of the proposed project will advance the goals and objectives of and is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and any other applicable City plan and/or policies;

The proposal complies with the Mesa 2040 General Plan by expanding communications coverage and creating access to information, while maintaining a safe, clean, and healthy living environment.

The proposal complies with this criteria.

2. The location, size, design, and operating characteristics of the proposed project are consistent with the purposes of the district where it is located and conform with the General Plan and any other applicable City plan or policies;

The proposed WCF would serve as an accessory use to the Red Mountain Golf Course, serving the purpose of maintaining and expanding telecommunications in the area. The monoecalyptus complies with the required setbacks of the RS-9-PAD District as well as all other requirements of Chapter 35 of the MZO for antennas and wireless telecommunications facilities. The increased height will provide greater coverage to the

area and will allow for the colocation of two other carriers on the WCF.

The proposal complies with this criteria.

3. The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area, nor will the proposed project or improvements be injurious or detrimental to the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City; and

The proposed WCF meet all setback requirements for the RS-9-PAD District, meets the separation requirements from residential development, and will be a stealth “camouflaged” design. Based on the proposed location of the WCF, staff does not anticipate that the WCF will pose any safety concerns and should not be injurious or detrimental to adjacent properties in the area.

The proposal complies with this criteria.

4. Adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure are available to serve the proposed project.

The addition of the WCF does not add any additional burden to the existing public services, public facilities, nor public infrastructure. The public infrastructure is already on-site and will adequately serve the site and proposed use.

The request complies with this criterion.

Findings:

- A. The proposed wireless communication facility would be located in the Single Residence-9 zoning district with a Planned Area Development Overlay.
- B. The proposed tower design is a monoecalyptus, which is considered a stealth design.
- C. The proposed facility will be over 500 feet from the nearest residential use and over 100 feet from the Power Road right-of-way line, meeting the separation requirements per MZO Section 11-35-5(E).
- D. The proposed facility meets the allowed setbacks for the zoning district.
- E. The applicant has worked with staff on the monoecalyptus design to best blend in with the site and context.
- F. The proposed wireless communication facility meets all other applicable requirements of MZO 11-35-5, Location, Design and Operation Requirements; and 11-35-6, Review and Approval Procedures.
- G. The location, size, design and operating characteristics of the proposed project are consistent with the purposes of the RS-9-PAD district and conform with the General Plan.
- H. The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area, nor will the proposed project or improvements be injurious or detrimental to the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City.

- I. There are adequate public services, public facilities and public infrastructure available to serve the proposed project.

Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:

The applicant mailed the required notification letters to all property owners within 750 feet of the site. Staff was contacted by several neighbors whom expressed concern with the location and height of the proposed tower as well as the proposed use in context of a previously denied proposal to develop residential units on the Red Mountain golf course. Staff explained to the neighbors that contacted the Planning Division, that the subject request is not a zoning request but rather a Special Use Permit to exceed the height allowed by right in the RS-9-PAD District.

Staff Recommendation:

Based upon the application received and preceding analysis, Staff finds that the request for a SUP to allow a wireless telecommunications facility to exceed the maximum height in the RS-9-PAD zoning district, meets the requirements of Chapter 35 and the approval criteria of Section 11-70-5(E) of the MZO; and therefore, recommends approval with the following conditions.

Conditions of Approval:

1. Compliance with all final documents submitted with this application.
2. The wireless communication facility shall utilize a monoeucalyptus design with a maximum height of eighty feet (80') to the top of the monoeucalyptus.
3. All antennas, mounting hardware, and other equipment near the antennas shall be painted to match the color of the faux eucalyptus leaves.
4. The pole of the monoeucalyptus shall be covered in an artificial bark.
5. The lease area containing the ground-mounted equipment shall be screened by a minimum eight-foot-tall (8') CMU wall, painted to be compatible with the natural desert surroundings.
6. Provide a permanent, weather-proof identification sign, approximately 16-inches by 32-inches in size on the gate of the fence identifying the facility operator(s), operator's address, and 24-hour telephone number for reaching the operator or an agent authorized to provide 24/7 response to emergency situations.
7. Maintenance of the facility shall conform to the requirements of Mesa Zoning Ordinance Section 11-35-5(I).
8. The operator of the WCF shall respond to and complete all identified maintenance and repair of the facility within 30-days of receiving written notice of the problem.
9. No later than 90 days from the date the use is discontinued or from the cessation of operations, the owner of the abandoned tower or the owner of the property on which the facilities are sited shall remove all equipment and improvements associated with the use and shall restore the site to its original condition as shown on the plans submitted with the original approved application. The owner or the owner's agent shall provide written verification of the removal of the wireless communications facility within 30 days of the date the removal is completed.
10. Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Department regarding the issuance of building permits.
11. Future co-location of additional carriers shall require individual zoning approval.
12. Future modifications must be approved by the Planning Director to ensure the modifications remain in compliance with the existing concealment elements of the monoeucalyptus or facility as approved in case BOA21-00686 and the Mesa Zoning Ordinance as amended.

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 – Vicinity Map

Exhibit 2 – Staff Report

Exhibit 3 – Narrative and Justification Statement

Exhibit 4 – Site Plan

Exhibit 5 – Rendering of monoeucalyptus

Exhibit 6 – Coverage Maps

Exhibit 7 – November 3, 2021 Comment Cards