



PIMA COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

DATE: January 30, 2023
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Tom Drzazgowski, Chief Zoning Inspector
SUBJECT: **P22CU00013 - WOLVERTON REVOC LIVING TR – S. SIERRITA MOUNTAIN ROAD**

The above item is a Type III Conditional Use permit for a 110 foot communication tower located along Sierrita Mountain Rd. The tower is part of a group of five towers that have been submitted by Vertical Bridge located throughout the county. Per their website, it appears that Vertical Bridge is a tower owner who leases space to carriers to place their broadband and wireless technology antenna on Vertical Bridge towers. The above site was heard at the Planning and Zoning Commission on November 30, along with three other sites. At the hearing three towers were continued and this site along Sierrita Mountain Rd., was recommended for approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission. At the hearing there were no members of the public to speak on this site. Since the hearing, staff has received public comment in opposition to the site and have spoken with numerous neighbors in the area who have concerns about the tower. When the application was submitted, no neighborhood meeting with area residents occurred. This outreach to neighbors is critical to help present a project that reduces adverse impacts to neighbors and can allow changes to occur to a site that reduces neighbor opposition to a tower.

Communication towers in rural areas are needed to provide the latest technology to area residents. The Pima County Zoning Code provides different levels of review and approval based on the scope of a tower submittal. The zoning code encourages towers to be located on existing verticality by allowing a by right permitting process for towers that collocate on existing electric utility or light poles or placed on non-residential buildings such as schools, churches, fire stations or other non-residential buildings. In addition, the code encourages towers 50 feet or lower, by allowing these towers as a Type I conditional use permit. Towers above 50 feet require a Type III conditional use and careful consideration should be made in determining why other options such as collocation or more shorter towers are not an option.

In this current case, a tower at 110 feet appears to not be consistent with the neighboring rural area. Staff recommends the applicant be prepared to clearly articulate

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all other options that were explored and why other options that would less adversely impactful neighbors were not selected. Additional time may be needed for the applicant to provide this information or potentially explore other sites, or changes that would provide a solution that reduces impacts to neighbors and provides the needed service to fill the gap in coverage by a wireless carrier.

In the past, staff has been very supportive of towers up to 50 feet on rural properties to provide wireless services to residents. Towers above 50 feet have been approved on non-residential sites such as schools and churches, but are not normally proposed on rural properties with homes on them as the current request does.