



# MEMORANDUM

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DATE: November 25, 2025  
For December 18, 2025 Hearing

TO: Jim Mazzocco  
Zoning Examiner

FROM: Koren Manning, Director  
Planning & Development Services

SUBJECT: SPECIAL EXCEPTION LAND USE  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT  
TP-ENT-0725-00012 Desert Christian High School – 1300 N Prudence Rd, RX-1  
Zoning (Ward 2)

**Issue** – This is a special exception land use request in the RX-1 Residential zone by Lazarus & Silvyn, P.C., on behalf of the property owner, Desert Christian High School Inc., to extend hours of operation for the existing Education use beyond 7:00pm, and the installation of lighting to the existing football field and track. The subject location is located at the 7500 E Block of Speedway Blvd, approximately 600 feet north of the right-of-way (See Case Location Map).

Educational – Elementary & Secondary use in the RX-1 zone is subject to Section 4.9.3.D of the *Unified Development Code (UDC)*. Requesting an exception to 4.9.3.D.3 to extend hours of operation past 7:00pm requires approval through the Zoning Examiner Special Exception Procedure, Sec. 3.4.3.

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

## **Background Information**

**Existing Land Use:** Education – Elementary & Secondary

**Existing Zoning Description:** Residential Zone (RX-1) – This zone provides for suburban, low density, single-family, residential development, agriculture and other compatible neighborhood uses.

## **Surrounding Zones and Land Uses:**

North – R-1 Residential Zone, Single-Family Residential

East – R-2 Residential Zone, Condo Development

South – O-3 Office Zone, School Building, Condo Development



West – R-2 Residential Zone, Multifamily Development

Previous Cases on the Property: There are no previous Special Exception cases on property.

Related Cases: None

**Applicant's Request** – The applicant request is for special exception approval for extended hours of operation for the existing Education use, and the installation of sports field lighting to support the request.

The proposed hours of operation require a Zoning Examiner Special Exception in the RX-1 zone.

**Planning Considerations** – Land use policy direction for this area is provided by *Plan Tucson* and the *Pantano East Area Plan*.

Plan Tucson: This location is within the Mixed-Use Corridors building block. This building block supports a mix of retail, housing, and employment centers, including mid- and high-rise multifamily and mixed-use multifamily development.

Support lighting design that follows the Outdoor Lighting Code, minimizing disruptive light pollution to the surrounding environment while providing adequate light for users (PT, A.20).

Support developments that are informed by engagement from surrounding communities PT, A.22).

Invest in the maintenance, enhancement, and expansion of sports and recreational facilities, and outdoor gathering spaces, making them destination-worthy and reflective of Tucson's cultural heritage and desert environment (PT, Chapter 3, Culture 8).

Improve physical, mental, and social health outcomes for community members through parks and recreational activities, events and classes for all ages (PT, Chapter 3, Wellness 18).

Pantano East Area Plan: This *Plan* provides guidelines for future growth, while protecting the existing development in the Pantano East Area.

The *Plan's* Parks, Recreation, and Open Space sub-goal is to provide for existing and future recreational open space in the area.

### **Design Considerations**

**Land Use Compatibility** – The subject site is developed with Desert Christian Academy's sports facilities. Previously, the site was a Tucson Fire Department station, which was granted to the school in a land swap with the City of Tucson in 2024.



The sports facilities consist of a football, track and field on the west half of the former fire station site and a softball field in the northeast quarter, with the remaining southeast quarter containing three pickle-ball courts and parking. Vehicle and pedestrian access are provided from the school site located on the north side of Speedway Boulevard, with a secondary access through Fremming Ave, a public right-of-way extending from Speedway Boulevard to the southeast corner of the sports fields area.

The proposed special exception will also allow indoor activities within the main school building and non-athletic facilities to occur on any day of the week, ending no later than 10:00pm. It would allow no more than five regular-season football games plus no more than two playoff games, if any, to conclude by 10:00pm. All other athletic field events would conclude by 8:00pm.

The request also includes a proposal to install lighting around the football field and track to support the extended hours of operation during football games and other athletic field events.

The proposed light poles are 90 feet in height, which allows the lights to be more downward-directed and shielded to minimize light trespass into adjacent properties. They will also be automated to ensure lighting is cut off when the athletic fields are not in use.

Drainage/Grading – The property has already been graded in accordance with the approved development package for the athletic facilities, and drainage considerations were incorporated at the time of development.

Road Improvements/Vehicular Access/Circulation – Site circulation will not change from the previously approved design package. During athletic events, Desert Christian High School will mitigate vehicular and pedestrian traffic impacts by requiring parking to be accessed from Speedway Blvd, primary parking to be in the main DCHS lot along Speedway Blvd, and closure of the gate at the end of Fremming Ave, which will be used only as a secondary or emergency access point.

The easement area directly east of the athletic fields' eastern wall will remain as a pedestrian area accessible by adjacent property owners, and DCHS will maintain and keep the easement area clean and free from trash.

Use Specific Standards – Education – Elementary and Secondary projects requesting exemptions to UDC 4.9.3.D are allowed as a Special Exception in the RX-1 zone with approval through a Zoning Examiner Special Exception Procedure, in accordance with UDC Section 3.4.3.

*UDC 4.9.13.D.3.*

*Educational Uses within Neighborhood Commercial (NC) or more restrictive zoning is limited in hours of operation to 6:00am to 7:00pm, Monday through Friday only.*

Staff finds the proposal to be in compliance with all other applicable UDC Use-Specific Standards.



**Conclusion** –The proposal is consistent with policy direction in *Plan Tucson* and the *Pantano East Area Plan*, which support development designed to be compatible with and sensitive to surrounding land uses. A plan amendment is not required. Subject to compliance with the attached preliminary conditions, approval of the requested special exception is appropriate.



### PROCEDURAL

1. A development package, in substantial compliance with the preliminary development package and required reports dated July 15, 2025, is to be submitted and approved in accordance with the *Administrative Manual*, Section 2-06.
2. Any relocation, modification, etc., of existing utilities and/or public improvements necessitated by the proposed development shall be at no expense to the public.
3. Five years are allowed from the date of initial authorization to implement and effectuate all Code requirements and special exception conditions.

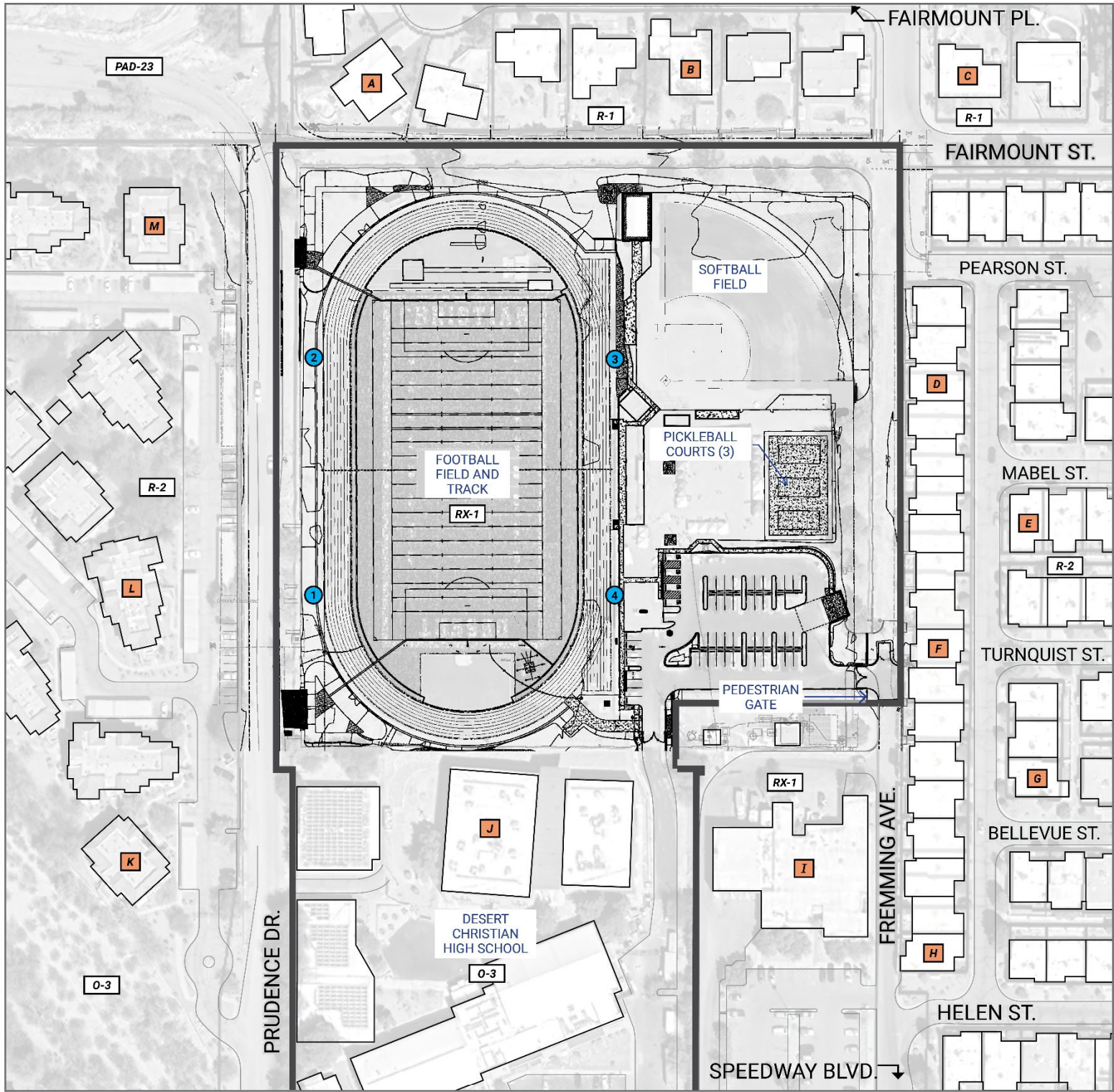
### LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

4. Desert Christian High School (“DCHS”) shall only install athletic field lighting that is fully shielded in compliance with the City of Tucson/Pima County Outdoor Lighting Code to mitigate light intrusion beyond athletic field boundaries. DCHS will only engage a lighting contractor that is a licensed contractor in the State of Arizona
5. DCHS will not install athletic field lighting on the softball field. Should DCHS desire to install future softball field lighting, it must process through a separate application via the City’s Zoning Examiner Special Exception Use process.
6. During school hours, the parking lot adjacent to the athletic fields (“Parking Lot”) is for DCHS faculty/staff use only. Students may not park in this lot during school hours.
7. DCHS will comply with the following hours of operation:
  - a. Activities within the main school buildings and non-athletic facilities may occur on any day of the week and shall end no later than 10:00pm.
  - b. Use of athletic fields shall be subject to the following restrictions:
    - i. Football games, shall number no more than five regular season games plus no more than two playoff games, if any, will conclude by 10:00pm.
    - ii. All other athletic field events will conclude by 8:00pm.
    - iii. School athletic events shall not be held on Sundays.
    - iv. Field lighting shall be turned off when athletic fields are not in use.
    - v. Athletic field lighting shall be equipped with timers that automatically turn off lights at the above stated times.



- vi. Parking Lot lighting shall turn off via automatic timer no later than 10:00pm.
- 8. During athletic events, DCHS will mitigate vehicular and pedestrian traffic impacts to adjacent neighborhoods by requiring a) parking to be accessed from Speedway Blvd.; b) primary parking to be in the main DCHS lot along Speedway Blvd.; and c) closing the gate at the end of Fremming Ave. and only using it as a secondary/emergency ingress/egress point.
- 9. The existing +/- 30-foot easement area (“Easement”) directly east of the athletic fields’ eastern wall will remain as a pedestrian area accessible by adjacent property owners.
- 10. DCHS shall maintain and keep the Easement area clean and free from trash.
- 11. No DCHS students are allowed in the Easement without direct supervision of DCHS staff.
- 12. If future public address (“PA”) systems are installed on the athletic fields for use during school athletic events, the school shall mitigate potential noise impacts by directing the PA speakers to the west, away from neighboring residential property on the north and east and/or mitigate potential noise impacts via other technological means or sound system designs.
- 13. Except for those days on which school events are held on athletic fields, public access to the athletic fields is prohibited between dusk and dawn.





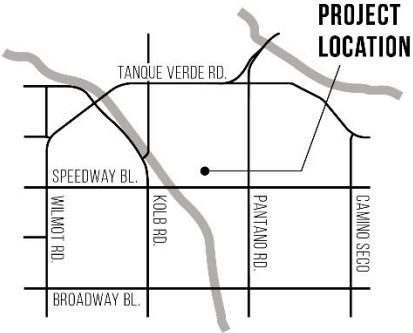
**NOTES:**

**EXISTING:**

- **ADDRESSES:** 7525 E. SPEEDWAY BLVD. & 1300 N. PRUDENCE RD.
- **APN:** 133-13-005J
- **TOTAL SITE AREA:** 15.52 ac
- **ZONING:** O-3 (SCHOOL) & RX-1 (ATHLETIC FIELDS) (EXISTING & PROPOSED, NO CHANGE)
- **USE:** EDUCATION & ANCILLARY ATHLETIC FIELDS

**PROPOSED:** ZONING EXAMINER SPECIAL EXCEPTION LAND USE (SELU) TO ALLOW SCHOOL ACTIVITIES PAST 7:00PM AND DURING WEEKENDS ON ENTIRE SITE. (UDC § 4.9.3.D.3.)

= DCHS PROPERTY  
1 = LIGHT POLE LOCATION  
 = BUILDING LOCATION, SETBACK MATRIX.



**SPECIAL EXCEPTION**  
 Preliminary Development Plan  
**TP-ENT-0725-00012     Date: 7-15-25**  
 Planning & Development Services

LIGHT POLE SETBACK MATRIX (FROM GROUND LEVEL):

Approx. Distance (ft)	Light Poles			
Buildings	1	2	3	4
A	495	250	360	580
B	635	460	270	530
C	840	715	450	640
D	675	640	330	380
E	735	760	460	420
F	645	705	440	330
G	765	855	620	470
H	750	885	700	500
I	550	695	545	340
J	315	485	480	260
K	340	560	680	540
L	160	270	510	465
M	400	185	480	595

Light Pole Heights (ft)			
1	2	3	4
90	90	90	90

Note: pole numbers and building letters correspond to labels on plan.

**DESERT CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL**  
**7525 E. SPEEDWAY BLVD. - SPECIAL EXCEPTION LAND USE**

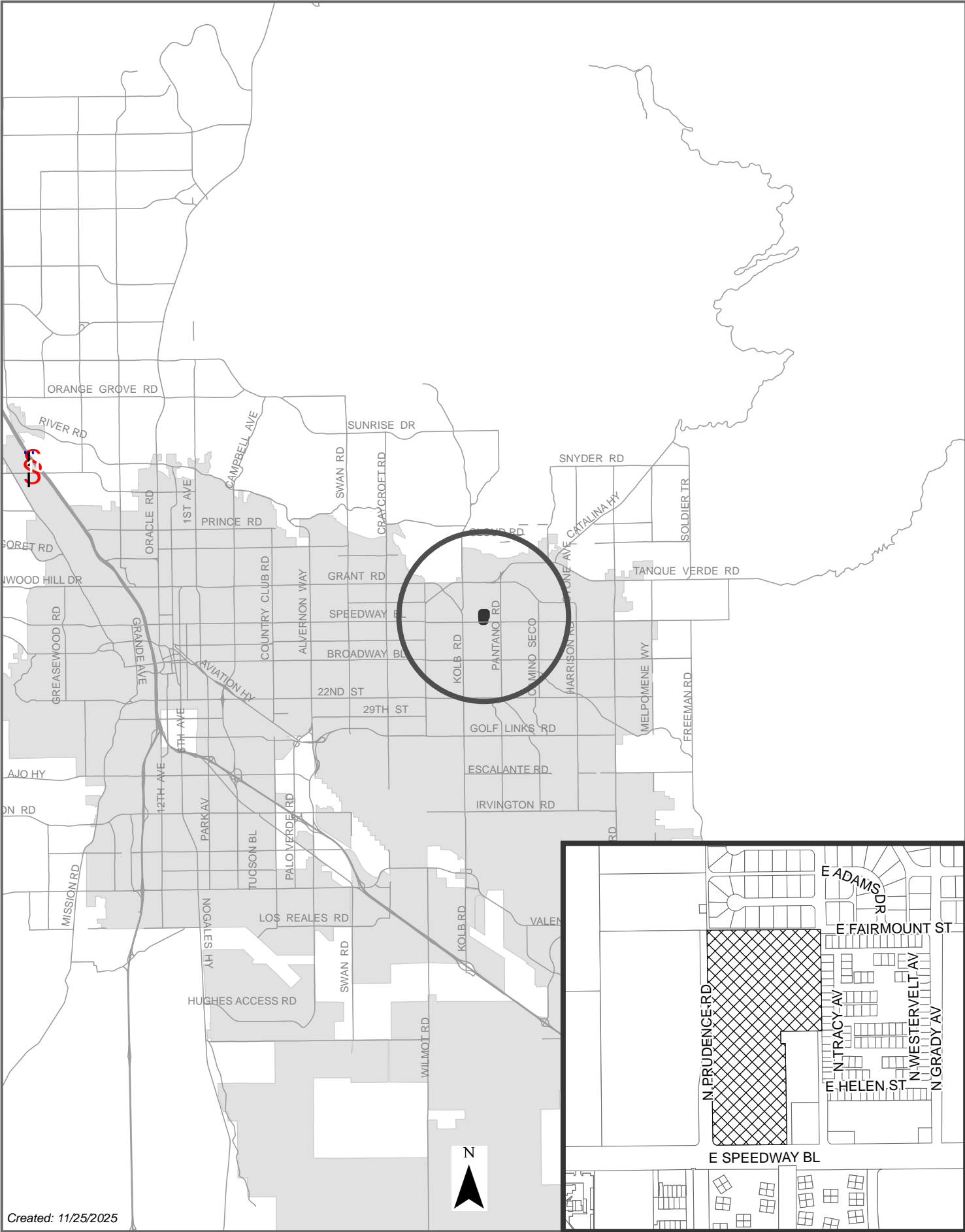
TUCSON, AZ - LAZARUS & SILVYN, P.C.

**PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN**

PRELIMINARY DRAWING - NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION     DATE: 10/29/2025

Tucson Cases\25\7\Desert Christian High School - 001 Athletic Field Lighting\Documents\SE- US Site Plan









Area of Special Exception Request

2022 Aerial

Created: 11/25/2025

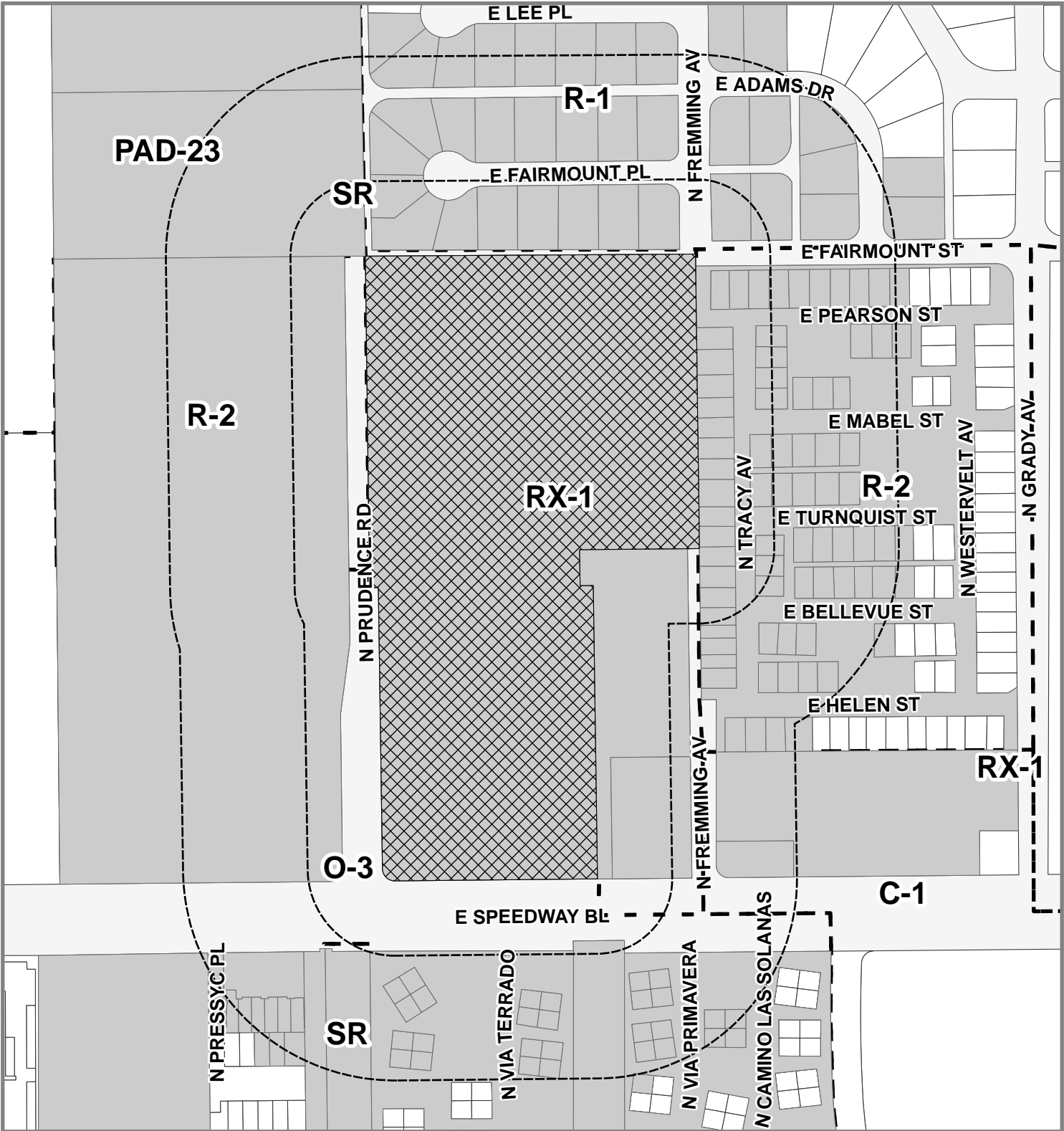







Address: 7525 E SPEEDWAY BL  
Base Maps: Twp. 1403 Range 1502 Sec. 05  
Ward(s): 2

0 130 260 Feet  
1:3,232

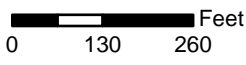






-  Area of Special Exception Request
-  Properties Notified
-  Zone Boundaries
-  400' Notification Area
-  Protest Area (150 ft. Radius)

Address: 7525 E SPEEDWAY BL  
Base Maps: Twp. 1403 Range 1502 Sec. 05  
Ward(s): 2



1:3,311





**Approval – Protest Form**



If you wish to submit a written protest or approval, this form is provided for your convenience. Print your comments below, sign your name, and mail to the City of Tucson Planning and Development Services Department, Entitlements Section, 201 N. Stone Avenue, P.O. Box 27210, Tucson, Arizona 85726-7210. The number of approvals and protests along with protest calculations will be reported at the Zoning Examiner’s public hearing. This form is not the City of Tucson Public Hearing Notice.

Protests from 20% of the property owners within 150’ of the whole perimeter of the property being rezoned, including BOTH 20% of the property by area and 20% of the number of lots with 150’, require an affirmative vote of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Mayor and Council (5 of 7 council members) to approve the Original City Zoning translation. Public rights-of-way and the area/lot of the proposed rezoning are included in the protest calculations. Calculations will be provided to the Mayor and Council.

**Case:** TP-ENT-0725-00012 Desert Christian Academy, 1300 N Prudence Rd, RX-1 (Ward 2)

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Property Owner(s) (PLEASE PRINT)

☐

APPROVE the proposed rezoning/special exception

☐

PROTEST the proposed rezoning/special exception

**Reason:**

OWNER(S) SIGNATURES	PLEASE PRINT PROPERTY ADDRESS	PLEASE PRINT YOUR MAILING ADDRESS

Date \_\_\_\_\_



Place  
Stamp  
Here

City of Tucson  
**Planning and Development Services Department**  
Entitlements Section  
201 N. Stone  
P.O. Box 27210  
Tucson, Arizona 85726-7210

TP-ENT-0725-00012 GS

Expose this flap - Affix stamp and return

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City of Tucson  
Planning and Development Services  
Department - Entitlements Section  
201 N. Stone Avenue  
P.O. BOX 27210  
Tucson, Arizona 85726-7210

TP-ENT-0725-00012 GS  
IMPORTANT REZONING NOTICE ENCLOSED