Tucson Mountains
ASSOCIATION
SINCE 1934

PO BOX 86117 • TUCSON, AZ 85754-6117

January 27, 2026

Mr. Rob Presuhn
Re: Gerhardt Road Properties Adjacent to Sweetwater Preserve
Cc: Pima County Development Services Department (DSD) Dir. Chris Poirier & Deputy Dir. Tom Drzazgowski

Dear Mr. Presuhn,

Thank you for meeting with the Tucson Mountains Association (TMA) Board of Directors on January 21, 2026 to discuss your property on Gerhardt Road. We also thank Pima County Development Services for referring you to us.

TMA is a 501(c)(4) organization founded in 1934 that represents thousands of residents in the Tucson Mountains. Our mission is to preserve open space, protect biodiversity, and promote the well-being of residents in the area. We have worked closely with Pima County for many years to help protect the unique character of the Tucson Mountains.

During your presentation, you mentioned that you had previously considered approaching Pima County Parks and Recreation about trading your property so it could be preserved forever as part of the Sweetwater Preserve, recognizing its unique beauty and conservation value. TMA strongly supports this path and would be glad to advocate on your behalf. TMA supported the open space bonds that funded the county's acquisition of the 880 acres that became Sweetwater Preserve, and we would welcome the opportunity to advocate for adding your parcel to the preserve.

Regarding the wedding and event venue concept, TMA cannot support a commercial rezoning at this location. Our opposition is grounded in the Pima Prospers 2025 Comprehensive Plan S-8 Tucson Mountains Special Area Policy, adopted October 14, 2025 by the Pima County Board of Supervisors. These policies were developed over two years with significant input from TMA specifically to protect the Tucson Mountains' character. Conflicts with the Pima Prospers 2025 policy include the following:

1. **Commercial Rezoning (Section C.3):** The S-8 policy states: "Outside the designated Commercial Activity Center (CAC) at W. Sunset Road and N. Silverbell Road, requests for commercial rezoning will be discouraged and must be carefully analyzed for impacts to and demonstrate compatibility with the low-density residential character, dark skies, and scenic corridors of the Tucson Mountains." The proposed site is well outside this designated CAC, and a 300-person event venue is incompatible with the low-density residential character of the surrounding SR-zoned properties.

2. **Open Space Preservation (Section B.2):** The S-8 policy states: "Open space adjacent to SR-zoned parcels should be preserved, with clustering to maintain viewsheds and habitat connectivity, and consider context with surrounding zoning." The proposed parcels are bounded on two sides by Sweetwater Preserve and on the remaining sides by SR-zoned properties. A commercial venue with a large parking lot, traffic from events accommodating up to 300 people, and associated infrastructure would be incompatible with this context.

3. **Character of the Tucson Mountains:** The S-8 description states: "The Tucson Mountains area was first homesteaded by families with the intention of keeping the area rural with large open residential parcels. Current residents expect the same." It further notes that "low density development such as Suburban Ranch (SR) zoning (1 residential dwelling per 3.3 acres) helps to retain the rural quality and dark skies of the area." A commercial event center contradicts this established expectation and character.

We encourage you to contact Nicole Fyffe at the County Administrator's Office to explore acquisition options. TMA would welcome the opportunity to support such efforts. This is exactly the kind of outcome our organization exists to help facilitate.

We appreciated your openness during our meeting and your evident care for this land. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can assist in any way.

Sincerely,

Ed Hendel
President, Tucson Mountains Association