



# City Council Report

**Date:** September 11, 2014  
**To:** City Council  
**Through:** Christopher J. Brady, City Manager  
**From:** William Jabjiniak, Economic Development Director *WJ*  
Jaye O'Donnell, Economic Development Deputy Director  
Scot Rigby, Senior Project Manager

**Subject:** Discuss and Consider Accepting the Falcon Strategic Visioning Commission's Falcon Field Economic Activity Area (FFEAA) Strategic Vision and Planning Document

"Council District 1 & 5"

## Strategic Initiatives



## Purpose and Recommendation

The purpose of the report is to present the Falcon Strategic Visioning Commission's final planning document regarding the Mission, Vision and Strategy for the Falcon Field Economic Activity Area (FFEAA)

Staff recommends accepting the Commission's FFEAA Strategic Planning Document.

## Background

The City of Mesa has a long and storied history of Falcon Field Airport and its surroundings. For more than 75 years, Mesa's Falcon Field Area has led the nation in aviation innovation: During the early 1940s, WWII United States and British cadets trained in the skies and today multi-million dollar, cutting-edge aircraft manufacturers continue to set the standard for aviation around the world. The Falcon Field Economic Activity Area is one of Mesa's most dynamic, high value and dense zones of employment and economic opportunity, possessing nearly 19,000 employees and more than 650 companies.

In April 2014, Mayor Finter and the City Council determined to accelerate the pace of economic progress and ensure the Falcon Field Economic Activity Area continues to excel and grow by announcing the formation of the Falcon Strategic Visioning Commission (FSVC). Comprised of seven highly respected aerospace, business, hospitality and development leaders from Arizona and Mesa, Commission members

have direct, first-hand experience in successfully leading their companies through strategic growth.

## **Discussion**

The Commission's purpose was to develop a strategic vision for the Falcon Field Economic Activity Area. The charge was twofold. First, they were identify area strengths, opportunities, untapped growth sectors, barriers to success and potential beneficial relationships. Second, they were to recommend a strategic economic vision to the City Council that set a clear course for the City of Mesa and its business community partners to follow. The Commission believes that it has accomplished both charges. Notable FSVC recommendations include:

- Expand the FFEAA boundaries south to Brown Road, west to Gilbert, north to City limits and east to Ellsworth Road. This will enable the City to highlight development opportunities along this 11 mile section of the Loop 202 Red Mountain Freeway;
- In addition to focusing on HEAT industries sectors, primary attention should be focused on the Aerospace/Aviation and Defense industry as well as the Advanced Business Service industry. A secondary industry sector to be developed is the Tourism and Hospitality industry;
- The City should proactively engage FFEAA businesses through its Business Retention and Expansion Outreach. This rejuvenated program, which started in July and is ongoing, has already met with over 30 FFEAA businesses;
- Recommend that Planning and Development staff investigate and implement processes that reduce process timelines, encourage development flexibility and improve customer service to businesses of all sizes;
- Develop a proactive business development outreach program where representatives from the City meet, communicate and engage existing building owners, vacant property owners, and real estate brokerage companies locally and nationally to outline the value opportunity of developing in the FFEAA;
- Identify a specific City staff member from Economic Development to lead the City's effort to accelerate development within the FFEAA;
- Develop a FFEAA branding strategy and marketing campaign to engage the development community

## **Alternatives**

If Council does not approve the report as drafted and recommended, they may choose one of the alternatives listed below.

Not Accept the Report: The Council may choose to not accept the report. If the Council chooses not to accept the report, the Council may direct staff and the Commission to continue to meet and work on the report's findings and recommendations.

Direct Staff to Modify the Agreements: Council may direct staff to modify the report and/or direct the Commission to convene again for additional discussion. The impact is unknown except for a likely delay while staff and Commission return to discuss.

Take No Action: The Council may choose to take no action or table the item until a future date. The impact would be that City staff would continue to operate under the existing direction and/or the City Manager could initiate changes independent of a report.

## **Fiscal Impact**

This report does not commit the City to spend funds. The report does make recommendations and preliminary cost estimates to implement specific items, but anticipates that many of the recommendations could be completed in house with City staff, within existing budgets or considered in upcoming budget cycles.

## **Coordinated With**

This agreement has been coordinated with City Manager's Office, City Attorney's Office, Planning, Visit Mesa and the Falcon Strategic Visioning Commission. Each agency is in support of the agreement and recommendation for approval.