



## Planning and Zoning Board

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### *Case Information*

**CASE NUMBER:** Z16-023 (PLN2016-00217)  
**LOCATION:** 2400 through 2600 blocks of North Greenfield Road  
**GENERAL VICINITY:** Located south of McDowell Road on the west side of Greenfield Road  
**REQUEST:** Modifications to conditions of approval of PEP district  
**PURPOSE:** This request will allow for a business park for offices and light industrial uses  
**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** District 5  
**OWNER/APPLICANT:** City of Mesa; William J. Jabjiniak, Economic Development Director and Corinne Nystrom, Airport Director  
**STAFF PLANNER:** Andrew Spurgin, Principal Planner

**PARCEL NO.:** 141-26-004; 141-26-007; and 141-26-001A  
**PARCEL SIZE:** 63.59 ± acres  
**EXISTING ZONING:** PEP-AOA1, PEP-AOA2, PEP-AOA3  
**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION:** Employment District  
**PROPOSED LAND USE:** Business Park  
**CURRENT LAND USE:** Agricultural

### **SITE CONTEXT**

**NORTH:** Residential with agriculture - zoned RS-35; industrial subdivision – zoned LI and vacant land – zoned LI  
**EAST:** (Across Greenfield Road) Falcon Field Airport – zoned LI  
**SOUTH:** Vacant agricultural lands owned by City of Mesa – zoned PS  
**WEST:** (across RWCD Canal) single residence development – zoned RS-35

### **ZONING & PROPERTY HISTORY**

December 4, 1978: Annexed into the City of Mesa (Ord. #1690)  
July 16, 1979: Rezoned subject property and property to the south (141± acres) from County Rural-43 to City of Mesa AG (Z79-65; Ord. #1254)  
November 15, 1982: Rezoned subject property from AG to M-1 (Z82-83; Ord. #1688)  
November 18, 1985: Rezoned 81± acres to the south of subject property from AG to M-1 (Z85-134; Ord. #2008)  
May 19, 2008: Rezoned subject property (64+/- acres) from M-1 to PEP and property to south (88 +/- acres) to PF (PS in current Zoning Ordinance) (Z08-022; Ord. #4839)

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval with conditions**

**P&Z BOARD RECOMMENDATION:** ☐ Approval with conditions. ☐ Denial

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The property subject to the requested modifications to conditions of approval is City-owned property located west of Falcon Field Airport along the west side of Greenfield Road to the south of McDowell Road. The request is to modify the conditions of approval established for the PEP designation for this property by Ordinance #4839 on May 19, 2008. Specifically condition #1: "Compliance with the basic development as described in the project narrative" that included a conceptual plan and to replace the condition with a new project narrative.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has authorized the City to use the property for non-aeronautical uses. The City of Mesa Office of Economic Development has partnered with Falcon Field to attract office and light industrial uses – specifically the technology, medical and life sciences sector. The existing PEP zoning district is not changing with this request and therefore underlying permitted uses will not change; however, the applicant's narrative has described targeted industries and economic development efforts for the site and surrounding area. The project narrative indicates that the requested changes will improve marketability of the site for the types of businesses targeted for the Falcon Field area.

The previous project narrative and concept plan envisioned developing the land as one unit with a series of courtyard buildings with a central open space preserving citrus features with parking on the perimeter of the buildings and preservation of citrus growth along the boundaries of the site. The new narrative is less specific about building layout, pedestrian systems and placement of buildings within the property but instead speaks more generally to design theme and anticipates adoption of design guidelines as a future process to address building design, materials, signage and other site characteristics. The new narrative includes an appendix with anticipated building prototypes that would be emulated in the Falcon Tech Center. The updated concept plan envisions a shared internal drive from Greenfield Road to serve 16 development pads ranging from 1.48 acres to 6.47 acres.

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

The applicant has notified all surrounding property owners within 1000-feet of the subject site, registered neighborhoods within one mile and homeowner's associations within one-half mile of the site. A neighborhood meeting was held on April 13, 2016 with six citizens in attendance. Citizen questions pertained to the potential project architecture, lease terms and project phasing. No additional comments have been provided as of the date of this report.

## **CONFORMANCE WITH THE MESA 2040 GENERAL PLAN**

*Summary: The proposed modification to conditions of approval for the PEP designation on this property is consistent with the concepts of the Employment District and Business Park sub-type established in the Mesa 2040 General Plan. The location has been identified in the Character Area Map of Chapter 7 as a component of a much larger five*

*square mile area for Employment and supports Chapter 5 policies targeting the aviation and healthcare sector for job growth.*

The goal of Mesa 2040 General Plan is to establish and maintain neighborhoods and to build a sense of place in neighborhoods and in commercial/employment areas of activity. Rather than focusing on individual land uses, the Plan focuses on the “character of development in different areas.” Character types combine concepts of land use with building form and intensity to describe the type of area being created through the development that occurs.

### **Criteria for review of development**

State statutes require that all adopted zoning and rezoning ordinances be consistent with the adopted General Plan. Determining consistency with the General Plan requires a review of the proposal against the character area requirements and the other goals and policies of the Plan and any adopted sub-area plans. The following criteria have been developed for use during the review process to determine whether or not the proposed development is achieving the vision and goals established in this Plan and thus meeting the statute requirements.

#### **1. Is the proposed development consistent with furthering the intent and direction contained in the General Plan?**

The General Plan focuses on creating land development patterns that emphasize the character of place and focus on those principles that build neighborhoods, stabilize the job base and improve the sense of plan.

Section II of the General Plan establishes the primary elements of the document:

- A. Creating and maintaining a variety of great neighborhoods,
- B. Growing and maintaining stable and diverse jobs,
- C. Providing Rich, High Quality Public Spaces and Cultural Resources, and
- D. Community Character.

*The proposed uses of this property described in the project narrative are consistent with the guiding principles of the General Plan. The site continues the anticipated development pattern of the larger Employment character area identified in the General Plan and has potential to incubate further development in the area. Future design guidelines will be incorporated into the project to ensure quality public spaces and promote a unique citrus theme for the Falcon Tech Center. The elements described in the project narrative will need to be verified through future site plan and design review processes.*

#### **2. Is the proposed development consistent with adopted sub-area or neighborhood plans?**

*The proposed development is located within the Falcon Field sub-area plan. The Plan establishes several policies that merit consideration in the context of the subject property.*

- *The Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan acknowledges that land in agricultural use will likely convert to commercial use, but must be developed with sensitivity to the adjacent Citrus Sub-Area character and residential uses. The updated project narrative describes incorporation of a citrus grove design theme. The Citrus sub-area is to the west of the subject property, across the RWCD Canal. The concept plan proposes a 100 foot wide landscape setback against the Canal. The updated project narrative*

*also describes an intent to minimize lighting impacts on adjacent residential development.*

- *The Sub-Area Plan establishes architectural character policies promoting a contemporary or progressive style, the use of innovative design, and quality building form, materials and color. The Plan also includes a pictorial Image Building Plan to illustrate desired architectural patterns. The applicant has proposed a future process to establish Design Guidelines for the 63.59 acre development addressing materials, landscaping, transitions and connections. In addition to incorporation of Design Guidelines, the updated narrative includes an appendix featuring anticipated building types that illustrate high quality building form, materials and colors; integration of landscape and hardscape areas; contemporary style with innovative design; as well as the use of outdoor plazas and natural areas.*
- *The Sub-Area Plan speaks to land uses compatible with airport operations. By virtue of the existing PEP designation plus the additional land use limitations of the Airport Overflight Area (AOA) on the property, the potential land uses are compatible with the operations of Falcon Field.*

**3. Is the proposed development consistent with the standards and guidelines established for the applicable character type(s)?**

Figure 7-1 of the Mesa 2040 General Plan identifies this location as Employment District, which is a character type primary used for employment-type land uses of at least 20 acres and typically have minimum connection to the surrounding area. Typical uses include manufacturing facilities, warehouses and business parks and may also include supporting retail and office areas with a goal of providing a range of opportunities in high quality settings. The Business Park Sub-type envisions offices, light industry and supporting uses joined together through street, sidewalk and/or open space systems with common landscaping and signage. These are typically office, office/warehouse, research and development and similar uses.

*The proposed Falcon Tech Center supports the Employment District designated in the General Plan by establishing a business park type of development unified by a common theme. The proposed uses and building designs described in the project narrative are consistent with the form and guidelines of the Business Park sub-type described on page 7-23 of the General Plan.*

**4. Will the proposed development serve to strengthen the character of the area by:**

- **Providing appropriate infill development;**

*The request anticipates development of a 64 acre area surrounded by a mix of existing industrial and vacant parcels to the west of Falcon Field Airport. Infill on this parcel with business park land uses is appropriate for land adjacent to an active airport and near other commercial and industrial land uses.*

- **Removing development that is deteriorated and/or does not contribute to the quality of the surrounding area;**

*It is acknowledged that there is a limited lifespan for citrus growing trees, therefore, late-mature and over-mature citrus trees that are declining in vigor and health and/or losing commercial value because of size, age or decay cannot be maintained indefinitely. The request will allow for development that will contribute to the economic development of the*

*greater community since healthcare and technology sectors described in the project narrative are two of the five targeted employment sectors identified Chapter 5 of the General Plan relative to "Growing and Maintaining Diverse and Stable Jobs."*

- **Adding to the mix of uses to further enhance the intended character of the area;**

*This particular Employment District established in the General Plan covers a very large area from south of Falcon Field Airport proceeding north along the Greenfield and Higley Road corridors and widening to the east and west along the Loop 202 corridor. Given the presence of Falcon Field Airport many of the uses in the greater area feature aviation related industries however the existing industrial subdivision to the north provides a snapshot of current uses including a sign shop, automobile suppliers, commercial printing, helicopter pilot training, construction trades contractor shops, and a solar energy equipment provider. The project narrative's description of efforts to attract technology and bioscience uses will enhance employment opportunities in the area and align more closely with the uses described for Employment Districts in the General Plan.*

- **Improving the streetscape and connectivity within the area;**

*The concept plan proposes a 20 foot landscape setback along Greenfield Road. Sidewalks along Greenfield Road will be established with site plans for the development adjacent to the roadway and the shared access drive within the Falcon Tech Center will be located to align with Mallory Circle creating a four-way intersection at Greenfield Road.*

- **Improving safety within the area;**

*This project review criterion is less relevant to this location however the FAA has deemed this location appropriate for non-aviation uses and the PEP zoning is appropriate adjacent to aviation operations.*

- **Adding to the sense of place;**

*The project narrative describes efforts to establish a common citrus theme and future development of design guidelines for the project. Establishment of this common theme and thus a sense of place will be examined through the creation of design guidelines, future site plans and the design review process. The common drive that will be used for circulation through the site will create an opportunity to promote a common theme between buildings and through signage and landscape areas.*

- **Meeting or exceeding the development quality of the surrounding area?**

*The surrounding lands are used for citrus growing and the Mesa Ridge Business Park is located to the north of the subject property. The proposed Field Tech Center continues the envisioned business park type of development for the area. The development of design guidelines and future design review of each individual project within the Falcon Tech Center will provide a forum for promoting high quality design as described in the project narrative.*

**5. Does the proposed development provide appropriate transitions between uses? In more urban areas these transitions should generally be accomplished by design elements that allow adjacent buildings to be close to one another. In more suburban locations these transitions should be addressed through separation of uses and/or screening;**

*A 100 foot wide landscape buffer has been proposed abutting the RWCD canal to the west. Two properties to the north currently have residential zoning but are anticipated for*

*Employment District uses in the future. At the time of site plan review, perimeter landscaping and building setbacks will be triggered based on the land uses in place at the time of site plan application.*

### STAFF ANALYSIS:

The applicant's request is to modify the conditions of approval for the PEP zoning on the property established by City Council in 2008. The table below quotes site plan elements and guidelines listed within the existing adopted project narrative with the applicant's requested replacement language:

Approved 2008 narrative:	Applicant's new narrative:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preservation and maintenance of existing citrus grove</li> <li>2. Clustering of buildings around a large open space/garden court with existing citrus grove trees to create a pedestrian area for employees and visitors to enjoy</li> <li>3. The conceptual site plan is created with pedestrian linkages between all buildings without crossing any parking space or driveways. The idea is that once you have parked your car in any parking lot, employees and visitors can walk between the buildings specially created for pedestrian environment</li> <li>4. Preserve a north south pedestrian axis through the open space/garden court linking the business park with the open space to the south with preserved citrus grove</li> <li>5. The buildings are located further away from the residential properties across the RWCD canal. The nearest building in the conceptual site plan to the residential property line across the canal is 867 feet.</li> <li>6. Significant landscape buffer is created along the RWCD canal with existing citrus grove</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preservation of the citrus grove design theme;</li> <li>2. Ability to create a clustering of "like businesses" with a pedestrian friendly, walkable environment with appropriate open space;</li> <li>3. Design of exterior Falcon Tech Center and facility lighting for the minimal lighting necessary to provide for safety and security without interfering with the existing residential development, Falcon Field Airport operations or other development in the area;</li> <li>4. Integration of the proposed developments along the Roosevelt Water Conservation District (RWCD) Canal within the Falcon Tech Center both visually and physically with the Canal multi-use path project;</li> <li>5. Provide for a strong landscape buffer along the western portion of the Falcon Tech Center, adjacent to the RWCD Canal.</li> </ol>

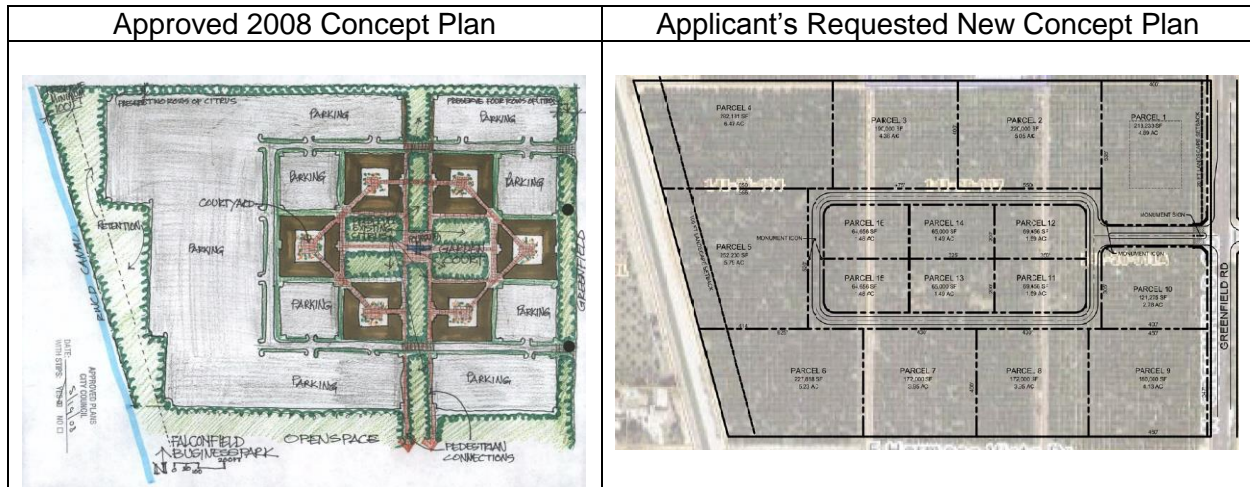
The applicant's new narrative is intended to increase flexibility to lend the site to the targeted technology and bioscience sectors therefore it is not as specific as the narrative approved in 2008. The new narrative anticipates Design Review Board adoption of design guidelines as a future step to ensure high quality development on the site. The elements that the applicant is proposing for the future design guidelines as well as the elements from the approved 2008 Design Guidelines are listed below:

2008 Design Guidelines:	Proposed Future Guidelines to Address:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain citrus grove character by preserving the existing trees and replanting new ones along Greenfield Road, RWCD Canal and northern boundary specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preserve and maintain four rows of existing citrus grove along Greenfield Road as landscape yard</li> <li>● Preserve and maintain existing citrus grove at any point no less than 100 feet of setback as landscape buffer, along the RWCD canal</li> <li>● Preserve and maintain at least two rows of existing citrus grove trees along the northern property line as perimeter landscape yard</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. All future development in this area shall be designed with citrus grove theme like the conceptual site plan (exhibit A) as an example</li> <li>3. Loading docks shall not face the residential properties across the canal</li> <li>4. Adequate buffer and screening shall be provided for all potential noise generation activities to mitigate its impact across the canal</li> <li>5. All future development in this area shall be consistent with the Council adopted Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan</li> <li>6. All future development in this area shall be inspired by the Design Inspiration document created for the Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan</li> <li>7. Development in this area is encouraged to include buildings of at least 2 stories.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building materials</li> <li>2. Architectural composition and detailing such as entrances and shade elements</li> <li>3. Arrangement of massing and functional elements such as the skyline edge, windows, and the visual effect of shade and shadows</li> <li>4. Transitions from building walls to public areas, parking areas and drive aisles around the base of the building</li> <li>5. Screening of loading and service areas</li> <li>6. Pedestrian and vehicular connections between buildings and the street systems</li> <li>7. Landscape elements along rights of way, within building setbacks and parking lots and perimeter landscaping</li> <li>8. Signage</li> </ol>

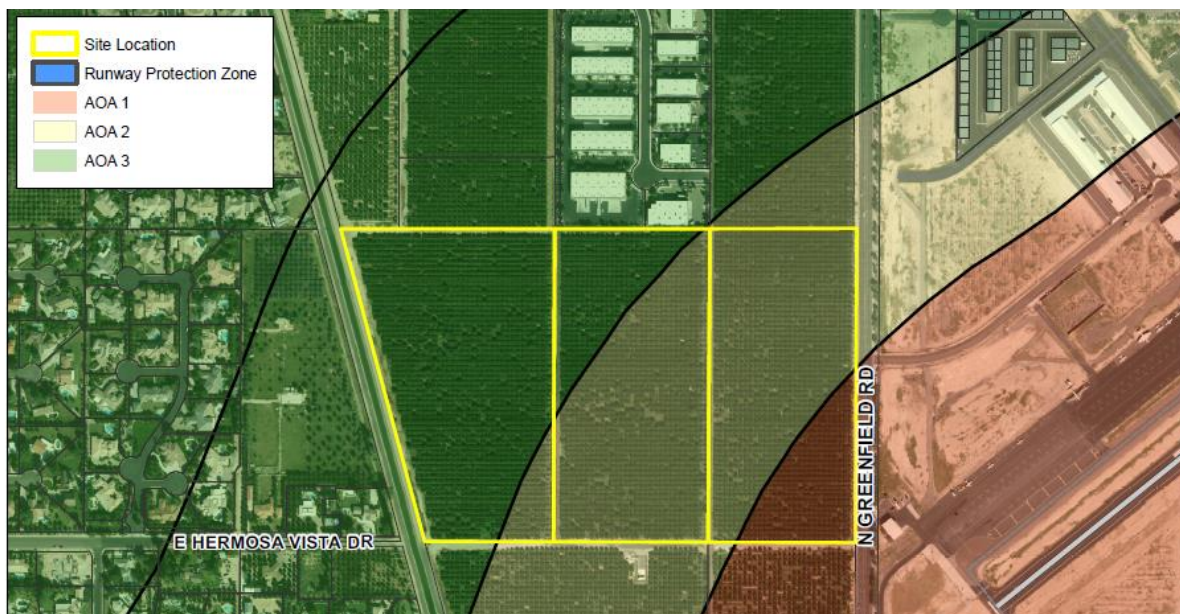
In addition to the changes to the project narrative, an updated conceptual site plan has been provided by the applicant. The 2008 concept plan proposed a central cluster of courtyard buildings with areas of citrus preservation, surrounded by parking and perimeter open space. The updated concept plan divides the property into series of pads for future development. The impact of the requested changes to the conditions changes the project orientation from a centrally clustered campus of buildings surrounding by parking fields to a conventional business park layout with individual pads for development. Previously the bulk of the western portion of the site was established as a parking field with a landscape buffer against the RWCD canal. The new layout envisions a series of pads established by lease lines served by a loop access drive. The applicant indicates that the requested design is more consistent with the type of sites targeted



employers desire and therefore increases the marketability of the land. The narrative continues the concept of a pedestrian oriented environment and maintains the 100 foot landscape buffer along the western side of the property that exceeds standard 25 foot perimeter landscaping requirement, as contemplated with the 2008 narrative.



The subject property encompasses portions of Airport Overflight Areas One (AOA-1), Two (AOA-2) and Three (AOA-3). AOA-1 and AOA-2 have limitations in allowable land uses. PEP uses that are not permitted within AOA-1 and AOA-2 include large public gathering facilities such as schools, hospitals, churches; prohibition of live/work units; as well as uses that would include outdoor facilities such as recreation or outdoor dining. All three AOA districts include requirements for sound attenuation, disclosure and notification of airport proximity (condition #4).



Since the City will retain ownership of the land, a lease-line process is anticipated and each individual development will be required to have a site plan approved pursuant to Mesa Zoning

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ordinance (condition #5). The applicant has also indicated that a lot combination will be completed prior to the site plan process.

The stated purpose of the PEP district established in the Zoning Ordinance is “to provide areas where professional and medical office parks, research and development facilities, light manufacturing, and data and information processing centers are integrated in a campus setting with ancillary restaurants, retail and other supportive establishments.” Unlike some of the permitted uses in the more intensive LI, GI and HI districts, the PEP district does not permit automotive related uses, medical marijuana uses, tattoo and body piercing parlors, recycling facilities, contractors’ yards, outdoor display/storage, nor freight/truck terminals and warehouses. The PEP allows limited manufacturing and light assembly however activities must be conducted within a fully enclosed building. The applicant’s request appears consistent with the purpose of the PEP district and by incorporating design guidelines to create a consistent themed campus will allow for attainment of the broader Employment District vision of the General Plan and the architecture and building typology established in the Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan and associated Image Building Plan.

The PEP district does not establish a maximum height however allows site plan-specific establishment of maximum building heights. The 2008 project narrative encouraged development of at least 2-stories in height. With the updated project narrative the applicant has indicated a desire for buildings up to 120 feet in height, provided however that all heights are reviewed by the FAA. Staff proposes that the Design Guidelines address building heights and related transitions in scale (condition 6b) and subsequently the site plan process will review requested building heights to the adopted Design Guidelines.

To ensure project build out maintains the quality envisioned in the Mesa General Plan and Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan, staff supports the project narrative’s intent to establish design guidelines. To be sensitive to the adjacent Citrus Sub-Area the project narrative proposes the use of a citrus grove design theme. Staff proposes incorporation of the citrus theme, as described in the project narrative, as a condition within the Design Guidelines and more specifically that the landscape section of the Design Guidelines incorporate citrus and other canopy trees without the usual allowances provided by the Zoning Ordinance for substituting palms, saguaros and ocotillos for required tree plantings (condition #6c). Staff proposes another condition that the Design Guidelines should address relative to pedestrian connections and safety within the Falcon Tech Center. To contribute to the idea of a campus type environment for the business park staff proposes an additional condition for the use of pavers and/or decorative/stamped concrete where pedestrian walks cross drive aisles or the shared internal access drive (condition #6d). Finally, while the Zoning Ordinance requires screening of loading and service areas to a minimum height of 8 feet, staff recommends that the Design Guidelines provide additional visual screening and noise buffering from residential properties located to the west.

The 2008 project narrative and concept plan did not address parcelization of the 63.59 acres. As discussed above, the City will retain ownership of the property and ground-leases may be used to develop the Falcon Tech Center.

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

Modifying the previous conditions of approval for the PEP zoning on the subject property with the updated project narrative and concept plan is consistent with the Mesa General Plan designation for this location as Employment District with the Business Park Sub-Type featuring key

employment sectors targeted in the General Plan for job growth. Establishment of Design Guidelines and the subsequent Design Review process will be used to address the design of buildings, public spaces and the relationship between pads within the Falcon Tech Center.

This property is owned by the City and the City will continue to maintain ownership as a requirement of the FAA. The goal of Falcon Field Airport and the Economic Development Office is to ensure flexible entitlements are in place so that the property can be marketed to a variety of technology firms in a way that allows the City to respond to specific users. There are a number of ways this property can actually be developed. Because of this, exactly when and how the street, driveway, and utility infrastructure will be installed cannot be specifically answered at this time.

Because the City will retain ownership, the City may enter into a contract or long-term lease with a master developer or with individual property developers. The lease agreement(s) will be used to ensure that the necessary and appropriate site improvements are provided and to determine who will pay for those improvements. The Economic Development Office will be responsible for coordinating the future design guidelines, lot combination, development improvement processes, and any infrastructure improvement requirements when users are identified for this property. Staff recommends approval of this case subject to the following conditions:

**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:** The following conditions of approval shall replace those of ordinance no. 4839.

1. Compliance with the basic development as described in the project.
2. Review through the Design Review Board for each individual development.
3. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations, as applicable.
4. Written notice be provided to future tenants, and acknowledgment received that the project is within 1 mile of Falcon Field Airport.
5. Site Plan Review through the public hearing process for each individual development.
6. **Approval of Design Guidelines through the Design Review Board prior to approval of a contract or the first ground lease of the Falcon Tech Center. The Design Guidelines shall include:**
  - a. Items listed in the project narrative and reiterated on page 7 of this report;
  - b. Building heights and transitions in scale;
  - c. Establishment of a citrus grove design theme, including a landscape palette of citrus and other tree species that will provide canopy without substitution of palms, saguaros nor ocotillos authorized by Zoning Ordinance Subsection 11-33-2 (C) for minimum required tree plantings; and
  - d. The use of pavers or decorative/stamped concrete for pedestrian crosswalks across internal access drive as well as where crossing any drive aisles within the project limits.

**APPENDIX: ORDINANCE NO. 4839 CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

1. Compliance with the basic development as described in the project narrative (without guarantee of lot yield, building count, lot coverage).
2. Site Plan Review through the public hearing process of future development plans.
3. Compliance with all requirements of the Design Review Board.
4. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.
5. Dedicate the right-of-way required under the Mesa City Code at the time of application for a building permit, at the time of recordation of the subdivision plat, or at the time of the City's request for dedication whichever comes first.
6. Owner granting an Avigation Easement and Release to the City, pertaining to Falcon Field Airport which will be prepared and recorded by the City (concurrently with the recordation of the final subdivision map, prior to the issuance of a building permit).
7. Written notice be provided to future tenants, and acknowledgment received that the project is within 1 mile of Falcon Field Airport.