

Project Narrative

Falcon Tech Center

Project Summary:

The City of Mesa owns property generally located on the southwest corner of Greenfield Road and McDowell Road. The subject property consists of three parcels (141-26-004, 141-26-007, 141-26-001A) and is currently zoned Planned Employment Park (PEP) with a Planned Area Development (PAD) overlay. The three parcels encompass approximately 69.34 acres of agricultural land. See attached location map, Exhibit A.

The property is under the management of Falcon Field Airport and is depicted on the Airport Layout Plan (ALP). The property has been subject to previous actions including a City Council-approved request to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to authorize the property for non-aeronautical use. The FAA subsequently approved the request conditioned upon the City retaining property ownership and revenue generated from the property's use being expended strictly for airport purposes.

In 2008, Falcon Field Airport requested a property zoning change to PEP-PAD which was subsequently granted. In the zoning change request, the Airport deemed the PEP zoning to be more compatible with the neighborhood to the west, and projected the zoning to stimulate more business development and job creation opportunities for the community.

The Falcon Field Airport and the Office of Economic Development continue to support the development of the 69.34 acres into an employment center. The property is well positioned to support the growth of specific business sectors which enhance the area, support Falcon Field Airport, create high-quality jobs for the community, and enrich the businesses currently operating in and around the Airport. The City of Mesa will maintain ownership of the property but will market the property for private development utilizing long term leases.

The intent of this request is to better position the property's use and vision, aligning it more specifically with targeted and growing business sectors, and enabling the area to develop into the high-quality business park to which it was originally intended. Branding the new concept will be critical to the success and will create momentum for development at the Mesa Falcon Tech Center.

Site Description:

The Falcon Tech Center is the center piece to launch the vision of establishing Mesa and the Falcon Field area as Metro Phoenix's location of choice for companies in high-growth technology industry sectors.

The proposed Falcon Tech Center is a new approach to development that integrates several of the recommendations from Mesa's 2013 Healthcare and Lifesciences Recruitment Plan and the 2014 Falcon Field Economic Activity Area (FFEAA) Strategic Plan including:

- Expand Mesa's established technology companies and growing the number of high quality, knowledge-based jobs in the City;
- Create a one-of-a-kind destination in Arizona (perhaps the entire Western US) where technology companies cluster;
- Elevate Mesa's brand and promote Mesa as a technology hub for growing companies;
- Leverage City resources to guide development and recruit high quality projects;
- Offer public-private partnership opportunities for developers and companies to join in implementing the Council's vision for quality economic development and cutting-edge, place-making projects.

The Falcon Tech Center was designed as an asset for Falcon Field Airport and the entire region with special care and consideration for the surrounding properties including the residential properties to the west of the canal. Special consideration was also given to the business operations at Falcon Field Airport. Specifically, the Falcon Tech Center's design was developed and honed so as not to impact business operations at the Airport. As such, Falcon Tech Center's development will not adversely affect aircraft operations at Falcon Field Airport.

The conceptual site plan (see attached Exhibit B) was created based on market and industry growth trends in the technology, medical, and life sciences business sectors. The conceptual site plan layout is developed for maximum flexibility based on the needs of those business sectors and the associated benefits for the community and surrounding area. Proposed parcels range in size from 1.48 acres to 6.47 acres. The precise lot layout will be determined as lease lines are negotiated and established on the property. The ability to utilize lease lines allows the possibility of reconfiguring the number and size of lots and the internal circulation pattern, and creates a flexibility of uses within PEP zoning.

The City of Mesa desires the Falcon Tech Center to be an area asset for surrounding residents, property owners, and businesses while creating a high-quality business environment, preserving the ability for development flexibility, and creating an environment compatible with the intended area character. To implement the vision for the property, we integrated recommendations from Mesa's 2013 Healthcare and Life-sciences Recruitment Plan, the 2014 FFEAA Strategic Plan, the 2007 Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan, and the 2003 Citrus Sub-Area Plan. As such, the development would incorporate the following elements:

- Preservation of the citrus grove design theme;
- Ability to create a clustering of "like businesses" with a pedestrian friendly, walkable environment with appropriate open space;
- 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;

- 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;
- Provide for a strong landscape buffer along the western portion of the Falcon Tech Center, adjacent to the RWCD Canal.

Impact on Surrounding Properties:

The requested change to the project will have little or no impact on surrounding properties other than to increase the aesthetic environment, value and attractiveness of the commercial and residential properties in the area. The property has historically been used for citrus growing. However, it has been zoned PEP since 2008 and designated by the General Plan for Business Park uses. Landscape setbacks are proposed for 20' along Greenfield Road and 100' along the RWCD Canal. Perimeter landscaping will be designated through the Site Plan process based on the adjacent zoning and land uses in place at the time of Site Plan Review. The City of Mesa's Falcon Field Airport and the Office of Economic Development have jointly coordinated this application and request. Both entities believe that the requested change is sensitive to the operational and business needs of the Airport.

Conformance with General Plan and Zoning Code:

The proposed Falcon Tech Center is consistent with the General Plan Employment District character area with Business Park sub-type. The vision for the Tech Center is to establish an area that contains businesses, offices, light industrial facilities, accessory and supporting uses joined together through the street, sidewalk, common landscaping and signage.

Anticipated primary uses include light manufacturing, research and development and associated laboratories as well as locations for office and administrative facilities which is consistent with those permitted uses in the PEP District. With this plan a building height of 40 feet to 120 feet is requested. However, FAA approval is required for each building on the site which includes approval of building heights. Therefore, FAA applicable height restrictions associated with aviation operations of the Falcon Field Airport will be maintained throughout the project.

Accessory uses may include services to support the primary employment land uses such as small food service establishments, convenience markets and business service providers such as mail services, printing and copying services, equipment rental and leasing, or graphic design studios.

Design Standards:

The Falcon Field Tech Center Site and Building Design Guidelines and Development Standards have been developed to address items such as those outlined below. See examples of anticipated building types in the Appendix.

- Building materials
- Transitions from building walls to public areas, parking areas and drive aisles around the base of the building
- Screening of loading and service areas
- Pedestrian and vehicular connections between buildings and the street systems
- Landscape elements along rights of way, within building setbacks and parking lots and perimeter landscaping
- Signage
- Lighting



Development Review:

This request includes a modification to the PAD overlay to allow future development to be reviewed through the Design Review Process with administrative review and approval of site plans. This will allow future development on the site to expeditiously proceed through the development review process adding to the marketability of the property.

Summary:

The vision for Falcon Tech Center is to provide an employment cluster that carries out the intent of the General Plan and the purposes of the PEP zoning district. Through future site plan review and design review staff will have opportunities to assess progress made on implementing the vision for the Falcon Tech Center and promote high quality development compatible with Falcon Field Airport.

Appendix: Anticipated Building Types for Falcon Tech Center

Examples of high quality building form, materials and colors



A medical device company's corporate headquarters building.



University of Kentucky's Center for Applied Energy Research – Lexington, KY

Examples of integrated landscape and hardscape:



Above Left: Gebauer Company – Cleveland, OH



Above Right: Venta Medical – Union City, CA

Example of contemporary style with innovative design



St. Jude Medical – Costa Rica



Precision Medical Products – Denver, PA

Examples of contemporary style with outdoor plazas and natural areas



Jabil Circuit Inc. – San Jose, CA



Life Spine Inc. – Huntley, IL