

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
WESTERN-PACIFIC REGION
Phoenix Airports District Office

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Mesa-Falcon Field Airport
Proposed Falcon Tech Center**

Mesa, Maricopa County, Arizona



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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

WHAT'S IN THIS DOCUMENT? This document is the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed Falcon Tech Center Project at Mesa-Falcon Field Airport (the Proposed Action). This document is based on the information and analysis contained in the Final Environmental Assessment dated February 28, 2018, which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference.

This document discusses all alternatives considered by FAA in reaching its decision, summarizes the analysis used to evaluate the alternatives, and summarizes why the Proposed Action would not significantly affect environmental resources. This document identifies conceptual mitigation measures that are part of the preferred alternative.

BACKGROUND. In October 2017, the City of Mesa prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) for the Proposed Action. The Proposed Action includes the development of approximately 70 acres of the area west of North Greenfield Road (Falcon Tech Center site) with non-aviation related uses. Approximately 60+ acres of the Falcon Tech Center site will be developed with buildings, landscaping, streets, and parking, with another nine acres reserved for onsite buffers and storm water detention. The Draft EA addressed the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action including various reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action.

The Draft EA was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 USC § 4321 *et seq.*), implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), FAA Order 1050.1F *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, and FAA Order 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*. The City of Mesa published the Notice of Availability for the Draft EA on October 15, 2017. The City of Mesa received comments on the Draft EA between October 15, 2017 and November 14, 2017. FAA approved the Final EA on February 28, 2018.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO? Read the FONSI to understand the actions that FAA intends to take relative to the Proposed Action.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THIS? The City of Mesa may begin to implement the Proposed Action.

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PROPOSED FALCON TECH CENTER

**MESA-FALCON FIELD AIRPORT
MESA, MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA**

- 1. Introduction.** This document is the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Finding of No Significant Impact on the environment in connection with the proposed Falcon Tech Center at Mesa-Falcon Field Airport (Airport), City of Mesa, Maricopa County, Arizona (Proposed Action). This document has been prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 USC Section 4321, *et seq.*), implementing regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, and FAA Order 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*.

The City of Mesa (City) is the owner of the Airport. The FAA must comply with NEPA requirements before taking the federal action of approving those portions of the City of Mesa's Airport Layout Plan (ALP) that depict the Proposed Action at the Airport.

- 2. Purpose and Need of the Proposed Action.** Chapter 1 of the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) documents the need (problem) and the purpose (solution/goal) for the Proposed Action. As discussed in Section 1.4 of the Final EA, the purpose of the Proposed Action is to support the long-term safety and viability of the Airport by providing a sustainable revenue source from non-aviation development while benefiting airport safety by reducing wildlife attractants. The City is currently sustaining a loss of revenue from leasing the Falcon Tech Center site for citrus farming.

The FAA's statutory mission is to ensure the safe and efficient use of navigable airspace in the United States. Pursuant to the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, as amended, (49 USC Section 40101, *et seq.*), FAA must ensure that the Proposed Action does not derogate the safety of aircraft and airport operations at the Airport.

- 3. Proposed Project and Federal Actions.** The Proposed Action, as described in Section 1.3 of the Final EA, includes the development of the Falcon Tech Center site with non-aviation land uses and associated adjacent drainage features.

The federal actions include:

- Unconditional approval of the portion of the ALP that depicts the proposed non-aeronautical development pursuant to 49 USC sections 40103(b), 44718, and 47107(a)(16) and 14 CFR Part 77.
- FAA determination of the Proposed Action's effects on the "safe and efficient use of navigable airspace."

- 4. Reasonable Alternatives Considered.** Alternatives to the Proposed Action were identified and evaluated in Chapter 2 of the Final EA using the following criterion:

- Would the alternative support the long-term safety and viability of the Airport by providing a sustainable source of revenue from airport land that is already designated for future non-aeronautical development on the Airport Layout Plan?

Two alternatives were evaluated in detailed in chapter 2 of the Final EA:

- The Proposed Action alternative would include non-aeronautical development on an approximately 70-acre site (Falcon Tech Center site).
- The No Action alternative, as required by 40 CFR Section 1502.14(d). The No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose and need.

5. Assessment. Chapter 4 of the Final EA identified and evaluated potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action. Section 4.1 discussed environmental impact categories that were not evaluated in detail because these resources do not occur in the study area or will not be affected by the Proposed Action: Coastal Resources, Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, Section 6(f), Farmlands, Environmental Justice, Children’s Environmental Health and Safety Risks, Wetlands, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

The following environmental impact categories were evaluated in detail in the Final EA to determine the nature and severity of impacts.

- A) **Air Quality.** Table 4A of the Final EA summarizes the emissions inventory for the Proposed Action. The emission analysis concluded that emissions from implementing the Proposed Action will not exceed the *de minimis* levels for all applicable pollutants, and therefore, will not result in significant impacts. A Maricopa County dust control permit and associated dust control measures will be required because the Proposed Action will disturb more than 0.1 acre.
- B) **Biological Resources.** As discussed in Section 4.3, there are no federally listed species, designated critical or suitable habitat occur at the Falcon Tech Center site. Therefore, the FAA made a finding of “*no effect*” on federally listed species or their habitat under the Endangered Species Act. Foraging and nesting habitat for migratory birds is present on the Falcon Tech Center site and seven avian species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) were observed in the project area during the field survey. Construction of the Proposed Action will involve tree clearing and removal of nesting habitat for migratory birds. However, tree clearing shall not occur during the active nesting season (February 1- September 30) to avoid impacts to migratory birds’ active nests and ensure compliance with the MBTA.
- C) **Climate Change.** As stated in Section 4.4 of the Final EA, the Proposed Action will not change the number, type, or frequency of aircraft operations at the Airport. Table 4B provided estimated annual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the Proposed Action. Temporary construction-related GHG emissions will occur but will cease once the Falcon Tech Center construction is complete.
- D) **Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f) Resources.** As discussed in Section 4.5 of the Final EA, the Proposed Action is located at a minimum 100 feet from the Roosevelt Canal, the closest Section 4(f) resource. The canal will not be substantially impaired by the Proposed Action due to a 100-foot buffer of trees. Therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in a direct use or constructive use of the Section 4(f) property.
- E) **Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention.** As stated in Section 4.6 of the Final EA, there are no known hazardous materials located within the Falcon Tech Center site. The

Proposed Action could potentially generate biohazardous and non-hazardous solid wastes associated with light manufacturing, medical, research, and office facilities. During construction, the contractor will use equipment and vehicles that utilize fossil fuels and other potential hazardous materials. All construction activity will adhere to applicable permit procedures for the handling, transporting, and disposal of such materials. Construction waste or debris will be properly disposed at a local landfill or recycle and transfer station. The Proposed Action will not result in significant impacts related to hazardous materials or solid waste per FAA Order 1050.1F, Exhibit 4-1.

- F) **Historical, Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources.** As discussed in Section 4.7 of the Final EA, no new or previously recorded archeological or historic resources are location within the Proposed Action's Area of Potential Effect (APE). The Roosevelt Canal, which has been deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, is directly adjacent to the APE. The Roosevelt Canal will be shielded by a 100-foot buffer of trees and will not be directly or indirectly affected by the Proposed Action. Therefore, the FAA made a finding "no historic properties affected" for the Proposed Action. The Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with FAA's finding March 20, 2017 (see Appendix B of Final EA).
- G) **Land Use.** As discussed in Section 4.8 of the Final EA, the Proposed Action will change land use on the Falcon Tech Center site from agricultural use to a "tech" center focused on companies in high-growth technology, medical and life sciences industry sectors. The Proposed Action is consistent with the City's General Plan land use designation and zoning, as well as the ALP; thus, no significant land use impacts will result related to the Proposed Action.
- H) **Natural Resources and Energy Supply.** As stated in Section 4.9 of the Final EA, the Proposed Action is not expected to create demand that will exceed available or future water or other consumable natural resources.
- I) **Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use.** As discussed in Section 4.10 of the Final EA, no significant change to the long-term noise environment of the Airport or the Falcon Tech Center site will occur as a result of the Proposed Action. Residents of Hermosa Vista to the west and one household to the north of the Falcon Tech Center site may experience temporary construction noise. All construction activities and future tenants will be required to comply with the City's Noise Ordinance and noise permit procedures.
- J) **Socioeconomics.** As discussed in Section 4.11 of the Final EA, the Proposed Action is anticipated to increase Falcon Field revenue from ground leases on the site to an estimated \$500,000 per year once the site is fully occupied. The Proposed Action will generate various tax revenues to the City of Mesa, Maricopa County, the State of Arizona as well as a range of year-round employment opportunities.

Based on a traffic analysis, a traffic signal will be warranted at Mallory Circle by the year 2019 to manage traffic flow and maintain an acceptable level of service with the addition of the Proposed Action traffic. The City of Mesa will be responsible to coordinate the traffic signal installation. The Proposed Action will not disrupt local traffic patterns or substantially reduce the level of service of the roads serving the Airport and its surrounding communities.

- K) **Visual Effects.** Section 4.12 of the Final EA discusses visual effects including light emissions and visual resources/visual character associated with the Proposed Action.

Light Emissions: The Proposed Action will include building and parking lot security lighting. However, lighting on the upper levels of the buildings is not expected to be intrusive as most office

buildings include tinted windows to diffuse interior light emissions and to provide some privacy to building occupants. Proposed buildings development will be visible to the nearby Hermosa Vista neighborhood and a home located north of the Falcon Tech Center site. Security lighting and traffic signal lights at the street level will be screened from the nearby residents by intervening trees and the 100-foot buffer of trees.

Visual Resources/Visual Character: The Falcon Tech Center site is part of a larger orange grove surrounded by the Airport on one side, and by commercial, office, residential development on the other three sides. The Proposed Action is consistent with the visual character within the larger area.

The final site plan, building materials, lighting, and landscaping plans will meet the design guidelines of the Falcon Field Sub-Area Plan (City of Mesa 2007) and any future Planned Area Development requirements. The Proposed Action will not result in significant impacts related to light emissions and visual resources/characters.

- L) **Water Resources.** Section 4.13 of the Final EA discusses potential floodplain, surface waters, and groundwater impacts associated with the Proposed Action.

Floodplains: Approximately 17 percent (12.2 acres) of the Falcon Field Center site is located within the 100-year floodplain. No change in the Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) will occur as the proposed landscaping, parking lots on the floodplain would not raise the BFEs or have adverse impacts on floodplain values. Any development to occur within a floodplain will require the Floodplain Use Permit from the Flood Control District of Maricopa County to meet the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program and the Maricopa County Floodplain Ordinance. No significant floodplain encroachment will occur as defined by DOT Order 5650.2.

Surface Waters: The Proposed Action will increase the amounts of impervious surfaces and storm water runoff, but will be designed to convey all storm events to the citywide storm water drainage system. The construction of the Proposed Action will disturb approximately 70 acres; therefore, an Arizona Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (AZDPDES) General Construction Permit, a Notice of Intent and related Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be prepared and/or obtained prior to construction to minimize temporary water quality impacts.

Groundwater: No significant impacts related to groundwater recharge will result from the Proposed Action since the Falcon Tech Center site is not a groundwater recharge area. Compliance with the conditions of required AZPDES permit and associated SWPPP will prevent water quality impacts related to surface water runoff, and groundwater quality impacts.

- M) **Cumulative Impacts.** Section 4.14 of the Final EA discusses the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable cumulative actions. No significant cumulative impacts were identified.

6. Public Participation.

The Draft EA was made available for a 30-day public and agency comment period from October 15, 2017 through November 14, 2017. Notice of availability of the Draft EA was published in *The East Valley Tribune* on October 15, 2017 (see Appendix C of the Final EA for proof of publication). The Draft EA was also made available on the Airport's and City's websites, at a local library, the Airport, the City's office, and at the FAA's Phoenix Airports District Office. A total of four written comments were received during the public comment period. All comments received were considered and addressed. Copies of comments and the responses to comments are presented in Appendix C of the Final EA.

7. Inter-Agency Coordination.

Pursuant to 49 USC Section 47101(h), the FAA has determined that no further coordination with the U.S. Department of Interior or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is necessary because the Proposed Action does not involve construction of a new airport, new runway or major runway extension that has a significant impact on natural resources including fish and wildlife; natural, scenic, and recreational assets; water and air quality; or another factor affecting the environment.

8. Reasons for the Determination that the Proposed Action will have No Significant Impacts.


The attached Final EA examines alternatives and each of the various environmental impact categories associated with the Proposed Action. Based on this review, the FAA has determined that the Proposed Action will not have any environmental impacts that exceed the threshold of significance as defined by FAA Orders 1050.1F and 5050.4B, and therefore the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

Based on the information contained in the Final EA, the FAA has decided to implement the Proposed Action Alternative as described in Section 3 of this FONSI and Section 1.3 of the Final EA.

9. Finding of No Significant Impact.

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds that the proposed Federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 of NEPA and other applicable environmental requirements and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA.

APPROVED:



Mike N. Williams
Manager
Phoenix Airports District Office

3-5-2018

Date

DISAPPROVED:

Mike N. Williams
Manager
Phoenix Airports District Office

Date