



DESOTO COUNTY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT

CASE #: SITE-115-2023

REQUEST: Development Plan Approval

PROPERTY OWNER: City of Arcadia
23 N Polk Ave, Margaret Way Building
Arcadia, Florida 34266

AGENT: Shelley Peacock, Airport Manager, City of Arcadia
23 N Polk Ave, Margaret Way Building
Arcadia, Florida 34266

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 2269 SE Ac Polk Jr Dr., Arcadia, FL 34266

PARCEL ID: 05-38-25-0000-0310-0000, 08-38-25-0000-0090-0000,
06-38-25-0000-0030-0000

TOTAL PARCEL SIZE: +/- 120 acres

FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION: Public Lands and Institutions

ZONING DISTRICT: IL (Industrial Light)

OVERLAY DISTRICTS: Conservation Overlay District (COD)

PROPOSED REQUEST:

The City of Arcadia Airport has submitted their FDOT/FAA (Florida Department of Transportation/Florida Aviation Authority) approved Airport Master Plan. Chapter 333, Florida Statutes, addresses airports and refers to the responsibility and authority of "political subdivision(s)". Florida Statutes Section 333.06(4) states that each public-use airport licensed by the Florida Department of Transportation must adopt an Airport Master Plan and give notice to counties within 2 miles of the boundaries of the airport. Given the airport is located within unincorporated county, DeSoto County shall adopt the master plan, which can be procedurally accomplished through the Development Plan process. The City has applied for a Development Plan and Improvement Plan approval with the same plan set. The Development Plan (aka Airport Master Plan) has an existing airport layout (Airport Master Plan – Page 1 of 3), future airport layout (Airport Master Plan Informational Only Page 2 of 3), and a larger scale zoom of the terminal area (Airport Master Plan – Page 3 of 3).

Section 20-95 of the LDRs (Land Development Regulations) define municipal public use airports as essential services, which allows them to be located in any zoning district.

BACKGROUND:

This Development Plan is for the existing City of Arcadia Municipal Public Use Airport. The plan includes existing buildings, hangars, maintenance structures, carport, restrooms, a pavilion, and future improvements at the airport. The airport also has FAA approved camping northwest of the airport where pilots can taxi their aircraft behind the T-hangars into a wooded area where they can pitch a tent under their wing. It is believed that Arcadia airport is the only FAA approved municipal airport in the State of Florida that allows camping all year. The development plan includes (2) 10X20 cabins that will have air conditioning and heat to be used year round. Running water is not proposed for the cabins as the campground, known as Aviation City, currently has 2- showers and 2 bathrooms nearby. A courtesy car is provided for transportation to get groceries and run errands while camping at the airport.

Plans for the next five years include the following:

- **T-Hangars**- Provide hangar space for tenants - 10-units
- **Ramp Rehab and Expansion**- This Project will extend out to the East of the Ramp and provide additional aircraft parking. There will be added lighting to the project. Funded by FAA and FDOT.
- **Security Gates**- Securing the airport is required by FAA. The new gates will be electric with a badge/key for tenants to access the airport.
- **Fuel Farm Awning**- 30X19- destroyed by Hurricane Ian. Need replacement to protect equipment.
- **Restrooms outside** - Additional restrooms are needed at the airport, two sized 8X12. This will be located between the Terminal Building and Fuel Farm.
- **Fuel - JET A** - Installation of a new fuel unit located on the ramp near current Fuel Farm.
- **Taxiway Alpha Rehab** - Taxiway is currently in poor pavement condition with lots of cracking. This would include resurfacing the taxiway and replace taxiway lighting.
- **Obstruction Removal** - Removing large trees at the end of Turf Runway 14/32. Trees have been identified and future meetings with residents are expected to be held in coming months. Trees causing airport violations with FDOT for more than 10 years. Because of the height, airport lost 700 ft of runway with not having the required 20:1 Slope as needed on approach.
- **Shade Hangars, Box Hangars, Maintenance Hangars** - additional hangers may take longer than 5 year plan.
 - Shade hangars will be located where the current 4 shade hangars are north of the field. Box Hangars will be 60X60 along Taxiway Bravo as identified in Airport Master Plan.
 - Maintenance Hangar identified in the location south of the airfield at the newest South Airport entrance. Identified in Airport Master Plan.

Also shown on the site plan is the future airport layout (site plan page 2). This shows a concept for the future expansion of the existing airport property and the extension of the runways. A condition is recommended that these proposed improvements identified on this page be conditioned as not approved with this Development Plan at this time. The properties identified for expansion are not currently owned by the City and are not part of this application. Physical expansion of the airport will also require an amendment to the Future Land Use Map, as the

adjacent designations are not Public Land Institution and Preservation. Specifically, the Low Density Residential designation to the east of the airport does not allow municipal public- use airports.

Data and Analysis

Future Land Use Designation and Zoning

A. Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Review

1. **Objective 1.10: Public Lands and Institutions (PLI) Category Defined.**

The Public Lands and Institutions land use category includes only those lands that are legally owned or leased long-term (20 years+) by a local, state, federal, public utility or special government and used specifically to serve the public in some capacity. This category is designated solely to show the location and variety of such governmental uses and to depict a more accurate picture of residential density within the FLUM. These are generally long-term uses that will be utilized publicly for over 50 years.

Policy 1.10.1: Public Lands and Institutions Category Location. The following criteria shall be used for assigning new areas for the Public Lands and Institutions (PLI) land use category on the Future Land Use Map:

- (1) Land already legally owned or controlled by a governmental entity and used in the service of the public.
- (2) When privately owned lands are permanently deeded, purchased, or leased long-term (20+years) for governmental use purposes, the County shall amend the Future Land Use Plan Map at the next available plan amendment cycle to change the land use to the Public Lands and Institutions Land Use designation. Additional land will be designated as PLI as new facilities are built over time such as schools utility plants, active parks.

Policy 1.10.2: Public Lands and Institutions Category Uses. This land use category includes those lands which contain State, Federal and City, County, School, and other quasi-governmental owned facilities that are publicly owned or controlled but are not Preservation. They may contain:

- (1) Governmental offices;
- (2) Public Works Facilities. Maintenance Departments;
- (3) Active and Passive parks;
- (4) Caretaker Residence;
- (5) Utility plants and facilities, excluding electrical generating plants;
- (6) Schools;
- (7) Correctional facilities, Civil Commitment Center;
- (8) Stormwater detention/retention Facilities and Water Reservoirs; and
- (9) Similar public service facilities.

Policy 1.10.3: Density/Intensity/Open Space design. All development within the Public Lands and Institution Land Use category is required to cluster development and provide 25 percent open space on-site. Intensity of non-residential development shall be limited to FAR of 1.0.

Policy 1.10.4: Land Use Compatibility. Land uses which are potentially incompatible either due to type of use or intensity of use shall be buffered from one another.

Staff finding

The subject property is located within the Public Lands and Institutions (PLI) land use category. The proposed use is consistent with the allowable uses in the land use category. The Development Plan illustrates that the expansion is generally adjacent to existing facilities. Due to the potential conflicts with aviation uses, tree growth, FAA regulations, public safety viewsheds, and the length of the airport perimeter being approximately 13,142 feet / 2.5 miles, perimeter buffers are being conditioned as not required.

Objective 1.12: Conservation Overlay Designation (COD). The Interim 2040 Conservation Overlay Map (FLUEMS-4) identifies public and private lands that may possess environmental limitations, such as floodplain, wetland, and other environmentally sensitive areas, including but not limited to, sloping topography subject to soil erosion, wildlife habitat areas, hydric soils, and special vegetative communities, but have not been confirmed as such and shall be protected to the greatest extent possible. Modifications of the boundaries are permitted upon submittal of data and analysis, or field inspection by qualified personnel which support the establishment of a more appropriate boundary.

MEASURABLE TARGET: Acres of habitat and wetlands or species to be impacted or preserved as identified through environmental surveys, Environmental Resource Permits, and other actions in response to development in environmentally sensitive environments.

Policy 1.12.3: Conservation Overlay Designation Development Standards.

- (1) A final determination of the suitability for development of any individual parcel, as it relates to a Conservation Overlay area on the Future Land Use Map, shall be determined prior to issuance of any development approval.
- (2) The Conservation Overlay Designation area on the Future Land Use Map is not to be considered the exact boundary of the conservation area, but to act as an indicator of a potential conservation area. The exact boundary shall be determined by an environmental site study by a qualified professional at the expense of the Developer and submitted for a determination to the South West Florida Water Management District or other agency with jurisdiction.
- (3) The Conservation Overlay Designation area is not all inclusive and other areas that do not fall within the COD boundaries that meet the definition of being environmentally sensitive areas are also subject to the regulations affecting them. These areas include protected plant and animal habitat.

- (4) Development proposals shall require the submittal of an Environmental Site Study indicating as to the extent of the impact of development or redevelopment for any lands within Conservation Overlay Designation areas and other environmental concerns.
- (5) Environmental Site Studies shall provide evidence and an inventory of wetlands; soils posing severe limitations to construction; unique habitat; endangered species of wildlife and plants; significant historic structures and/or sites; and areas prone to periodic flooding (areas within the 100-year floodplain).
- (6) DeSoto County shall require identification of proposed impacts to the natural functions of any resources by any development or redevelopment that proposes to be placed in/on, to disturb, or to alter identified areas. Compensation and Mitigation plans shall also be provided.
- (7) Such identification shall occur during the development review process and provide the opportunity for DeSoto County to review the proposed project so that direct and irreversible impacts on the identified resources are avoided, minimized, or in the extreme, mitigated.
- (8) Natural resources discovered as a result of the required Environmental Site Study will be protected in accordance with state and federal law. The Environmental Site Study will require that a qualified professional analyze the natural functions of eco-systems and connectivity of resource corridors. A conservation easement, or other protective measure, may be required to protect the functions of natural resources. Mitigation may be allowed on a case-by-case basis through the appropriate reviewing agencies.
- (9) If an area is determined to be developable and not within the Conservation Overlay Designation, then the underlying future land use category shall apply.
- (10) The Conservation Overlay District is comprised of data collected from other sources and utilized as a tool to assist in development decisions. As this data is modified, updated or altered, the County will update the Conservation Overlay District boundaries upon data being published to reflect the most accurate data and analysis available. Should other recognized professional sources or technology also provide for updates and improved accuracy, that data shall be reflected in updates to the DeSoto County Conservation Overlay District when made available. Staff shall review and update available data semi-annually.

Staff finding

Given the unknown timing of these potential improvements, future Improvement Plans impacting specific undeveloped areas may require an Environmental Site Study to be determined at the time of application by the Planning Director.

2. **Zoning District related-issues.** Land Development Regulation zoning district related issues include the zoning district and its consistency with the FLUM, the uses allowed within the zoning district, the minimum lot size and width, the minimum building setbacks or open yards.

Staff finding

The subject property is zoned Industrial Light (IL). The property is currently developed as a municipal public use airport with existing buildings, hangars, maintenance structures, carport, restrooms, and pavilion. The Development Plan identifies future improvements at the airport. Municipal public use airports are considered an Essential Service, which pre-empts the need for an additional special exception application and analysis.

The setbacks meet/exceed the minimum requirements for the IL zoning district:

	Setbacks for IL
Front	40'
Side	35' (adjacent to residential and ag districts) 25' (adjacent to commercial and industrial districts)
Rear	35'

The maximum impervious lot coverage in the IL zoning district is 70 percent, and the site plan meets that requirement. A portion of the site is in FEMA Flood Zone A, X, and AE in map panels 120227C01179C (effective 11/6/2013). All improvements must comply with all building-related requirements on future site plan and building permit submittals.

The following table illustrates the adjacent uses, land use, and zoning designations. Future site plan submittals will be required to demonstrate compliance with setbacks consistent with Code requirements.

Adjacent Parcel	Zoning	FLU	Use
North	IL	Low Density Residential	Warehouse – storage, auto sales
	RSF-3	Low Density Residential	Vacant
	A-5	Employment Center	Orchards, groves
East	A-5	Employment Center	Orchards, groves
	A-10	Employment Center	Orchards, groves
South	A-5	Low Density Residential	Residential
	RM	Rural/Agricultural	Residential
West	RSF-3	Low Density Residential	Residential
	A-5	Low Density Residential	Pasture

These zoning standards shall be conditioned and illustrated on future site plan submittals / Improvement Plan. Therefore, with conditions, the proposed facility can be found in conformance with the zoning district.

3. **Transportation related issues.** Transportation related issues include roadway access, right-of-way width, and off-street parking and loading requirements.

Staff finding

No traffic study was submitted with the Development Plan. However, it is expected that additional traffic created by the Development Plan would not be significant or impact level of service. Access will be reviewed in detail with the Improvement Plan submittal. All aviation related transportation activities are approved by the FDOT Aviation Office and the FAA.

4. **Infrastructure issues.** Infrastructure issues include potable water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, stormwater management, and electricity.

Staff finding

The project is outside the DCU service area. Well and septic shall be identified on future Improvement Plan submittals. Stormwater is not illustrated on the

Development Plan. The property is located within the Conservation Overlay District. The applicant is required to obtain all-necessary permits from State and Federal agencies. Future plan submittals shall depict the location of any required stormwater management facilities and conform to County stormwater requirements and obtain any necessary permitting from the Southwest Florida Water Management District and FDEP, if there are any proposed additional impervious surface area requiring additional stormwater management.

5. **Miscellaneous issues.** These include impervious surface area, maximum density, required recreation, and dead storage.

Staff finding

The maximum impervious lot coverage in the IL zoning district is 70 percent, and the site plan meets that requirement. Page 2 of the submitted Development Plan site plan is the future airport layout. This shows a concept for the future expansion of the existing airport property and the extension of the runways. A condition is recommended that these proposed improvements identified on this page be conditioned as not approved with this Development Plan at this time. The properties identified for expansion are not currently owned by the City and are not part of this application. Physical expansion of the airport will also require an amendment to the Future Land Use Map, as the adjacent designations are not Public Land Institution and Preservation. Specifically, the Low Density Residential designation to the east of the airport does not allow municipal public use airports.

STAFF REVIEW

Staff review has determined that this application, SITE-0115-2023, can be found to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations with the recommended conditions to be imposed.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL:

1. Pages 1 of 3 and 3 of 3 of the Airport Master Plan are subject to conditions 2 through 18 herein. Airport Master Plan Informational Only Page 2 of 3 of the same plan set illustrates the future municipal public use airport layout, is informational only and not approved by this resolution.
2. Landscaping must conform to all FAA requirements and therefore a perimeter landscape buffer shall not be installed.
3. An Environmental Site Study shall be provided with future Improvement Plans and building permit applications, if required by the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations.
4. An Improvement Plan, as required by the LDR, shall be approved in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, LDR, and county Engineering Standards.
5. The Improvement Plan shall depict the location of any proposed stormwater management facilities, conform to County stormwater requirements, and obtain any necessary state or federal permitting.
6. Future Improvement Plans shall show an access within 150 feet of any proposed structure that is a minimum of 20 feet wide with a surface capable of supporting the weight of all DeSoto County Fire Rescue vehicles. This shall be approved by the Public

Safety Department.

7. Future Improvement Plans shall show a water source and infrastructure for fire protection. The details will be approved by the Public Safety Department.
8. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all required state and federal permits (e.g., SWFWMD, DEP, ACOE, FEMA, FDOT, FDOT Aviation, FAA). With the Improvement Plan application, the applicant shall submit either:
 1. A copy of the permit application filed with the State or Federal agency, or
 2. A letter of exemption.

All approved state and federal permits must be provided to the County prior to issuance of the Notice to Proceed.

ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit A: Location Map

Exhibit B: Official Zoning District Atlas

Exhibit C: Future Land Use Map

Exhibit D: Development Plan (aka Airport Master Plan)

PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE

**Board of County Commissioners: April
28, 2026**