

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

PARK OPERATIONS ~ ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ~ RECREATION/CULTURAL SERVICES

October 13, 2022

Kari Parsons  
Project Manager  
El Paso County Development Services Department  
2880 International Circle  
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

**Subject: Meadowlake Airport Expansion 1041 Permit Application (AASI-22-002)**

Hello Kari,

The Park Operations Division of the Community Services Department has reviewed the Meadowlake Airport Expansion 1041 Permit application and has the following comments on behalf of El Paso County Parks.

Meadowlake Airport is located southeast of East Highway 24 and is generally bounded by Judge Orr Road to the north, Curtis Road to the east, and Falcon Highway to the south. The property, zoned PUD, is located east of the Town of Falcon in unincorporated El Paso County.

The 2013/2022 El Paso County Parks Master Plans show the Drake Lake Natural Area located approximately 425 feet west of the subject property, while Falcon Regional Park is situated approximately 2 miles north of the airport. The existing Rock Island Regional Trail is located approximately 0.25 mile northwest of the project site, but the proposed asphalt runway is sited further south than the existing runway, so the new runway location poses little added distraction to trail users. The proposed Judge Orr Road, Curtis Road, and Falcon Highway Bicycles Routes are located immediately adjacent to the northern, eastern, and southern boundaries of the project area, respectively. Dedicated public right-of-ways already exist along the aforementioned bicycle routes, so no easement requests are necessary at those locations; however, the applicant is advised that multi-modal transportation options may be developed within the rights-of-way in the future.

The applicant's 1041 Permit Application, Appendix B, Section 2.303 (11) [F], states the following:

*"It should also be noted that the El Paso County Parks Master Plan [Reference h(2)] describes a future Judge Orr Secondary Regional Trail that crosses airport property along Cessna Drive, across the Crosswind Runway (08-26), through the Powered Paraglider OpArea and southbound across several fenced pastures. This would be a hazardous route for pedestrians as well as aircraft and is contrary to FAA guidance to separate the unwary general public from potentially dangerous aviation activities."*



The 2013 Parks Master Plan did indeed show the Judge Orr Secondary Regional Trail running through the airport property, crossing one of the Master Planned asphalt runways. This proposed trail alignment was not conducive to the runway expansion recommendations of the Meadowlake Airport Master Plan, and due to the secure nature of the airport property and overall concerns for public safety, this particular trail alignment, and therefore all subsequent trail easements, were realigned during the drafting of the Trails Master Plan section of the 2022 El Paso County Parks Master Plan. As such, the realigned Judge Orr Trail now follows Judge Orr Road immediately north of Meadowlake Airport, then turns south on Curtis Road as a means to bypass the airport property.

The 2022 El Paso County Parks Master Plan includes an update to the Candidate Open Space Areas, utilizing a weighted overlay of numerous natural and man-made attributes which contribute to strong candidate open space areas. The Open Space Master Plan shows the Judge Orr Road and Drake Lake Candidate Open Space areas encompassing large portions of the project site. Natural resource values include tallgrass and bluestem prairie communities intermixed with permanent and intermittent wetland areas, serving as habitats for numerous bird and aquatic species. The project would not be in conflict with the plan, as long as its development does not adversely affect the surrounding existing environment, either through the expansion of man-made airport facilities or through additional air traffic noise. The Meadowlake Airport Master Plan Future Layout displays a strong effort to in-fill currently utilized areas and avoid wetland habit areas in the far southeast portion of the property, although caution should be exercised when conducting construction activities near those areas.

Sheets 4 and 6 – Airport Layout and Terminal Plans, Future – of the submitted Airport Layout Plan Drawing Set shows a secondary entrance to Meadowlake Airport to access the proposed hangers, fuel station, terminals, and associated airport buildings located west of the main runway. This proposed airport entrance would require drivers to use Mallard Drive and Sissy Way to access the airport, thus introducing a higher amount of traffic on roads that normally serve a rural residential neighborhood.

The applicant's 1041 Permit Application, Appendix B, Section 2.303 (10) [F], states the following:

*“Future expansion of the airport and aeronautical surfaces, as projected with the growth plans contained in the Master Plan, would be the result of and/or require increased development of facilities on the airport. These would necessarily require development of infrastructure to support them, i.e.; **surface access (transportation/road systems)**, power (electric & gas), water-waste water-drainage, emergency services, etc.”*

As previously noted, El Paso County Parks' Drake Lake Natural Area and its roadside parking area are located immediately west of the intersection of Mallard Drive and Sissy Way. Should the 1041 permit application process determine that these two roads would be detrimentally impacted by heavier traffic loads and therefore benefit from asphalt paving, Drake Lake Natural Area and its small parking area could be greatly impacted by increased stormwater runoff from the road's impervious surfacing. As such, EPC Parks requests that the possible paving of Mallard Drive and Sissy Way extend into and include the Drake Lake parking area, and stormwater drainage improvements be designed and constructed to eliminate stormwater runoff impacts to the sensitive Natural Area, including the wetlands located between the parking area and lake. This could be accomplished through roadside ditching or curbing to direct waterflow to an appropriate outlet point along Mallard Drive.

No park land or trail easement dedications are necessary for this application, nor are regional or urban park fees, as the Board of County Commissioner has elected not to apply these fees to commercial operations. These comments do not require Park Advisory Board endorsed, so are therefore being submitted administratively.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Williams", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ross A. Williams  
Park Planner  
Park Operations Division  
Community Services Department  
[rosswilliams@elpasoco.com](mailto:rosswilliams@elpasoco.com)

# Meadowlake Airport Expansion 1041 Permit Application Review

-  Public Schools
-  Parks By Other
-  Primary Regional Trail, Completed
-  Primary Regional Trail, Proposed
-  Proposed Bicycle Routes, Proposed
-  Secondary Regional Trail, Proposed
-  Major Roads
-  State Highways
-  Streets & Roads
-  Meadowlake Airport Property
-  Parcels
-  Streams
-  Candidate Open Space Land
-  Incorporated Areas

