***Note:***

*This text is copied directly from Christina Mc Vie’s, June 20th email response to Supervisor Jennifer Allen’s request for feedback concerning a 410 Acre Private Airfield Construction proposed for North Manville Rd., Marana.*

*Living Desert Alliance*

Hi all,

Here are some of my initial thoughts -

This 640-acre section of land is part of the Conservation Lands System and surrounded by a LOT of Tucson Water land. COT is developing its draft Habitat Conservation Plan and these parcels may be a part of that plan, including preserves. There are potential speculative developable parcels to the W of the 400-acre+ proposed development and some residential lots, not entirely built out, along the east. I have seen situations like this become airport community wildcat developments in the past.

And airports can be very problematic. I do not believe the applicant can guarantee they won't be dropping parachutists onto County and especially City lands - and that presents a whole lot of attractive nuisance issues, including a potential fire hazard. Will they manage the lands for invasive species? How will that be monitored and enforced? That is a big risk for adjacent private, COT and County lands.

The entire area within and all around this proposal is a flood control resource area / flood hazard area. A potential nightmare. County SDCP/MSCP (probably RFCD) preserve lands are located to the east of the City lands along the east side of Reservation Rd (mesquite bosque, etc). This proposal has large swaths of Xero-riparian C and D IRA, has some dense vegetation wildlife love, and already has major flooding issues that impact public roads to the north.

The entire area is categorized as a low elevation valley floor grassland with areas of Sonoran riparian scrub and Palo Verde / mixed cacti.

Wildlife friendly fencing, where safe, would be great to support connectivity with COT and County lands. We really need a much better idea of the siting - buildings, etc - configuration is always key. The runway is proposed to be a north-south alignment and will need to be elevated. It will most likely bisect a large area of IRA vegetation that flows from the south to the northwest. That will create a berm that accelerates flows on the east side of the runway, heading north, and cuts off flows that currently feed a long strip of a 5000-10000 cfs wash/IRA drainage that starts in the center of the Baldridge parcel and flows north-northwest - that should be avoided entirely and set aside in perpetuity. Other 500-2000 cfs washes occur on the site. According to the PC Hydro map, the site is desert and mountain brush, with the mountain brush corresponding to a dark brown in the latest orthophoto imagery - makes it very convenient to visualize the IRA vegetation.

Also, there would need to be well thought out restrictions on night lighting, noise, types of aircraft and hours of operation - and they need to be permanent and enforceable - not something where the applicant can quietly return for a variance or "minor modification" later. Can future expansion and uses actually be restricted? That would be nice. These types of developments have a way of morphing into negative situations for public health (there is no sewer - all sceptic), safety (all weather emergency access, fire, sheriff), and the environment.

That's where I'm starting from - and the devil is always in the details.

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Best wishes, Christina

she / her / ella

*Born on ancestral Gabrielino-Tongva lands Gratefully living on traditional O'odham, Tohono O'odham and Pascua Yaqui lands*