



City of Muscatine

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 6, 2024

The Planning and Zoning Commission meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers.

June 6, 2024, 5:30 PM

AGENDA

1. **On Site Viewing of law Enforcement Training Facility and Range at the Muscatine Municipal Airport** The Muscatine Police Department and Muscatine County Sheriff's Office are proposing to collaboratively develop a joint law enforcement training facility and range at the Muscatine Municipal Airport, south of Runway 12/30, roughly 3,000 feet northwest of the terminal building. This site visit is to give the Planning and Zoning Commission and any other interested parties an opportunity to view the proposed site. There will be no action or consideration of the issue by the Commission at the on-site viewing, any Commission action or consideration will occur at the public hearing on June 11th. Any Commission action or consideration will occur at the public hearing, on Tuesday, June 11, 2024, in City Hall Council Chambers, 215 Sycamore St at 5:30 pm.
 - A. Law Enforcement Training Facility Memo
2. **Adjournment**



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

City Hall - 215 Sycamore St
Muscatine, IA 52761-3840
(563) 262-4141
Fax (563) 262-4142

Planning • Zoning • Building Safety • Construction Inspection Services • Public Health • Housing Inspections • Code Enforcement

To: Planning and Zoning Commission
From: Andrew Fangman, Assistant Community Development Director
Date: June 11, 2024
Re: Law Enforcement Training Facility and Range at the Muscatine Municipal Airport

INTRODUCTION:

The Muscatine Police Department and Muscatine County Sheriff's Office are proposing to collaboratively develop a joint law enforcement training facility and range at the Muscatine Municipal Airport.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Muscatine and Muscatine County have agreed to a partnership with a 50/50 cost-sharing agreement. This facility will provide a dedicated space for officers to conduct a variety of training exercises, including:

- Firearms Training & Qualifications
- MSORT Training
- Defensive Tactics Training
- ASP Training
- Conduct trainings in Muscatine County at minimal cost as a host agency

The proposed shooting range will accommodate handguns using .40 and 9mm caliber rounds, and rifles using .308 and .223 calibers. It will feature two 220-foot handgun bays and a separate 370-foot rifle bay. Each bay will be enclosed on three sides by 20-foot-high berms, exceeding recommended heights to ensure safe projectile containment within the range. To minimize the risk of ricochet, the berms will have a 1:1 slope design. Additionally, they will be 10 feet thick at the top, exceeding the recommended minimum design standard. Construction will utilize only virgin fill free of debris to further eliminate ricochet hazards. These design specifications meet or exceed NRA Range Source Book criteria and comply with Iowa state qualification distances.

Within the proposed range site will be a 60' x 60' training building facility. It will be utilized for the classroom portion of firearms instruction as well as several other police department and sheriff's office in-service training needs. It will be equipped with bathrooms and running water.

It is anticipated that the range will be in use 3 to 5 times a month. This may be more during months where department qualifications are necessary. The training facility will be utilized anytime the range is live and several times a year for classroom training.

The department closed its original range location in early 2022. Since that time, department personnel have been traveling to the West Liberty gun range to conduct training. MSORT training, which is conducted 1 to 2 times a month, is also traveling the 40-mile round trip for training. Since the West Liberty Gun Club is a public range, only minimal equipment can be stored there, the rest is required to be transported to and from. The police department and sheriff's office are in desperate need of a secure range and training facility to serve both agencies.

The proposed location for this facility is at the Muscatine Municipal Airport, south of Runway 12/30, roughly 3,000 feet northwest of the terminal building. Access would be through an extension to existing internal airport access roads.

RECOMMENDATION/RATIONALE:

The proposed shooting range and training facility have been evaluated for compatibility with airport operations. Both the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Muscatine Airport Advisory Commission have reviewed the project's proposed location on the airport property and determined it would not adversely impact airport operations.

Situated behind the airport fence, the proposed location was acquired to function as a protective buffer zone for the runways. Currently, the site is not used for any active airport operations, and there are no plans for future development related to airport operations at this location. The proposed shooting range would leverage an underutilized City property. Currently leased for agricultural purposes, this land can be repurposed to serve a critical function. By establishing a shooting range here, the City can take advantage of the area's continued role as a protective buffer zone for the airport runways, while simultaneously fulfilling a vital training need for law enforcement personnel.

The proposed location at the Muscatine Municipal Airport offers several advantages that make it an ideal location for a law enforcement shooting range. The proposed location offers the necessary isolation for safe range operations while remaining conveniently accessible for law enforcement personnel. The Public Safety Building is less than a 15-minute drive away.

Substantial distance between the shooting range and residences and other non-agricultural and non-airport uses, minimizes potential noise disruptions for the surrounding community. The substantial distance also contributes to overall safety in the extremely unlikely event of. A stray round or ricochet.

One of the most common concerns surrounding shooting ranges is noise complaints from nearby residents. According to NRA range design guidelines, these complaints typically originate from people living within a half-mile radius of the facility. The proposed shooting range location offers a significant advantage in this regard. There are:

- No residences or structures within a half-mile radius of the firing line.
- The nearest dwelling located nearly two-thirds of a mile (3,387 feet) to the north.
- Only six homes within a three-quarter mile radius, and 17 homes within a one-mile radius.

The proposed shooting range site benefits from existing land uses that are inherently compatible with range operations. Additionally, the location offers greater assurance of continued land use compatibility in the future compared to any other potential site within Muscatine County.

Slightly more than half of the area within a half-mile radius of the proposed range lies behind the airport fence. Surrounding areas beyond the airport property are subject to long-standing land use restrictions specifically designed for areas situated near airport runways. These restrictions help ensure compatibility with continued aviation operations by limiting development.

Aircraft near runway ends pose potential safety risks (accidents) and noise disturbances for people on the ground due to takeoffs and landings. Similarly, a shooting range can create noise and safety concerns for nearby areas.

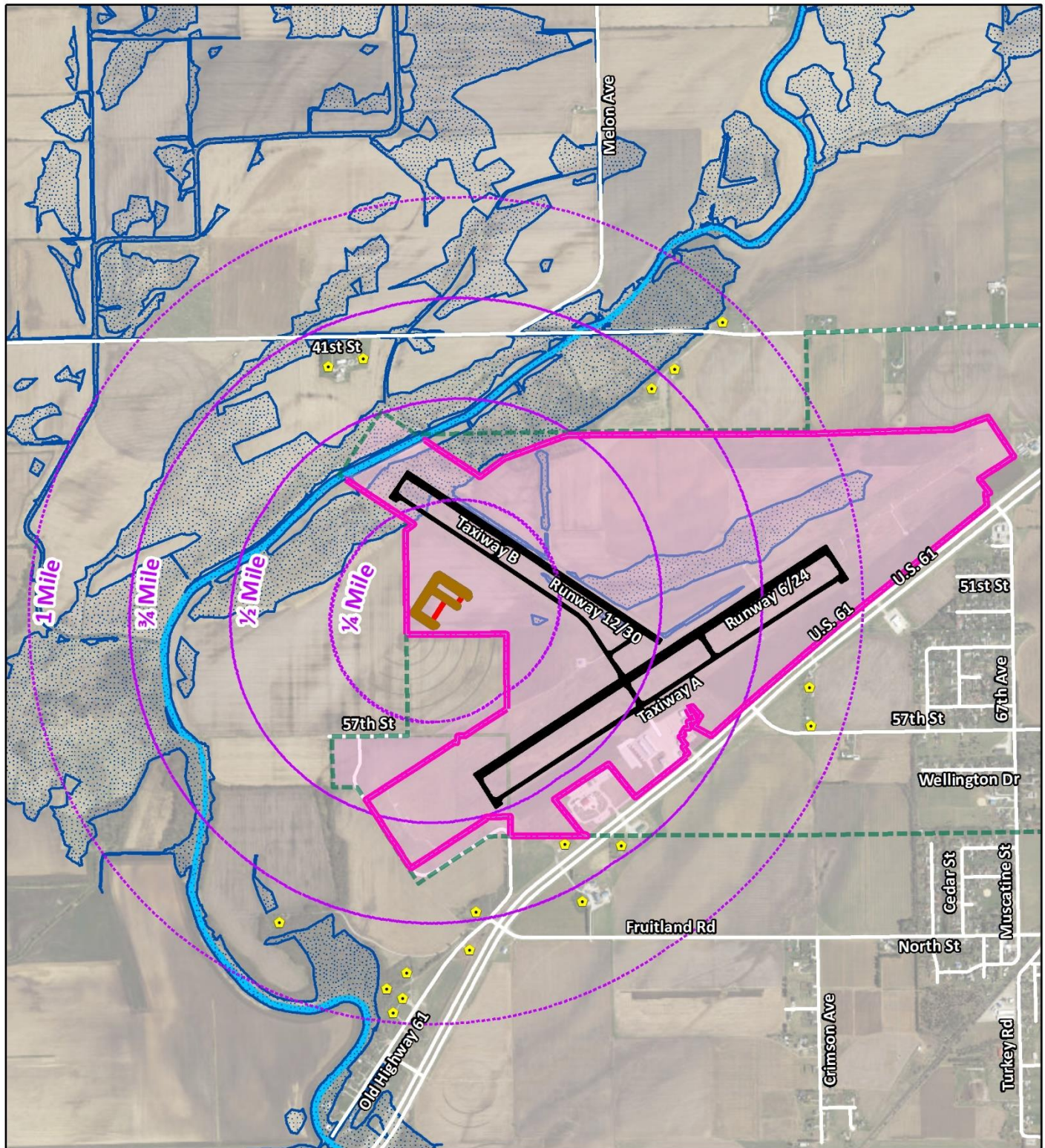
However, existing land use restrictions designed to mitigate the impact of airport runways can also effectively address potential disruptions from the shooting range. The proposed location leverages these existing restrictions, minimizing the need for additional measures to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas.

The firing line will be oriented towards the Muscatine Slough. The bank of the slough is approximately 1,500 feet beyond the backstop berm. Furthermore, the presence of the slough and its associated floodplain significantly reduces the likelihood of future development occurring immediately downrange of the proposed site. The regulatory floodplain in this area stretches about 3,000 feet wide. The proposed range site is located well outside the floodplain.

Stringent land-use regulations adopted by both the City and Muscatine County severely restrict development within the floodplain. These regulations are in place to ensure property owners throughout the city and county can access flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the primary flood insurance option available. Participation in the NFIP requires local communities to enact regulations that limit new development in regulatory floodplains. Therefore, the regulatory floodplain located downrange of the proposed shooting range is highly unlikely to see any development in the foreseeable future.

The Planning and Zoning Commission is being asked to make a recommendation on two aspects of a potential law enforcement training facility range at the Muscatine Municipal Airport:

- Amending City Code Section 10-3-1 to allow a law enforcement training facility and range as a permitted use in the Agriculture Zoning District, provided it is located at the Muscatine Municipal Airport and only available for use by law enforcement personnel.
- Approving the location of the shooting range, as required by Iowa Code Section 657.9(1).



Legend

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Airport Fence | Quarter Mile Rings From Firing Line | Runways & Taxiways |
| 20 Feet High Berms | Homes Within 1 Mile | City Owned Parcels |
| Firing Line | Floodplain | |
| City Limits | | |

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles





Looking Northwest from Approximate Proposed Location of Firing Line



Looking North Along Airport Property Line Near the Proposed Range Site



Looking West Along Airport Property Line Near the Proposed Range Site