


RESPONSE TO NASA REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

# UNITED STATES SPACE ACADEMY

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

NOVEMBER 2026

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UNITED STATES
SPACE ACADEMY
FLORIDA

## RESPONDING ENTITY IDENTIFICATION

**State and proposed Academy location(s):** State of Florida. Permanent campus: Kennedy Space Center, Brevard County, Florida, on an approximately 1,000-acre NASA-owned site adjacent to the Launch and Landing Facility (LLF), that is already under lease with Space Florida through a NASA-approved Space Act Agreement. Interim academic operations in 2028: University of Central Florida (UCF), Orlando, Florida, with proposed flight training support from Embry-Riddle.

**Name, legal status, and organizational affiliation of the Responding Entity with any proposed partner organizations:**

Space Florida, the State of Florida's independent aerospace finance and spaceport authority. Space Florida is coordinating the State's response in partnership with the University of Central Florida.

**Name, title, organization, email address, and telephone number of the primary point of contact for the Responding Entity:**
Rob Long, President and Chief Executive Officer, Space Florida,
Rlong@spaceflorida.gov, 321-652-5300

**Prepared with support from:** The Executive Office of the Governor; Florida Department of Commerce; Florida Department of Education; Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT); Florida Space Research Consortium; University of Central Florida; and Florida's aerospace leaders.

**Governor's written designation of the Responding Entity and State Selecting Official:** Pursuant to the requirements of the RFI, the Governor has designated Space Florida as the Responding Entity and the Executive Office of the Governor as the State Selecting Official. Contact information for the responding entity is found above and the State Selecting Official in the official letter on page 63 of this response. As the RFI process continues, any change to the designations above will be provided through the portal referenced in the RFI.



## SUMMARY

Florida proposes launching the U.S. Space Academy in 2028 and delivering a permanent campus at Kennedy Space Center by Fall 2031. For interim operations, UCF in Orlando is prepared to host approximately 300 students in Fall 2028, with the Academy operating as a distinct college keeping its federal identity while leveraging UCF's accreditation, faculty, laboratories and services. UCF would dedicate the approximately 98,000 square foot University Tower as home base, with housing and transportation to Kennedy Space Center. Florida is in active discussions with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University to support flight training.

For the permanent campus, Florida proposes a 1,000-acre NASA-owned site at Kennedy Space Center adjacent to the LLF. NASA would out grant the site by amending Space Florida's existing LLF agreement, supported by a potential Space Act Agreement (Appendix A). The initial 3 million-square-foot campus would serve at least 1,200 students by Fall 2031, with capacity to expand to approximately 6.9 million square feet for 4,000 students.

Florida's commitments include interim facilities and operating support, pathways for state-led financial assistance including in-state status for enrollees, transportation, potential flight training support, no cost design and project management, infrastructure investment, permitting coordination, and leveraging Space Florida and FDOT's financial tools including design-build-leaseback and a per pupil maintenance stipend, building on more than $680 million invested in space transportation infrastructure. Groundbreaking is targeted for 2027.

Florida brings established, funded mechanisms to support the Academy immediately. The state can use recurring transportation appropriations for horizontal capital improvements and Space Florida's financing authorities, including lease-purchase agreements, ground leases, and P3 tools, to reduce upfront federal investment. Florida is refining additional investment models for state leadership, with the upcoming legislative session aligning with the RFI providing further opportunities to support the Academy from opening day and decades to come.




**2027**
GROUNDBREAKING

**2028**
FIRST 300 STUDENTS AT UCF

**2031**
1,200 STUDENTS ON THE PERMANENT CAMPUS

**4,000**
LONG-TERM STUDENT CAPACITY

MISSION 01

# 01

# FLORIDA IS THE AEROSPACE STATE

Where America's space story begins, and where the next generation of space leaders will learn to write the next chapter.


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Florida's Backyard is America's Launchpad

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The Florida Advantage: Top Economy and Workforce Hub

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Florida Advantage: the Frontier of Innovation

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Florida Advantage: a Location That Inspires

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Research Enterprise Already Connected to NASA

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Unmatched Education System

Americans one day will look back from the stars and tell a story of adventure, exploration, commerce, and settlement. A story that begins in Florida, on Cape Canaveral at Kennedy Space Center, and at the future U.S. Space Academy (USSA) on the Space Coast.

Florida's following response to NASA's request for information (RFI) on the U.S. Space Academy not only answers the call to create an institution that combines rigorous technical education in concert with existing world class institutions, it also places that institution at the convergence of all three dimensions of the world's leading civil, commercial, and military space ecosystem and on sites unlike any other. In addition to unmatched proximity to the heart of NASA's launch and flight infrastructure, the Commission will note immediately the value of the unrivaled financial commitments and clear timelines captured in this response. Florida will welcome an inaugural class of at least 300 students to an operational Academy in the Fall of 2028, will scale that institution to at least 1,200 students by 2031, and is committed to supporting the Space Academy's long term expansion to accommodate 4,000 students.

The missions of the next fifty years have yet to be designed. The men and women who will fly, build, and defend those missions will start training now. Assuring American space dominance means having the most elite Space Academy in the one location where its students are at the heart of our country's civil, commercial, and military space activities. As the nation seeks to educate its future space leaders, strengthen American competitiveness, and secure strategic advantages in an increasingly contested space domain, Florida is the obvious choice- the most mission aligned path to success, built on an ecosystem developed over decades. These commitments reflect both the vision and urgency necessary to sustain America's continued leadership in space.

Florida's case for the U.S. Space Academy is reinforced by congressional action specifically supporting its location in the state. In September 2026, Senator Ashley Moody introduced the Securing The Advancement of Rising Spacefarers (STARS) Act, legislation specifically seeking to locate the U.S. Space Academy in Florida, with companion legislation by Governor-elect and Representative Byron Donalds and co-sponsored by Representative Mike Haridopolos. Florida's pursuit of the Academy also has the support of Florida Senate President Jim Boyd and House Speaker Sam Garrison (Appendix C). This broad support reflects a unified commitment across state and federal leaders to bring the Academy to Florida and the state's readiness to make it a reality.



## 1.1 FLORIDA'S BACKYARD IS AMERICA'S LAUNCHPAD

A CENTURY OF FIRSTS

Florida has been central to our nation's history and ambitions for nearly five hundred years, since the founding of St. Augustine as the oldest continuously inhabited city in the United States. The battles for Florida, America's "14th Colony," played a pivotal role in the Revolutionary War, and Florida has been at the forefront of United States commercial, technical, and military leadership in aeronautics and space since the dawn of aviation.

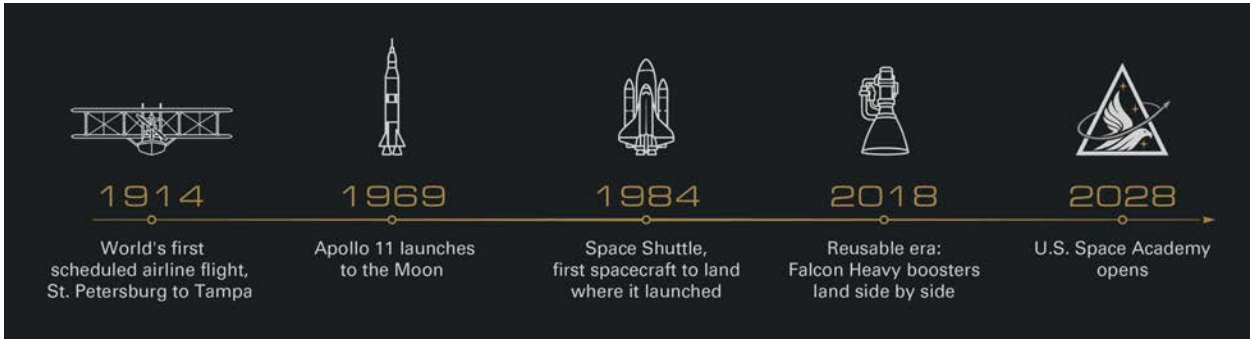
More than a century ago, a seaplane lifted off from St. Pete, Florida. In just 23 minutes, it landed in Tampa, marking the world's first scheduled commercial airline flight. Fifty-five years later, American families camped along Florida's Atlantic coast while others crowded around their televisions. The earth shook, the clouds parted, and one million men, women, and children stood in awe as Apollo 11 left the Earth, from Florida, destined for the Moon. That one small step marked the beginning of a new era of aerospace in America.

In the 1980s, the Space Shuttle's tires puffed with smoke for the first time on one of the longest runways in the world, making it the first spacecraft ever to land back where it launched, in Florida. This was just a preview of the era of reusability that is now upon us and was captured in the incredible scene in 2018 when thousands watched as two boosters from Falcon Heavy's maiden flight returned side-by-side to their pads, in Florida. Now, in this decade alone, Florida launched the first all-civilian orbital mission, the first entirely private ISS mission, the first commercial spacewalk, and the first commercial soft landing on the Moon.

History is made in Florida because we have not rested on our legacy. We've focused on producing real outcomes that support and advance the entire aerospace industry. Florida has continued to invest in the space infrastructure across Cape Canaveral and beyond, brought old pads back into service, built new aerospace hubs across the state to design and manufacture, and created the commercial, education, and military ecosystem that supports both aeronautics and space – key pillars of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

In Florida, the runway that once hosted the Shuttle now welcomes spaceplanes home from orbit, receives astronauts and flight hardware, and hosts testing from companies shaping the next era of aeronautics and space, all thanks to Florida's management of upgrades and investments stepping up to the plate when past Administrations shifted focus away from the stars.

Today, rockets are built beside the launch pads, flown to orbit, and then come back for landing, where they're refurbished and flown again. Long before leaving the ground, pilots and astronauts learn to fly in simulators designed



here in Florida. And the state is now a proving ground for advanced air mobility and the development of new aerospace technology, recreating the very flight that started the commercial aerospace industry last month, this time utilizing eVTOLs.

None of that happened by accident. Florida has taken creative, durable, and intentional actions to build and maintain an aerospace and space economy that does not end when any one program finishes. Florida's success is carried forward by the men and women and ecosystems that anchor industry to the state. For more than a century, Florida has been where aerospace is invented, tested, and proven. And it will be where the next generation of aerospace leaders learn to do the same, here in the Aerospace State.



## 1.2 THE FLORIDA ADVANTAGE: TOP ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE HUB

A permanent U.S. Space Academy requires a host with the fiscal strength and stability to support it for the long term. With a GDP approaching $1.9 trillion, Florida would rank as the 14th-largest economy in the world if it stood alone. Aerospace and aviation sit at its core, supporting more than 150,000 jobs across more than 3,000 establishments and generating $34.1 billion in economic activity. The U.S. Space Academy will prepare the leaders of a space economy that is expanding every year. In Florida, the space economy already operates at scale.

Space Florida closed 2025 with 220 aerospace projects in its pipeline valued at $6 billion. Recent commitments show the scale: SpaceX's $1.8 billion Gigabay Starship integration facility at Cape Canaveral, adding 600 jobs; Blue Origin's $600 million manufacturing expansion, supporting 500 jobs; Relativity's expansion to Florida for production, launch and test facilities at Kennedy Space Center; and Williams International's $1 billion+ gas turbine manufacturing campus in Okaloosa County.

Civilian aircraft and parts were Florida's top export category in 2025 at $12.8 billion, with turbojets and gas turbines adding another $2.4 billion, within a record $78.9 billion export year. Florida also ranks first in the nation for aviation maintenance, repair, and overhaul establishments and third for aircraft manufacturing establishments.

Aerospace in Florida reaches well beyond the Cape. Northwest Florida anchors defense aviation and engine manufacturing. Central Florida leads in simulation, training, and aerospace manufacturing. NASA's Florida operations generate $8.2 billion in economic output and support nearly 36,000 jobs.[1] Aerospace and aviation firms continue to choose Florida to host their operations, and it is easy to see why. Florida's leadership is supported by an established aerospace industry that sets the state apart. The state maintains an attractive overall business environment, ranking fifth in business tax climate.[2] Graduates commissioned in Florida will speak fluently in the language of both public and private roles and experience the widest breadth of capabilities within the national space enterprise, exactly the foundation that American space dominance demands. Florida is the best location for students to lead from both a military and civilian capacity.

### THE SPACE TRIANGLE

American dominance in space requires tightly integrated civil, military, academic and commercial capabilities. Florida is the only state where the existing ecosystem is prepared to tightly integrate into the new USSA on day one. Located in the nation's Aerospace State, it will be the launchpad to new frontiers. Academy students would train inside the ecosystem they

**$1.9T**
STATE GDP · 14TH-LARGEST ECONOMY IN THE WORLD

**150,000+**
AEROSPACE AND AVIATION JOBS

**$34.1B**
AEROSPACE AND AVIATION ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

**$6B**
220 PROJECTS IN SPACE FLORIDA'S PIPELINE

are preparing to lead. One where launch manufacturing output, and private investment are rising together, and where America's next aerospace capabilities are built and flown every week. At the center of that system is the Space Triangle. Brevard, Orange, and Volusia counties form its core, supported by the complementary assets, workforce, and connectivity of neighboring Osceola and Seminole counties. The proposed campus sits at the center.

Brevard County brings the launch complex: Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, and the Atlantic coastline. Orange County brings the University of Central Florida, Orlando International Airport, and the amenities of a major metro area. Volusia County brings Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and its aviation and aerospace programs. Students could reach all of it in less than an hour.

KSC alone hosts more than 90 private sector partners under roughly 250 partnership agreements. Beyond launch, it manages procurement for the cargo, equipment, and consumables that enable exploration of the Moon and Mars, oversees Commercial Resupply Services for the International Space Station, and runs research at facilities including the Applied Physics Laboratory and the Electrostatics and Physics Laboratory.

The companies building America's air and space advantage keep choosing this ecosystem. Established leaders include Blue Origin, SpaceX, Relativity, Airbus U.S. Space and Defense, Amazon Leo, L3Harris, Northrop Grumman, Boeing, and Lockheed Martin. Emerging firms such as Seagate Space and Star Catcher prove that Florida's ecosystem supports the established, new-to-market, and startup companies that support America's future in space.

The defense mission is just as deep. Next door to KSC, the five installations of Space Launch Delta 45 host mission partners including:

- **Space Training and Readiness Command (STARCOM)**
- **Delta 10:** wargaming, field experimentation, and doctrine development
- **Naval Ordnance Test Unit:** submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) testing
- **Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC):** nuclear arms control/verification

Beyond the Space Triangle, Florida hosts more than 20 major military installations, three combatant commands, and 85,000 active-duty personnel. Every branch is represented, along with nationally significant capabilities:

- U.S. Special Operations Command and Air Force Special Operations Command
- Florida's Gulf Test Range and major overland ranges[3]
- the Navy's aviation training enterprise and its premier diving and salvage training
- modeling and simulation centers of excellence

No classroom can replicate this. Academy students would see firsthand how the nation develops, designs, builds, and operates its leading aerospace capabilities, and they would learn alongside the civil, military, and industry leaders who do that work every day.

### THE SPACE TRIANGLE: DEEP WORKFORCE BENCH

The U.S. Space Academy will train the leaders of America's space enterprise. In Florida, it would sit inside the workforce that already runs it. The state boasts over 3,000 establishments in the aerospace and aviation sectors, employing over 150,000 Floridians within this combined industry cluster. The state also ranks No. 2 nationally for aerospace engineering employment, underscoring the depth of the highly skilled technical workforce available to support the Academy and the broader Space Triangle.[4]

Florida has strategically fostered the proper conditions to form a strong ecosystem for aerospace and aviation technology development. The proof of that is in the substantial workforce the state has formed around this cluster, clearly demonstrating that industry continues to flock to Florida to innovate and operate.

A significant share of Florida's aerospace and aviation workforce is concentrated within the Space Triangle of Brevard, Orange, and Volusia counties. Brevard County anchors Florida's launch, spacecraft manufacturing, and space operations capabilities, Orange County provides aerospace manufacturing and aviation operations at scale, and Volusia County supports one of the nation's most concentrated flight training ecosystems.

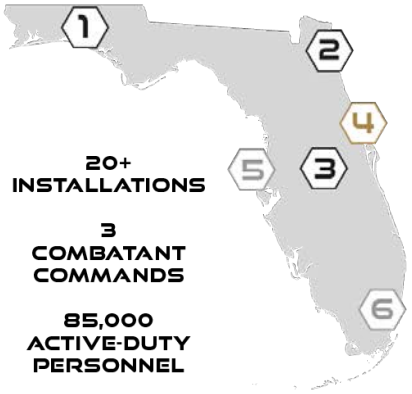
Together, the three counties account for more than a quarter of the state's total aerospace and aviation jobs and their concentration is even more pronounced within just the aerospace sector: the Space Triangle accounts for more than half of Florida's entire aerospace sector workforce.[5]

Brevard County serves as the state's launch and space operations core. The county supports 18,327 aerospace jobs and another 1,482 aviation jobs, for a combined aerospace and aviation workforce of 19,809.[6] Its employment base reflects the concentration of launch, spacecraft manufacturing, engineering, and space operations along Florida's Space Coast.

Orange County provides the Triangle's largest concentration of aviation employment while also supporting a substantial aerospace manufacturing base. The county is home to 7,778 aerospace jobs and 18,288 aviation jobs, bringing its combined aerospace and aviation workforce to 26,066.[7] In Osceola County, immediately south of Orange County, a new tech-hub is thriving to support workforce, housing, and industry growth in direct proximity to Orlando International Airport and the nation's leading tourism destinations. Volusia County rounds out the Triangle with a specialized strength in flight training. The county supports 1,704 aerospace and aviation jobs, with its aviation economy distinguished by a strong concentration of flight training activity.[8]

A strong aerospace workforce has a tremendous impact on the state's economy, where Florida's aerospace and defense industry's GDP contribution was $25.8 billion in 2025.[9] Total economic output for the sector that year also totaled $43.5 billion.[10]

For the Academy, this means students learn alongside those who build, launch, fly, and sustain American aerospace every day. Experiential learning, research and industry partnerships, and direct exposure to live operations are available from day one. The ecosystem its graduates will lead is already in place.




1 **NORTHWEST (PENSACOLA TO PANAMA CITY)**
NAS Pensacola, NATTC and USAF 479th Flying Training Group · Corry Station Center for Information Warfare Training · NAS Whiting Field Training Air Wing FIVE · Eglin AFB and Naval School Explosive Ordnance Disposal · Eastern Gulf Test and Training Range · Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center, NSA Panama City

2 **NORTHEAST**
Camp Blanding Joint Training Center

3 **CENTRAL (ORLANDO)**
Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division, NSA Orlando · National Modeling & Simulation R&D and Training Center of Excellence · Avon Park and Pinecastle Ranges

4 **SPACE COAST**
STARCOM · Space Launch Delta 45 · Space Delta 10 · Naval Ordnance Test Unit (Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile Testing) · Air Force Technical Applications Center

5 **TAMPA BAY**
U.S. Central Command · U.S. Special Operations Command

6 **SOUTH FLORIDA**
U.S. Southern Command

SPACE TRAINING OTHER

# THE SPACE TRIANGLE

The Space Triangle provides an environment that cannot be replicated through classroom instruction alone. Future Academy graduates would witness firsthand how the United States develops, launches, secures, and sustains space capabilities. Florida offers something that very few competitors can claim - a functioning ecosystem integrated with the broader national space enterprise. The proposed sites exceed USSA requirements while offering future growth opportunities within an ecosystem that is unmatched nationwide. Florida's leaders are committed to bolstering these successes and investments into the future, including through increased aerospace apprenticeships workforce training programs in the high school and community college settings to bolster the number of skilled welders, mechanics, and technicians to meet the moment, and the demand necessary.

## GOVERNMENT

Kennedy Space Center
Cape Canaveral Space Force Station
Space Launch Delta 45
STARCOM Headquarters
Space Florida Launch and Landing Facility

## COMMERCIAL AEROSPACE

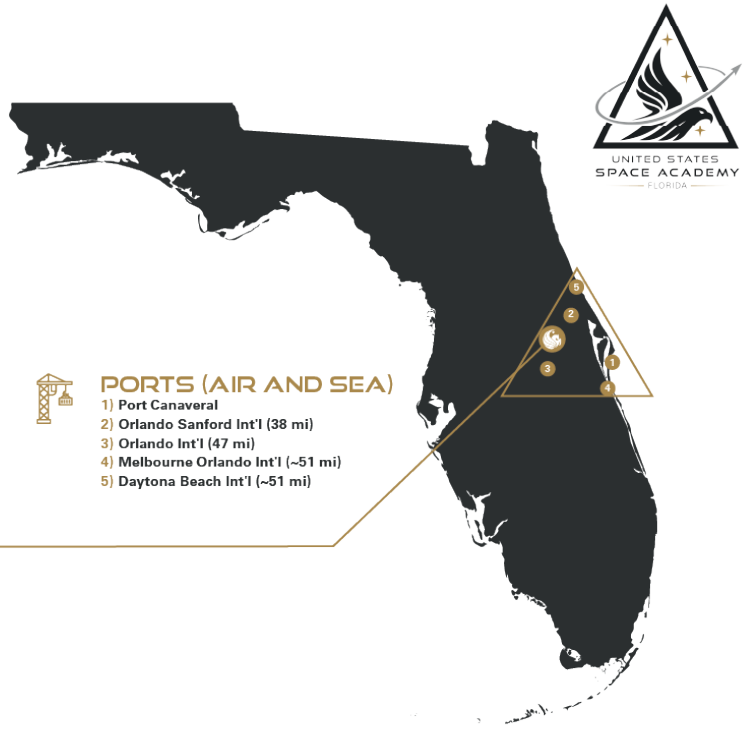
Launch & Mission Operations
Manufacturing & Integration
Payload Processing
Testing & Refurbishment
Satellite Operations
Supply Chain & Services

## INFRASTRUCTURE

State-Invested Spaceport Facilities & Utilities
Space Florida Launch and Landing Facility
Utility Corridor
NASA Causeway Bridge
Max Brewer Bridge & Beach Road

## EDUCATION

UCF
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Florida Space Research Consortium
Florida's aerospace and engineering talent pipeline




## PORTS (AIR AND SEA)

1) Port Canaveral
2) Orlando Sanford Int'l (38 mi)
3) Orlando Int'l (47 mi)
4) Melbourne Orlando Int'l (~51 mi)
5) Daytona Beach Int'l (~51 mi)


ARTEMIS
NASA
SPACEFLORIDA
LAUNCH AND LANDING
FACILITY (LLF)
amazon Leo
SPACEX
SIERRA SPACE
ULA
SPACEX
CAPE WEEK
UP.SUMMIT
MAX POWER
BOEING
ASTROTECH
SPACE OPERATIONS
SPACEX
LOCKHEED MARTIN
Kennedy Space Center
VISITOR COMPLEX
LOCKHEED MARTIN
SPACEX
Relativity
DRAPER
BOEING
BLUE ORIGIN
space
life sciences lab
AIRBUS
U.S. SPACE & DEFENSE
STOKE
PHANTOM
SPACE CORPORATION
SCIIP
beyond gravity
FUTURE
GROWTH
ROCKETDYNE
BLUE ORIGIN
NORTHROP
GRUMMAN
PORT
CANAVERAL

## 1.3 FLORIDA ADVANTAGE: THE FRONTIER OF INNOVATION

Florida's mix of civil, commercial, military, and academic leadership keeps the state at the front of research and new technology.

- **Reusable rockets:** SpaceX and Blue Origin build and launch reusable rockets in Florida, while Relativity Space is developing Florida manufacturing, testing, and launch capabilities for its reusable vehicle
- **Critical space technologies:** Florida companies and researchers are working on power beaming, lunar infrastructure, and sea-based launch systems.
- **MAX POWER / CAPEWEEK:** NASA, Space Florida, and other partners showcased such innovations at America's newest aerospace technology expo and airshow, and where the future CAPEWEEK will be held, on the site where the USSA should soon stand (future CAPEWEEK site is adjacent where the USSA should soon stand).
- **Advanced air mobility (AAM) and eVTOL:** Florida is USDOT's premier EIPP partner, and has the legal framework for the industry, unmatched state funding for vertiports, and an officially endorsed Aerial Highway Network. It built SunTrax AirGround, the nation's leading combined test facility for autonomous vehicles and eVTOLs. Dozens of AAM companies operate in Florida, and several personal eVTOL companies are based here.
- **Statewide aeronautics research:** Work ranges from hypersonic engine research in Jacksonville to metallurgy and autonomous drones in Tampa Bay.
- **Modeling and simulation:** The proposed 2028–2029 interim Academy site in Orlando sits next to the world's largest concentration of modeling and simulation. That includes every branch of the U.S. armed services and more than 200 specialized firms working on flight training, mission rehearsal, and digital simulation.
- **FinTech and advanced computing:** South Florida is a national FinTech hub and is now headquarters to companies such as Palantir and D-Wave Quantum.







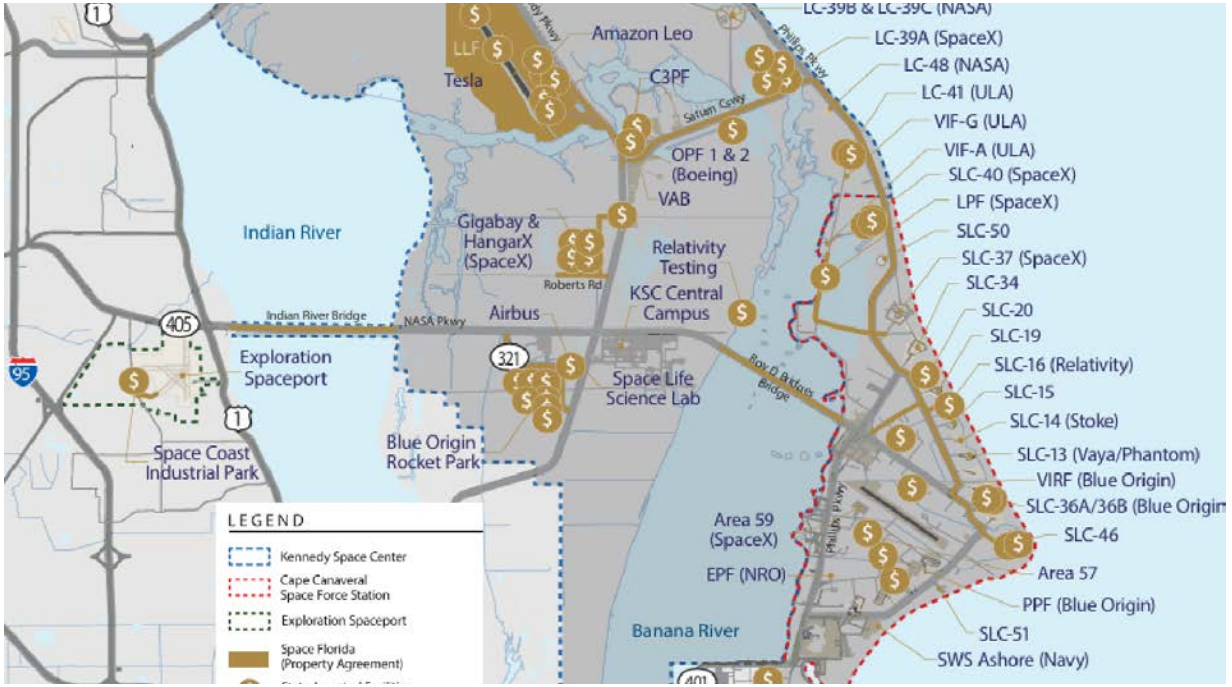
## 1.4 FLORIDA ADVANTAGE: A LOCATION THAT INSPIRES

Future American space leaders should grow up imagining themselves at USSA. A United States Space Academy located in Florida will be uniquely positioned to inspire those dreams. Florida is the No. 1 domestic travel destination in the United States, with over 130 million Americans visiting Florida in 2025 alone.[11] They come for the beaches and the boating, for the winter, wildlife, and for the recreation and entertainment. Tens of millions of them come to cruise from the world's busiest cruise ports, driving or sailing right along Florida's Space Coast.

Florida is the world's leading family destination, a place where parents can bring their children to vacation with confidence. Americans grow up vacationing at Orlando's amusement parks, the world's most visited, which run the gamut from Old Florida to brand new, and bring to life everything from the most widely read book series to the highest-grossing films. Orlando is less than an hour from Kennedy Space Center. The 57 million passengers arriving at Orlando International Airport see Kennedy Space Center by a highway and soon, a one-stop high speed rail destination, with more than 1.5 million people coming to KSC's Visitor Complex yearly.

Florida gives the U.S. Space Academy a recruiting pipeline that's already running. Every year, the students the Academy wants to reach come to Florida. Orlando is the No. 1 spring break destination for high schoolers, and four more Florida cities rank in the top 10. That puts the Academy in front of prospective high school applicants at exactly the age they're choosing where to go to college. With the Orlando International Airport led by a Gubernatorial-appointed board, the opportunities for a signature MCO welcome mat are endless and can be supported on an in-kind basis.

Those visits also turn into lasting interest. Ninety percent of Florida visitors come back, and young men and women who want to return already drive applications to Florida's colleges and universities. An Academy on the Space Coast would benefit from that same pull. Prospective students could tour the campus,



watch a launch, and see Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral in action during a trip they were already planning. No other location gives the Academy this kind of steady, national exposure to future applicants without building it from scratch.

As a part of student life, the opportunities to bask on the beach, dive on a reef, and partake in a park will help fuel dreams of the U.S. Space Academy, but they will not stand alone. Florida's Space Coast is the place where they'll be surrounded by the accomplishments of every facet of America's space past, present and future, from the historic missions to the commitment of fortunes and honors by America's commercial space visionaries. Where else can prospective students watch a reusable rocket's return from the balcony of their dorm on a sunny January morning before heading to an annual memorial service honoring the sacrifices of Grissom, White, and Chaffee; Scobee, Smith, Resnick, McNair, Onizuka, Jarvis and McAuliffe? Where else can students walk from the athletic center to the flight line for their afternoon solo?The answer is nowhere. Only in Florida can the U.S. Space Academy be a place that immediately draws the best aspiring leaders, engineers, and adventurers to build America's future in space.







## 1.5 RESEARCH ENTERPRISE ALREADY CONNECTED TO NASA

Florida doesn't need to build an academic research network around the Academy, because one already exists and already works directly with NASA. The Florida Space Research Consortium links eight of the state's leading research universities to NASA's Kennedy Space Center: Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Florida A&M University, Florida Institute of Technology, Florida International University, Florida State University, the University of Central Florida, the University of Florida, and the University of South Florida.

For the U.S. Space Academy, this means:

**Statewide scale.** The Academy gains access to a network of about 300,000 students and a research enterprise with about $3 billion in annual research activity.

**Research from day one.** Students can join active research instead of waiting for the Academy to build its own portfolio. Consortium faculty are already working on smarter spacecraft and satellites, propulsion, navigation, and communications. They are also developing materials for harsh space environments, technology for manufacturing and operating in space and on the lunar surface, and the science of how humans, plants, and biological systems function in space.

**Faculty depth across mission-critical fields.** The Academy can draw on faculty, labs, and research partners statewide as instructors, advisors, and collaborators. Their expertise covers aerospace, cyber, AI, robotics, propulsion, autonomy, materials, communications, manufacturing, and national security space.

**Unique research facilities.** These include Florida International University's Aquarius Reef Base, the world's only underwater research laboratory.

**A direct line to NASA's mission.** The consortium is tied to Kennedy Space Center, so students' classroom and lab work connects directly to the research and technology NASA needs for deep space exploration.

**A bridge to industry and defense.** The consortium already has partnerships with NASA, the Department of War, and aerospace and defense manufacturers. That gives students a ready path to internships, fellowships, and careers.

Anywhere else, NASA would have to build these academic relationships after choosing a site. In Florida, the structure, governance, and NASA connection are already in place, so the Academy can plug into a mature research enterprise from its first class.

**~300,000**
STUDENTS

**~$3.6B**
ANNUAL RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Aerospace and Propulsion · AI, Autonomy and Robotics · Cyber and Communications · Materials and Manufacturing · National Security Space

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University · Florida Tech, Florida's STEM University · FAMU Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University · University of Central Florida · FIU Florida International University · UF University of Florida · FSU Florida State University · University of South Florida

ONLY IN FLORIDA – EXTRAORDINARY TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

Florida's unique coastal and aquatic environments would provide another learning experience well beyond the acreage of the Academy. From undersea habitats to miles of navigable waterways, Florida's water resources provide students with attractive spaces to simulate the environment of living and working underwater, comparable to the isolation, conditions, and challenges experienced by astronauts.

Florida International University's Aquarius Reef Base most recently served as a training location for Artemis II astronauts, simulating the isolation, confinement, and operational challenges of spaceflight. Several new companies continue to establish a presence in Florida to complement the work happening at FIU, providing additional opportunities to maximize commercial space research from the ocean floor.

Panama City's Navy Experimental Diving Unit, a component of Naval Sea Systems Command, houses leading hyperbaric and simulation chambers that are leveraged for spaceflight testing and research. Just South of Panama City and Pensacola and west of Tampa Bay, lies Florida's Gulf Test Range, the largest military testing and training range in the continental U.S., 180,000 square miles of space to support America's undersea, sea, airspace, and advanced defense systems for new and emerging technologies.



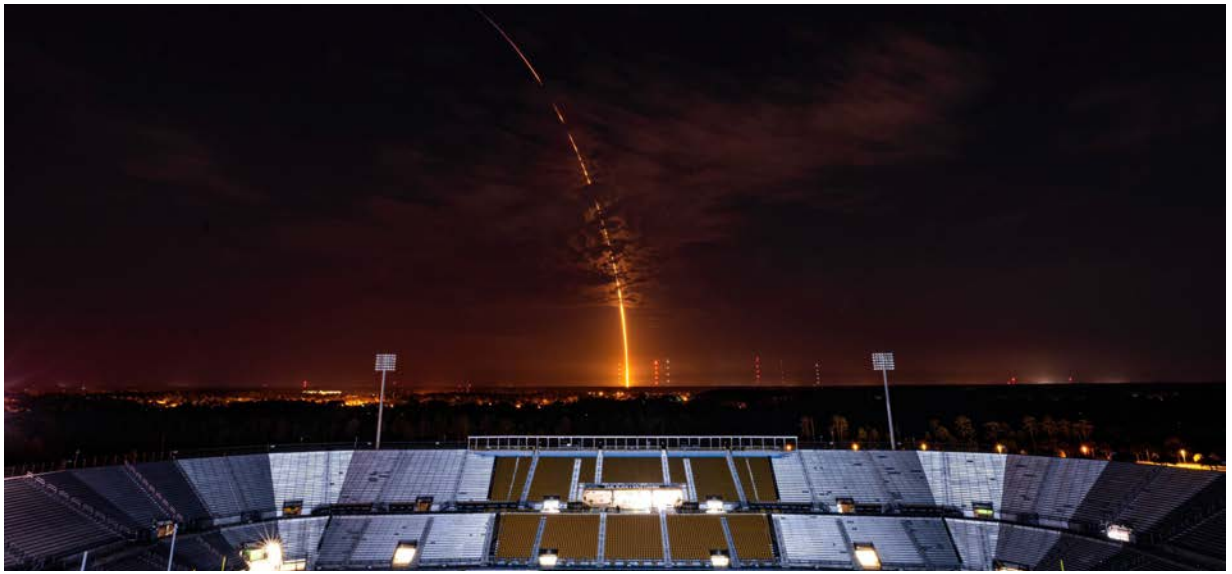



## 1.6 UNMATCHED EDUCATION SYSTEM

The USSA will benefit directly from a talent ecosystem with breadth and vibrancy unlike any other. Florida's commitment to academic excellence is embedded in the state's results: ranked the No. 1 state for higher education by the U.S. News & World Report for ten straight years.[12] This was accomplished all while the state charged the lowest resident undergraduate tuition in the nation. Florida awards 3,300 bachelor's, 984 master's, and 219 doctoral degrees annually across aerospace, electrical, mechanical, and industrial engineering.[13]

Two top aerospace talent-producing and research universities are within an hour of all sites allowing ready access and collaboration with top educators. The University of Central Florida was named the No. 1 supplier of talent to the nation's aerospace and defense industries and ranked one of the top ten most innovative public universities in the nation. Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Daytona Beach campus ranks sixth in the nation for undergraduate aerospace engineering among doctoral granting programs.

Embry-Riddle alumni include nine current or retired NASA and civilian astronauts, reflecting the university's deep connection to human spaceflight. Its students do not simply study







spaceflight, they build hardware that flies on it. During the 2024 Polaris Dawn mission, commanded by Embry-Riddle alumnus and current NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman, a multi-camera system designed and built entirely by Embry-Riddle students supported the mission that conducted the first commercial spacewalk. Embry-Riddle also runs one of the busiest flight training operations in the country. From its Daytona Beach flight line, a fleet of more than 100 aircraft and over 200 flight instructors support nearly 400 training flights every day, with the tempo and discipline of a working airline. Its graduates are the highest paid of any Florida University, and many choose to build their careers in the state. Embry-Riddle partners with more than 200 industry and government organizations each year, including NASA, the FAA, and the Department of War. This is the kind of integrated academic, training, and industry model the Academy can plug into on day one.

Talent includes access to a diverse range of experiences and skills. In Florida, that range includes more than 150,000 skilled aerospace and aviation employees,[14] 85,000 active-duty military personnel,[15] and nearly 1.4 million veterans.[16]

NASA must also recognize that building and growing an Academy is a multi-decade commitment, needing a pipeline of talent to support the Academy for decades to come.

Florida's leadership in education extends to its commitment to a top-ranked K-12 school system. Florida is the No. 1 state for education freedom. Florida has rejected ideological indoctrination and prohibited the use of discriminatory instruction. Florida introduced a civics curriculum that builds American optimism and civic pride, adopted the nation's most thorough standards for Holocaust education, and has delivered record numbers of students performing above grade level in math and English. When it comes to aeronautics and space, Florida's schools are bolstered by the Space Florida Academy aerospace skills program, in which public school students engage in industry-aligned coursework, are introduced to careers in aerospace, earn industry credentials, and participate in hands-on learning experiences. Florida's K-12 achievements will fuel the Academy's future human capital needs.

Access to talent must also include retention of talent, and families, faculty, and staff will choose to stay in Florida. The state has no income tax and a top-ranked education system. This November, Floridians across the state took another giant step at increasing the attractiveness of affordable cost-of-living by approving an increase to the state's homestead property tax exemption, further reducing the cost of homeownership. A federal investment in Florida buys more than infrastructure, more than speed; it buys a workforce that stays.

Florida also offers optionality in accreditation. As a founding participant in the six-state Commission for Public Higher Education, Florida is helping establish a model focused on rigorous, transparent, adaptable, outcomes-based standards and greater process efficiency. For the U.S. Space Academy, that creates another pathway to consider, giving NASA greater flexibility.

The convergence of robust academic institutions with world-class talent in an appealing location not only leads to the conclusion that Florida is the only natural location for the Academy, but it becomes an imperative to be at the nexus of this convergence. Rather than building in isolation and hoping to draw talent, NASA must build where talent and infrastructure exist. The Academy will immediately benefit and be ready for its inaugural class on day one.



MISSION 02

# 02

# FLORIDA DELIVERS RESULTS OVER RHETORIC

RFI Section 1 · Location Plan – Permanent USSA Campus


2.1 · P.23
Location Plan – Permanent USSA Campus

2.2 · P.25
The Permanent Proposed Site

2.3 · P.37
Proposed Land and Site Control

Florida is home to the most important spaceport on Earth and, consequently, is the only state capable of delivering a U.S. Space Academy within a mature, fully integrated local ecosystem combining NASA research and operations, United States Space Force national security space operations, commercial space transportation providers, aerospace manufacturing, elite universities, workforce development assets, and funding unique to the state.

NASA has said the Academy's location is foundational to its success. Where the U.S. Space Academy stands will shape what its students see, who teaches them, and how quickly they move from the classroom to the mission.

The Academy will prepare scientists, engineers, astronauts, pilots, operators, entrepreneurs, civil servants, and warfighters. Florida's ecosystem drives $43.5 billion in aerospace economic output,[17] and Florida's proposal puts the permanent campus at the center of that ecosystem – a 1,000-acre site on NASA land at Kennedy Space Center that can break ground in 2027, begin instruction for its first 300 students in 2028, and open to 1,200 undergraduates for the fall 2031 term. As outlined, Florida has proposed several financial tools and delivery models for consideration by NASA as the RFI process progresses.

America's Space Academy requires more than available land. It needs foundational support that includes utilities, connectivity, and transportation infrastructure to fast track and support the education institution from day one. Florida is not starting from scratch. The state offers a decisive advantage here as the foundation for its success is its infrastructure investments. The infrastructure that is the foundation for the world's most important spaceport also includes three FAA-licensed spaceport facilities and eight spaceport territories. That same system connects commercial service airports, deepwater seaports, roads, freight rail, public-use airports, and the top maintained roads in the country. No other state pairs up a multi modal transportation network with the highest level of commercial space and military operations.[18] Simply put, Florida is the standard of good governance, which in 2026, is the exception to the rule, when compared to other states.

That same readiness extends to the environment, and Florida's approaches and policies let development move quickly while balancing the protection of our beautiful natural resources and ensuring the infrastructure supports America's space dominance for the better. Unlike other states, Florida defines space as a mode of transportation, unlocking additional recurring tools and authorities to ensure speed-to-completion.

ONE INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM

**$43.5B**

AEROSPACE ECONOMIC OUTPUT



## 2.1 LOCATION PLAN – PERMANENT USSA CAMPUS

PROXIMITY TO THE SPACE TRIANGLE, CAPE OPERATIONS, AND INDUSTRY

A Florida-based U.S. Space Academy puts future space leaders at the center of the Space Triangle, where civil, commercial, and national security space operations happen daily and at scale. Students would learn inside the industry they are preparing to lead, with the launches that carry Apollo and Shuttle-era ambition forward happening just down the road.

**The high points:**

**One connected region, under an hour away.** The Space Triangle joins three counties. Brevard brings Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. Orange brings UCF and Orlando International Airport, and proximity to Osceola's emerging tech hub. Volusia brings Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

**NASA at full operational depth.** KSC hosts more than 90 private-sector partners under roughly 250 agreements.[19] It also manages Moon and Mars logistics procurement, oversees ISS Commercial Resupply Services, and runs research laboratories.

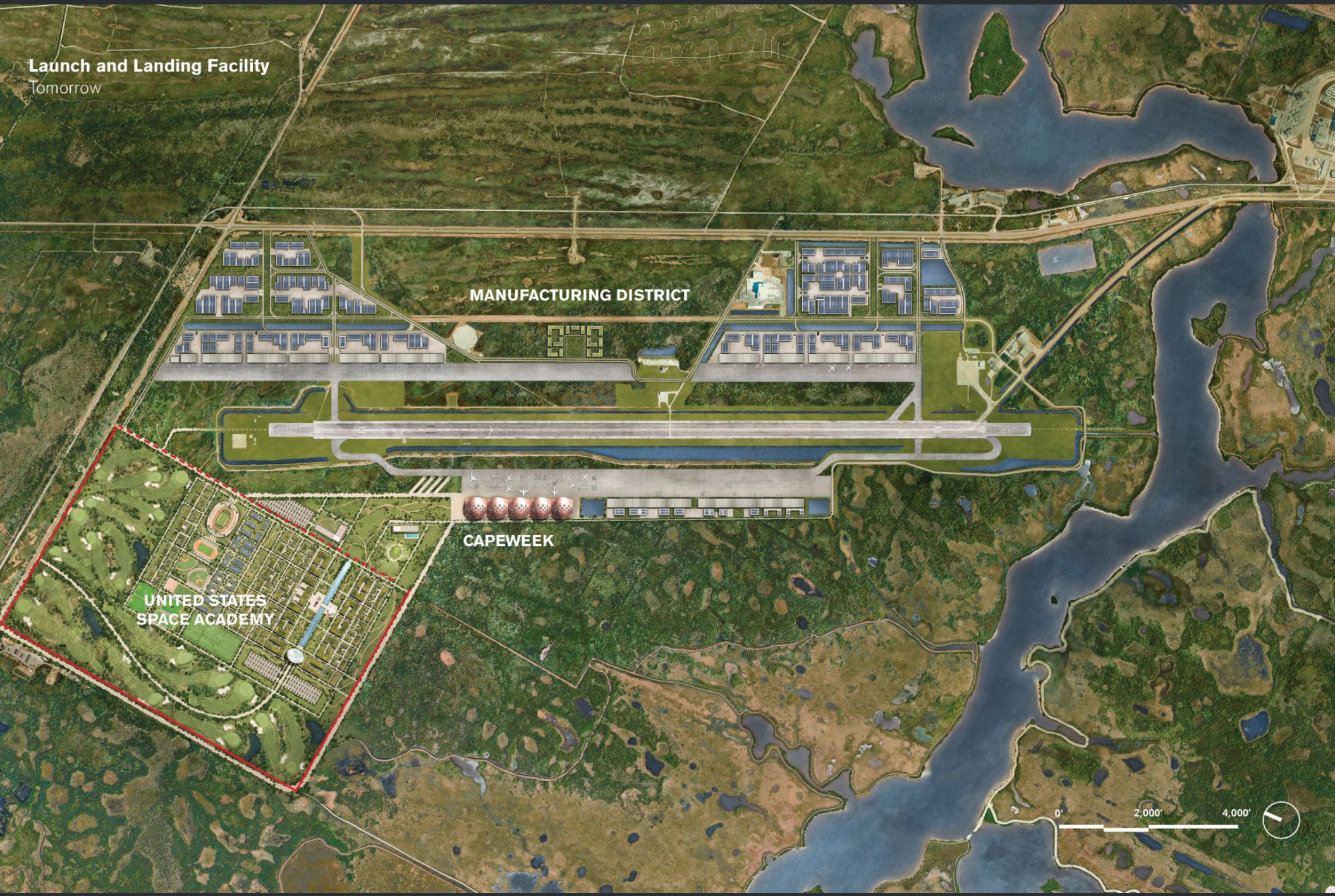
**National security space next door.** Space Launch Delta 45's five installations host Delta 10, the Naval Ordnance Test Unit, the Air Force Technical Applications Center, and Space Training and Readiness Command.[20]

**The full operational chain.** Students would contribute to real missions from research and design through launch and operations, instead of studying them from a distance.

The Space Coast's commercial base spans launch and spacecraft development, commercial aircraft design and manufacturing, and aviation maintenance, repair, and overhaul. For students, that means access to internships, research partnerships, and mentors from the companies building America's next generation of vehicles. For industry, it means a pipeline of graduates trained minutes from where they will work.

CAPEWEEK will bring the global aerospace industry to the Space Coast each year as an international air and space show. Academy students would have a front row seat to the technologies, companies, agencies, and international partners shaping the field, and a standing opportunity to meet future employers and collaborators. With a deep history of commercial partnerships, Florida is where the handoff between educational institutions, government, and industry physically happens.




Launch and Landing Facility
Tomorrow
MANUFACTURING DISTRICT
CAPEWEEK
UNITED STATES
SPACE ACADEMY
0'
2,000'
4,000'

## 2.2 THE PERMANENT PROPOSED SITE

Florida proposes a 1,000-acre site on NASA property at Kennedy Space Center in Brevard County, at the center of the Space Triangle, the aerospace region spanning Brevard, Orange, and Volusia counties. The site exceeds NASA's 300-acre minimum. The current proposed build is a 3.08 million square foot campus that can accommodate 1,200 undergraduates by fall 2031, with room to grow to a 6.9 million square foot campus for 4,000 students.

The United States Space Academy presents an unprecedented opportunity to establish a new model for aerospace education, one that is directly integrated into the operational heart of America's space program. Located alongside the Launch and Landing Facility, the Academy will become part of an established and rapidly expanding ecosystem of research, manufacturing, testing and commercial space operations from its very first day. Rather than developing as an isolated academic institution, the Academy will draw upon the extraordinary infrastructure, expertise, and industrial partnerships already present at Kennedy Space Center.

This proximity creates the opportunity for students to move seamlessly between education and industry, connecting classroom learning with the real world experience of designing, building, testing and ultimately launching the technologies that will shape the future of space exploration.

Existing high voltage electrical service, nearby utility and communications infrastructure, established NASA security and emergency-response services, and multiple emergency routes provide a strong foundation for development. And while further expansion will be required over the years, such developments have the added benefit of providing additional support capacity for future spaceport operations across northern KSC locations.

### A LEGACY OF EXPLORATION

Other applicants will tout experience. Yet, only Florida has actually delivered in creating America's gateway to new frontiers. In just 77 years, Florida's Space Coast has transformed from a military proving ground into the world's foremost gateway to space. From the first rocket launches at Cape Canaveral to the Apollo Moon landings and the Space Shuttle program, this remarkable landscape has been at the center of humanity's greatest achievements in space exploration. What began as a quiet coastline rapidly evolved into a national center for scientific discovery, technological advancement and human ambition. Today, that pioneering spirit continues to drive a new era of innovation, as the boundaries between government, commercial industry and academic research continue to expand.

| 1,000 | 3.08M | 1,200 | 4,000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| ACRES, NASA-OWNED, AT KENNEDY SPACE CENTER | SQ FT INITIAL CAMPUS | STUDENTS BY FALL 2031 | STUDENTS AT FULL BUILD (6.9M SQ FT) |



### THE NEXT FRONTIER

The next chapter of this extraordinary place is already being written. Increasing launch activity, humanity's return to the Moon, and ambitions to explore Mars and beyond are ushering in a new era of space exploration. As commercial investment accelerates and new technologies reshape the industry, Kennedy Space Center is evolving from a historic launch destination into an increasingly active center of aerospace research, manufacturing and innovation. At the heart of this transformation, the Launch and Landing Facility is poised to become a new destination for advanced industry and international collaboration. This future is already taking shape; the opportunity is for the United States Space Academy to become part of it from day one.

### LAUNCH AND LANDING FACILITY: THE CENTER OF AEROSPACE TECHNOLOGY

Originally developed as the landing site for NASA's Space Shuttle program, the Launch and Landing Facility is entering a new chapter in its remarkable history. Its 15,000-foot runway, established infrastructure, and strategic position within Kennedy Space Center are a welcome mat to America's aerospace exceptionalism. What was once dedicated primarily to the return of spacecraft is now evolving into a center for research, manufacturing, testing and commercial innovation at LLF East as well as a technology and aerospace convention venue of America at LLF West.

Under Space Florida's stewardship, this historic facility has been reimagined as a place where new aerospace capabilities can be developed, tested, and brought to life. The vision for the Launch and Landing Facility East extends far beyond its historic runway. A network of industrial neighborhoods brings together aerospace manufacturers, technology companies, research institutions and commercial operators within a connected campus. Organized around shared infrastructure, specialist facilities, and collaborative spaces, this ecosystem supports the full cycle of aerospace innovation, from initial research and design through fabrication, assembly and testing. Companies will benefit from their proximity to one another and direct connections to the Kennedy Space Center spaceport—something every enrollee will benefit from on day one.

### CAPEWEEK: THE FUTURE OF AEROSPACE EXCHANGE

CAPEWEEK introduces an entirely new platform for aerospace innovation, industry collaboration, and public engagement. Conceived as a world-class convention and exhibition destination, it will bring together the leading companies, technologies, and ideas shaping the future of flight and space exploration.

More than a traditional exhibition center, CAPEWEEK is envisioned as a dynamic environment where industry, research and the public can come together to experience aerospace innovation firsthand. Its location alongside an operational runway creates an extraordinary opportunity to connect exhibitions and conferences with live demonstrations, aircraft displays, and real world aerospace activity.

The architectural ambition is to create a flexible, large scale environment capable of accommodating everything from intimate industry gatherings to major international exhibitions. Together with the existing infrastructure, CAPEWEEK will further the



Launch and Landing Facility as the premier global hub for aerospace commerce and innovation, bringing the men and women who imagine the future of aerospace into direct contact with those who are making it possible.

### A NEW FRONTIER FOR A MISSION-DRIVEN CAMPUS

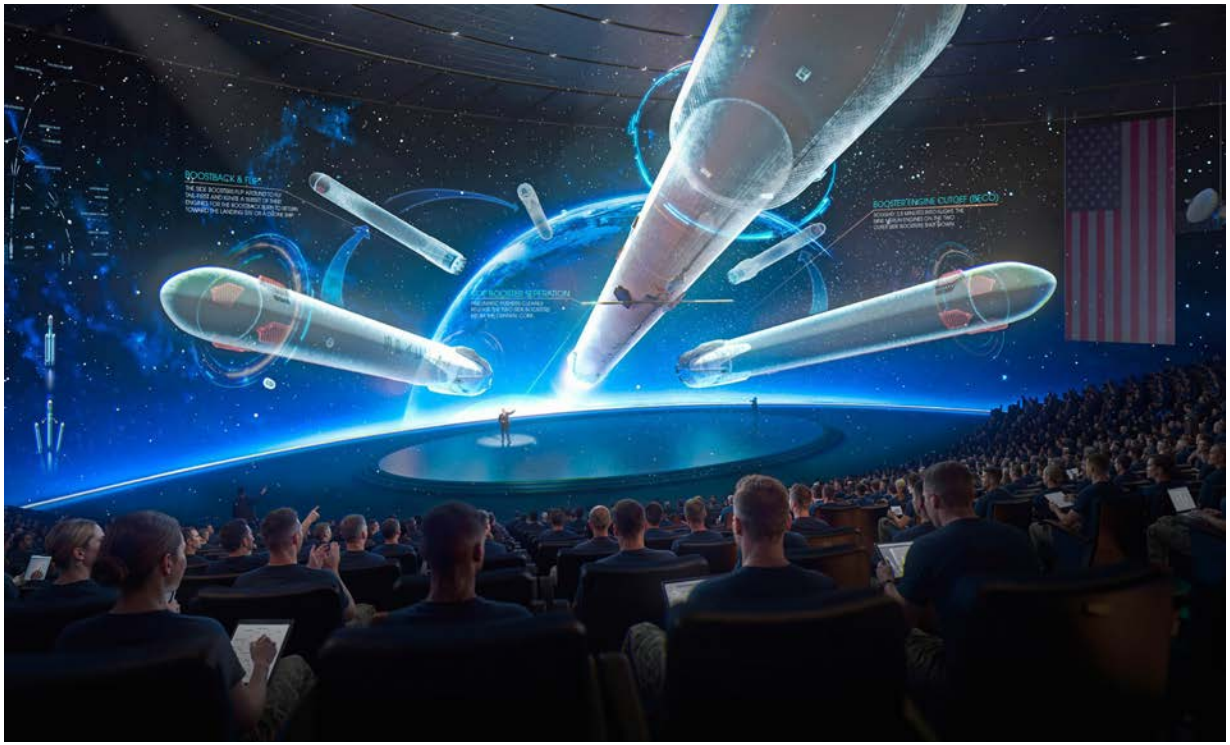
The United States Space Academy represents a defining moment in America's commitment to the future of space exploration. Building upon the proud traditions of the nation's federal academies, it will prepare a new generation of leaders, scientists, engineers and public servants to advance America's leadership in space. Guided by the Space Force's foundational values of Character, Connection, Commitment and Courage, the Academy will combine academic excellence, technical innovation and national service in an institution dedicated to the challenges and opportunities of a new space age.

Located alongside the Launch and Landing Facility on a 1,000-acre site, the Academy will become part of an established and rapidly expanding ecosystem of research, manufacturing, testing and commercial space operations from its very first day. The Academy will draw upon the extraordinary infrastructure, expertise and industrial partnerships already present at Kennedy Space Center. This proximity creates the opportunity for students to move seamlessly between education and industry, connecting classroom learning with the real world experience of designing, building, testing and ultimately launching the technologies that will shape the future of space exploration.

### THE MISSION AT THE CENTER

The master plan (Appendix B) places the mission at the heart of the Academy, both physically and symbolically. The campus is deliberately organized and oriented toward Kennedy Space Center's active launch complexes, creating a constant visual and experiential connection between academic life and the extraordinary missions taking place beyond its boundaries.

From classrooms and research laboratories to residential housing and shared campus spaces, the presence of the launch facilities will be an enduring part of daily life. Rocket launches will be defining moments in the Academy





experience, reinforcing the purpose and ambition of every student who comes here. This direct relationship between the campus and its operational surroundings will create an educational environment unlike any other, where the next generation of aerospace leaders will not simply study the future of space exploration, but witness and participate in its development.

### THE HEART OF CAMPUS LIFE

The parade grounds form the ceremonial and social heart of the Academy. Drawing upon the traditions of America's great federal institutions, this central open space will provide a setting for formal assemblies, parades, graduation ceremonies and the shared rituals that establish a strong sense of identity and belonging.

Beyond its ceremonial role, the parade grounds will be an everyday place of gathering, recreation and reflection. Framed by the Academy's principal buildings and oriented toward the distant launch complexes, this space will connect the traditions of national service with the extraordinary ambition of the space mission. It will be a place to celebrate achievement, reflect on responsibility, and bring the entire Academy community together.

### FACILITIES FOR SPACE TRAINING

Today, the specialized facilities required for space education and training are dispersed across research institutions, military installations, and aerospace centers throughout the country. From mission simulation and spacecraft operations to propulsion testing, advanced research and astronaut training, these capabilities exist independently, but have never been brought together within a single, fully integrated academic campus.

For the first time, the United States Space Academy will bring these disciplines and facilities together in one place, creating an unprecedented environment for learning, collaboration and innovation. Students will have access to a comprehensive range of world-class training facilities, connecting academic learning directly with hands on experimentation, technical development, and mission operations. Building upon the existing infrastructure and industrial partnerships at the Launch and Landing Facility, the Academy will extend this integrated approach into the






wider Kennedy Space Center ecosystem. The result is an entirely new model for space education, where students can design, build, test and ultimately launch within one connected environment, preparing the next generation of leaders to advance America's ambitions in space.

### TWO STATELY BUILDINGS AT THE HEART OF CAMPUS

Positioned prominently along the central parade grounds, the Academy's principal academic and assembly building will become a defining feature of campus life. At its heart, a technologically advanced auditorium will provide a secure, enclosed environment for teaching, mission briefings, presentations and collaboration, complemented by a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) auditorium for classified instruction and operations.

This enclosed environment will open toward the launch complexes, creating a shared viewing experience for the entire Academy community. What begins as a place of learning becomes a place of collective inspiration, where students and faculty can gather to witness rocket launches firsthand, bringing the national space mission directly into the heart of campus life.

Positioned at the highest point of the campus, the Chapel will serve as both a physical landmark and a symbol of the Academy's enduring values, like the US Air Force Academy. Its location at the heart of the master plan establishes a place of reflection, contemplation, and purpose.

Rising above the surrounding academic and residential buildings, the Chapel will provide a defining point of orientation across the campus. Conceived as a place for reflection and spiritual life, it will offer a moment of calm within an environment dedicated to discovery and innovation. Its central position reinforces the importance of character, service and integrity, reminding students that the pursuit of knowledge and technological advancement must always be grounded in a greater sense of responsibility.

### CONNECTED TO REAL WORLD OPERATIONS

Specialist training facilities will be positioned along the campus edge closest to the Launch and Landing Facility, creating opportunities to draw upon existing runway, hangar and aerospace infrastructure. This deliberate relationship will allow the Academy to connect its educational and training programs with the operational capabilities already present at Kennedy Space Center. Through potential partnerships with government agencies, research institutions and commercial operators, students will have opportunities to engage with the technologies, facilities and expertise that underpin real aerospace missions.

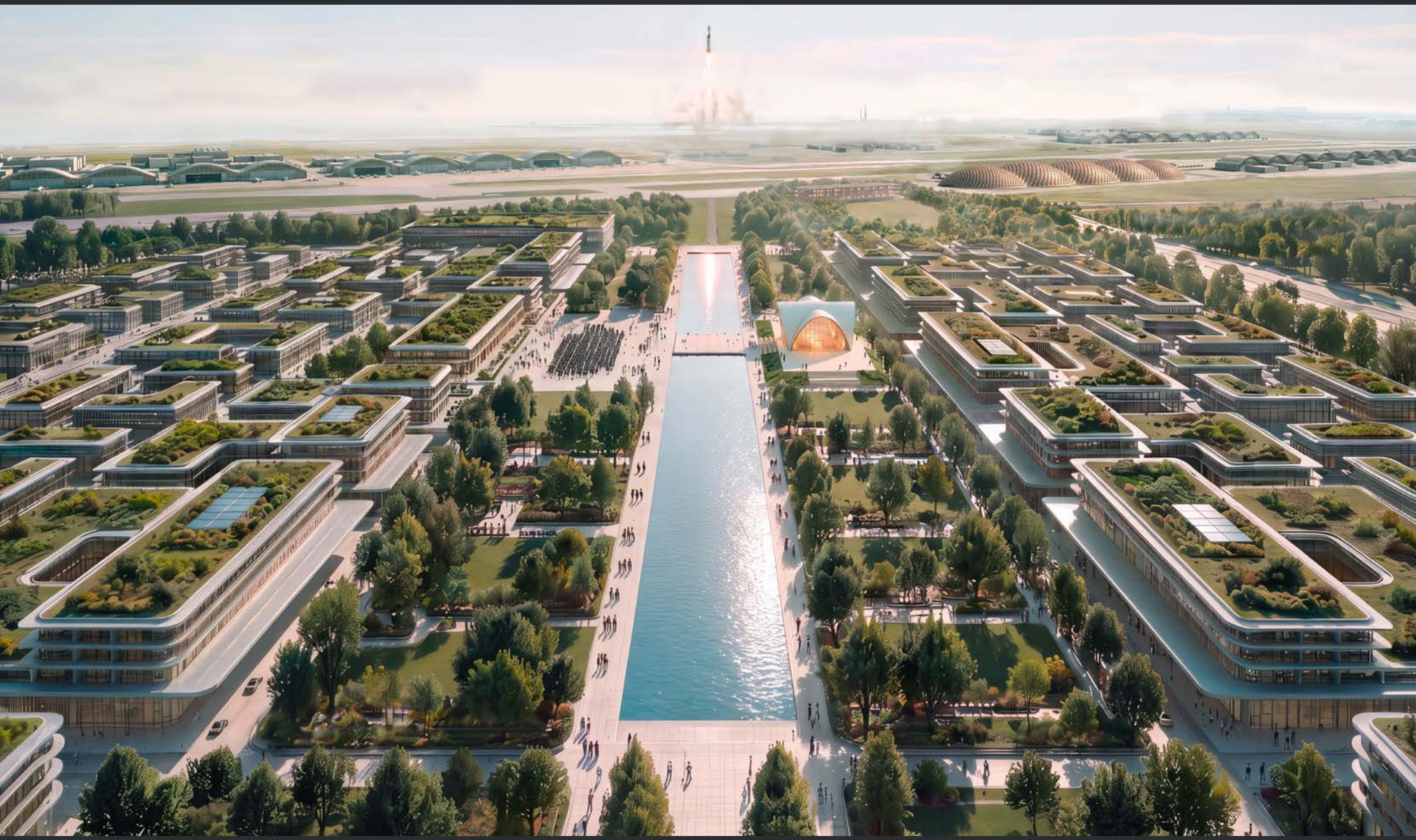
The United States Space Academy will establish an exceptional sporting environment, with a landmark stadium, championship golf course and world-class training facilities supporting its ambition to compete at the NCAA Division I level.

Initially drawing upon the established athletic facilities at the University of Central Florida, the Academy will progressively develop its own sporting campus, creating an outstanding environment for athletes, students and the wider community. From major competitions and flyovers to everyday training and recreation, these facilities will celebrate athletic excellence, Academy tradition and national pride.

### TRAINING INTEGRATED THROUGHOUT

Training Grounds will extend well beyond conventional classrooms and dedicated facilities. The master plan (Appendix B) integrates a broad range of physical, technical and mission oriented training environments throughout the campus, allowing students to develop the skills, resilience and leadership required for careers across the aerospace


UNITED STATES
SPACE ACADEMY
FLORIDA



sector.

From athletics and field training to specialist laboratories, simulation environments and collaborative research facilities, learning will become an integral part of everyday campus life. This distribution of facilities creates opportunities for different disciplines to intersect, encouraging students to work together across the boundaries of science, engineering, operations, and leadership.

### A GENERATION OF LEARNING

Florida's USSA campus will establish a new benchmark for education in science, engineering, technology, and aerospace operations. World-class academic facilities will bring together advanced laboratories, collaborative learning environments, simulation spaces and specialist research capabilities, creating an environment where theoretical knowledge is directly connected to practical application.

Designed to encourage interdisciplinary learning, the academic campus will support collaboration across scientific, technical and operational disciplines, preparing students to address the increasingly complex challenges of space exploration. From classrooms to research laboratories, every aspect of the learning environment will be shaped by the technologies and missions defining the future of aerospace.

### EXCELLENCE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Physical development, teamwork and personal resilience will be fundamental to the Academy experience. A comprehensive collection of world-class sports and recreation facilities will provide students with access to the highest standards of athletic training, competition and wellness, supporting both individual achievement and the development of a strong Academy community.

From major indoor sporting facilities and specialist training environments to outdoor playing fields, athletics tracks and recreational spaces, the campus will offer an exceptional setting for physical development. Integrated with the wider landscape and everyday student life, these facilities will encourage a culture of excellence, discipline, and collaboration that extends well beyond the classroom.

### A CAMPUS CONNECTED TO THE WORLD

The Academy's proximity to CAPEWEEK will create opportunities to extend the educational experience beyond its own facilities. Conceived as a world-class aerospace exhibition and convention destination, CAPEWEEK will provide access to an extraordinary environment for international conferences, industry exhibitions, technological demonstrations and gatherings of the global aerospace community.

Through shared use of its adaptable exhibition



halls, auditoriums and event spaces, the Academy could accommodate major academic assemblies, conferences, competitions and collaborative programs without duplicating large scale infrastructure on campus. More importantly, this connection will bring students into direct contact with the men and women, technologies and ideas shaping the aerospace industry, ensuring that learning continues well beyond the traditional academic setting. The campus is purposefully designed with adjacent needs in mind, including a coordinated model that would allow support through state, federal, in-kind, and private investment. For example, coordinating the Academy's academic calendar with CAPEWEEK could expand opportunities for shared-use facilities and commercial investment.

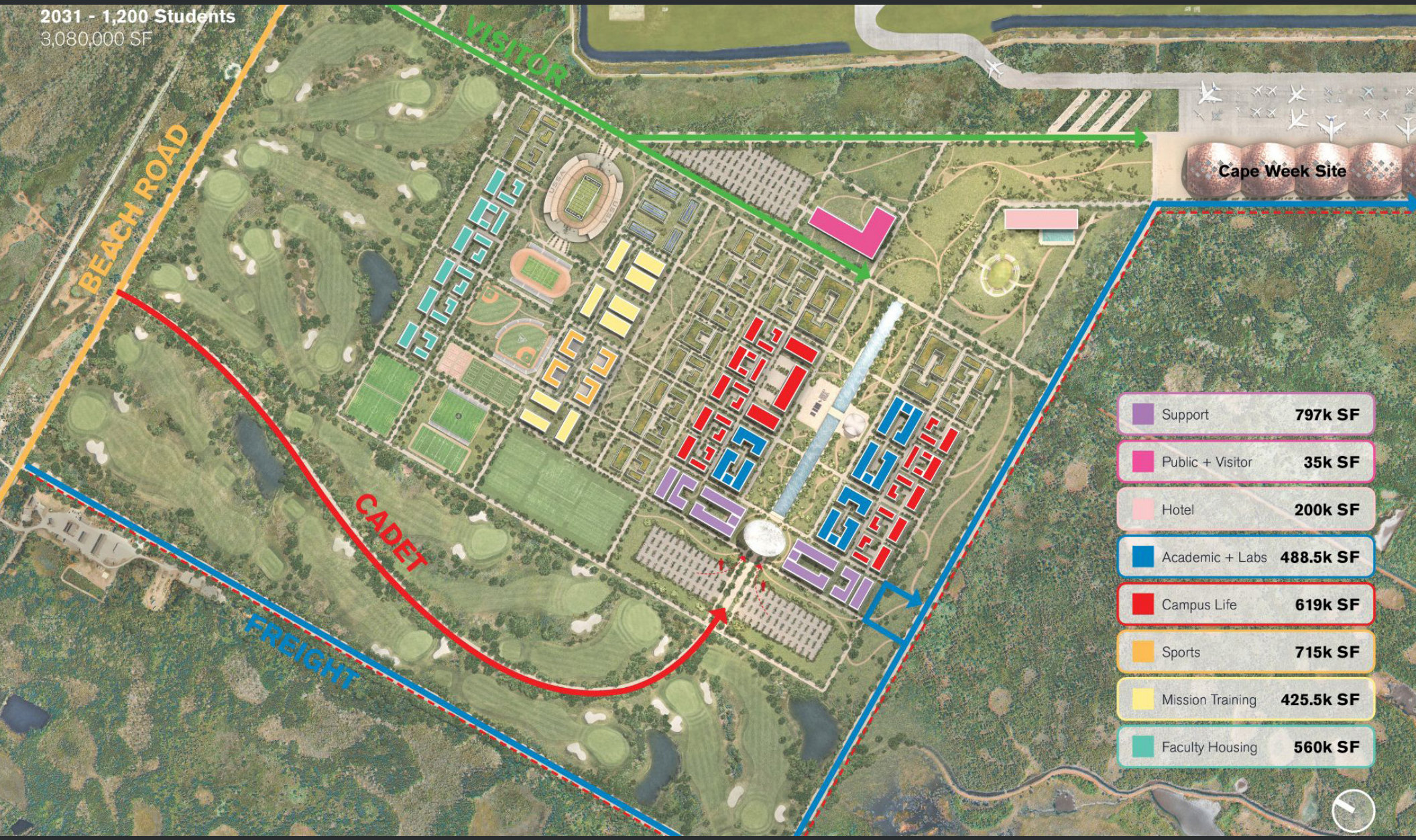
### PROGRAMMATIC BREAKDOWN

The master plan (Appendix B) allows for mission critical facilities to be fully built out on day one in 2031, while the rest of the campus grows to full capacity in 2035. The program includes core student facilities and support functions as well as visitor touchpoints.

### THE BEACH HOUSE

Overlooking Florida's iconic Indian River Lagoon, the Superintendent's residence will carry forward the legacy of the historic Astronaut Beach House at KSC, where generations of astronauts gathered ahead of their missions to reflect on the pioneering spirit of America.






SITE PLAN
CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

## 2.3 PROPOSED LAND AND SITE CONTROL

The proposed site is located within NASA Kennedy Space Center (KSC) in Brevard County, Florida, at approximately 28.6353079 latitude and -80.7221092 longitude. The proposed site consists of a single 1,000-acre parcel, with significant flexibility for future expansion. The campus could potentially double in size through expansion to the west, south, and/or east onto undeveloped land within KSC boundary. As proposed, the boundary does not interfere with adjacent lands managed by the U.S. Department of Interior.

The property is currently owned by NASA and is federal property. The proposed approach would be for NASA to outgrant the site to the State of Florida through an amendment to Space Florida's existing property agreement (Appendix A), supported by a Space Act Agreement (Appendix A) to enable development and return of the property improvements for NASA's use upon completion. The estimated value of the land is approximately $80 million. Leveraging the existing federal / state partnership, the site is positioned to be made available for development without the need for separate land acquisition.

There are no existing buildings or planned occupants on the proposed site. The property is within NASA's boundary and is currently underutilized as buffer land. Locating the campus here would put this NASA-controlled property to productive mission use without displacing planned commercial development or affecting spaceport operations.

The site also offers flexibility in how the campus interfaces with surrounding federal property. It is adjacent to the Launch and Landing Facility runway and could either be incorporated within the KSC security gate or remain outside the gate to allow for greater public accessibility. This provides options for accommodating the institutional, residential, research, and controlled-access federal functions envisioned for the campus.

Based on preliminary reviews by state permitting agencies, the site intentionally avoids nearby navigable waters and has no impact to historic resources. As with any project, a small amount of mitigation will be required, but is very manageable. In fact, given the support of FDOT and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), mitigation could be leveraged and incorporated into the design of the campus itself to reduce duplicative costs and increase the overall design of the campus through the use of natural features along the campus buffer and gateway.

### SITE READINESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The site benefits from proximity to existing KSC and LLF infrastructure, with opportunities to extend utilities and supporting systems into the proposed campus. NASA-provided 115-kV electrical lines are located along the northern boundary of the LLF, and to the southeast, while additional utility infrastructure could be extended from the LLF.

For water and wastewater service, the City of Cocoa currently limits water flow to KSC to 1 million gallons per day, while KSC peak usage is approximately 750,000 gallons per day. The U.S. Space Force (USSF) is currently expanding wastewater capacity for the area and the State of Florida's gubernatorial-appointed water management authorities and recurring grant programs can assist with future needs as required. Stormwater conveyance is already present along the northern KSC LLF boundary. The campus will also benefit from infrastructure associated with the LLF, where Space Florida has invested in and constructed a nearly three-mile utility corridor.

Communications conduit is located adjacent to the site and the existing Merritt Island National

Wildlife Refuge (MINWR) facility to the west, providing another opportunity for extension of infrastructure from the LLF, along existing state-funded infrastructure corridors.

Primary roadway access is provided by Beach Road/Max Brewer Memorial Parkway, a recently resurfaced two lane, undivided roadway. Given the abundance of right-of-way available crossing onto the Cape, the Federal-State agreement can provide for FDOT to fund the construction and capacity improvements to maximize throughput onto the Cape and to campus, while the federal government would provide the land already available. Further, FDOT is finalizing a corridor study at the state's direction to ensure any improvements within the SR 46 corridor from I-95 to US-1 are ready on day one to accommodate the increased trips projected through the establishment of the USSA in Florida.

As all major roadways in the region are already eligible for state or federal pass-through funding, FDOT stands ready to commit the resources to ensure the build out happens, whether that be wider shoulders, efficient turn lanes, and enhanced routes.

Recognizing the need for additional value to NASA and the commercial space industry's mission to set Florida's application apart, Florida is also prepared to prioritize the existing NASA short-line railroad for eligible FDOT programs—another opportunity to maximize the partnership NASA seeks, allowing NASA's discretionary resources to stay focused on the academic build-out of the campus. Put simply, by leveraging financial tools, the entire system benefits.

Because the property is currently undeveloped, no demolition is required. Primary site-preparation activities would consist of greenfield clearing, grubbing, and grading.

The site also benefits from KSC's existing emergency response and security infrastructure. NASA provides security, fire, emergency response, and routine patrol services in accordance with service levels established through the Reimbursable Space Act Agreement (Appendix A) as needed, based on developed square footage, building type, and occupancy. NASA coordinates law enforcement activities with the Brevard County Sheriff's Office. Healthcare access is available via a direct route to Parrish Medical Center in Titusville using CR 402 and US 1.

### ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

Development of the site would occur within an established federal operating environment in which Space Florida and NASA/KSC have an existing history of coordinating successfully to address wetlands, floodplains, historic and cultural resources, contamination, and protected species and habitats. With respect to natural hazards, resilience, and continuity of operations, the site is supported by KSC's nationally significant infrastructure and its established network of emergency response teams, with a 60-year history of preparing for and recovering from storm events.

NASA/KSC maintains jurisdiction over KSC property and building permitting. Applicable regulatory responsibilities include those of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), which currently administers federal Clean Water Act Section 404 permitting in Florida. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection administers applicable state environmental reviews and Environmental Resource Permitting requirements. In addition to the FDOT resources referenced in this RFI, as provided in Appendix C, FDEP stands ready to assist in all state and federal permitting coordination and the Executive Office of the Governor has already engaged the USACE's Jacksonville District to ensure swift permitting. The U.S. Space Force, as operator of the area's regional wastewater treatment facility, reviews applicable service, capacity, connection, and discharge requirements. See Appendix C for a letter of support from FDEP.

PROXIMITY AND SUPPORTING ECOSYSTEM

The site offers strong connectivity to regional air transportation, federal space infrastructure, higher education, industry, healthcare, and quality-of-life amenities. The proposed site provides convenient access to four international airports across Central Florida and the Space Coast, all within roughly an hour's drive: Orlando International Airport, Orlando Sanford International Airport, Melbourne Orlando International Airport, and Daytona Beach International Airport. Notably, Orlando International Airport serves nearly 200 nonstop destinations, and is the country's 7th busiest airport. Within a 200-mile radius is another of America's 10 busiest airports (Miami International Airport), and five additional airports among the nation's 50 busiest (Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, Jacksonville International Airport, Tampa International Airport, President Donald J. Trump International Airport, and Southwest Florida International Airport). Except for Tampa and Southwest Florida, all of these are readily reachable via Interstate 95 and with the planned Brightline rail station in Cocoa in 2030, four of them (Orlando, Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Trump International) will be accessible via privately operated intercity rail service.

The site is located directly on NASA property adjacent to the historic former Shuttle Landing Facility, now leased and operated by Space Florida as the LLF. It is approximately five miles north via Kennedy Parkway from KSC's Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB) District, including Boeing operations at the Commercial Crew and Cargo Processing Facility (C3PF) and Orbiter Processing Facilities (OPFs).

Nearby academic institutions provide potential support for the Academy's planned 2028 inaugural instruction program. The proposed site is approximately seven driving miles from Eastern Florida State College's Titusville Campus and 22 driving miles from both the University of Central Florida's Cocoa Campus and Eastern Florida State College's Cocoa Campus.

The surrounding area also provides direct connections to a growing commercial space ecosystem. Space Florida is actively developing land east of the LLF runway for Launch Service Provider operations, including the completed Amazon Leo Payload Processing Facility, while additional hangar space, including CAPEWEEK, is located west of the LLF. The proposed site

## UTILITIES

**Power**
**Utility corridor**
**Water**
**Wastewater & stormwater**
**Communications**

## PLANNED ACCESS & SAFETY UPGRADES

**Beach Road / Max Brewer Pkwy**
**SR 46 corridor**
**NASA short-line railroad**
**Security & emergency response**
**Parrish Medical Center**

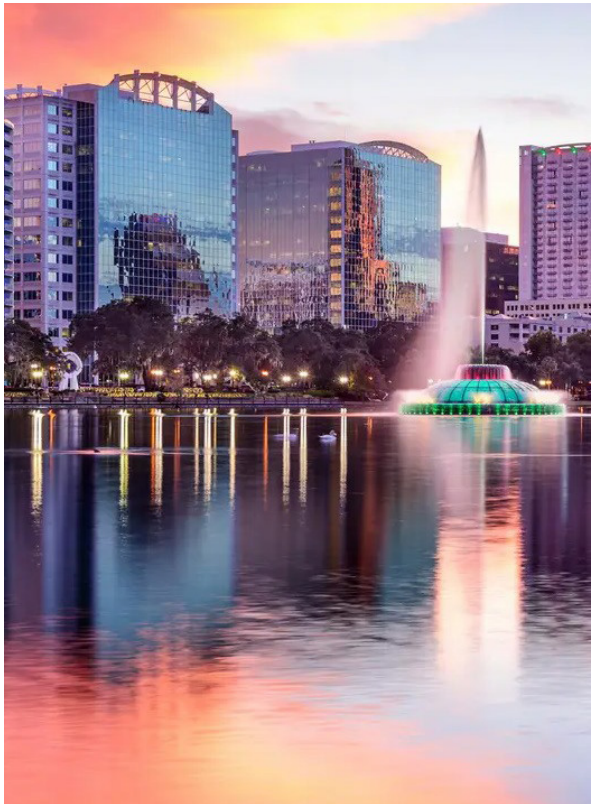
offers the potential for direct access to and collocation or shared use of hangar space and the runway apron west of the LLF, strengthening its connection to nearby aerospace operations.

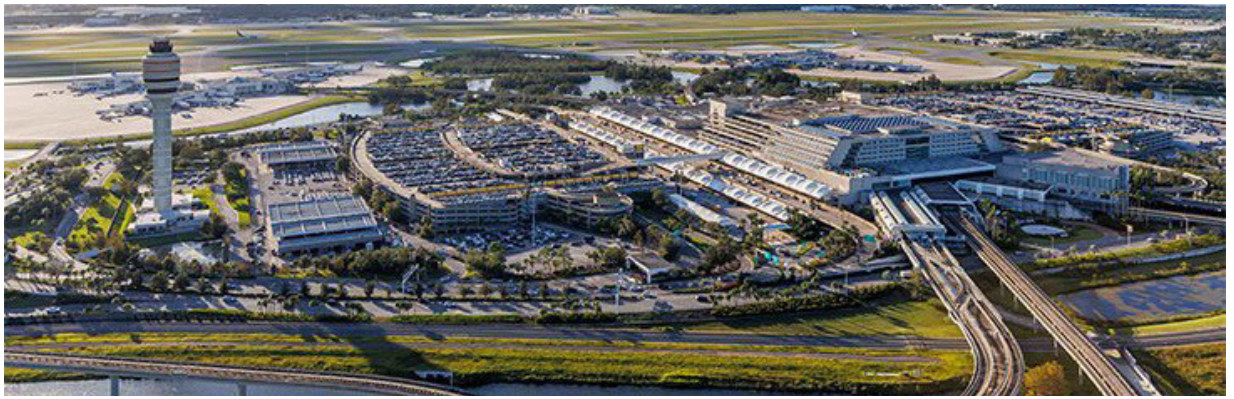
Healthcare services are readily accessible, with Parrish Medical Center approximately seven driving miles away, complemented by Cape Canaveral Hospital, scheduled to open in 2027, and Orlando Health facilities serving the broader region. The location is also situated along a planned bicycle route and the established Beach Road vehicular route leading to public beaches and recreation within Canaveral National Seashore, including Playalinda Beach, manatee-viewing areas, and hiking destinations such as Oak Hammock, whose trailhead is immediately across Beach Road from the proposed site.

The site's primary mainland connection, Max Brewer Bridge across the Indian River, enters the mainland in Downtown Titusville. The broader region provides access to established retail, hospitality, and entertainment destinations including Downtown Melbourne, Cocoa Village, Cocoa Beach, Satellite Beach, Viera, and Port Canaveral's entertainment district, as well as extensive opportunities for water based recreation such as fishing.

Metropolitan Orlando is within a one hour drive time of the site, providing access to global corporate offices, conferences and professional-development opportunities, as well as major sports, concerts, nightlife, theme parks, and other entertainment. The broader region combines access to four international airports, Port Canaveral, waterfront living, and an extensive and diverse hotel and retail inventory serving the area's space, cruise, and beach tourism markets and its growing private sector space industry.

The location evokes NASA's ethos to explore the unknown in air and space, innovating for the benefit of humanity while reflecting the scale and importance of the national mission of the U.S. Space Academy to produce tomorrow's aerospace leaders. The site offers what few can, a ready made canvas to build tomorrow's vision today. Not only does the site benefit from past investments, the partnership between NASA and Florida has proven



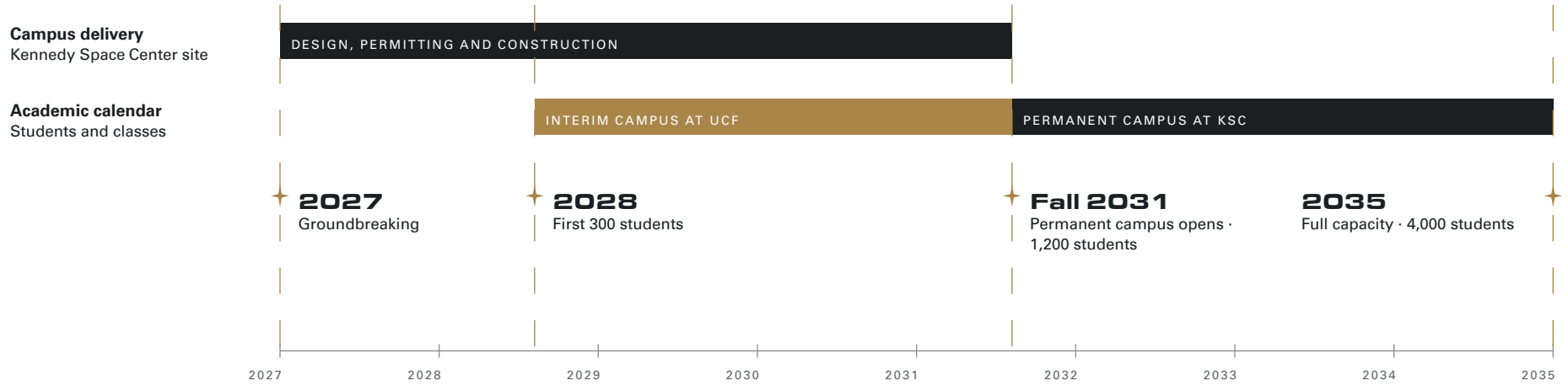


successful in growing the industry over the past decade. By keeping the site on NASA property, NASA is provided with additional flexibility and a reduction in duplicative state or local reviews. Additionally, any investment on spaceport territory immediately unlocks additional Space Florida and FDOT tools. Further, recognizing the importance of a NASA-led, state-supported model by the Administration, maintaining the project on federal land allows NASA to leverage its existing project development processes, and at its discretion, request Florida to in-kind all professional services. NASA moves with competence and purpose, and this not only follows that vision, it enhances it.

Most importantly, Florida's schedule meets all three RFI milestones - groundbreaking in 2027, first instruction in 2028, and a permanent campus for the Fall 2031 term. Construction and the academic calendar move on parallel tracks, so every student has an uninterrupted path from the first day of class to graduation.



PROJECT DELIVERY TIMELINE




PHASE LENGTHS ARE ILLUSTRATIVE; MILESTONE YEARS FOLLOW THE RFI SCHEDULE

MISSION 03

# 03

# FLORIDA IS READY ON DAY ONE

RFI Section 2 · Interim Academic Instruction Plan for 2028


3.1 · P.46
Credible Capacity for Instruction in 2028

3.2 · P.51
A Flexible Operating Model

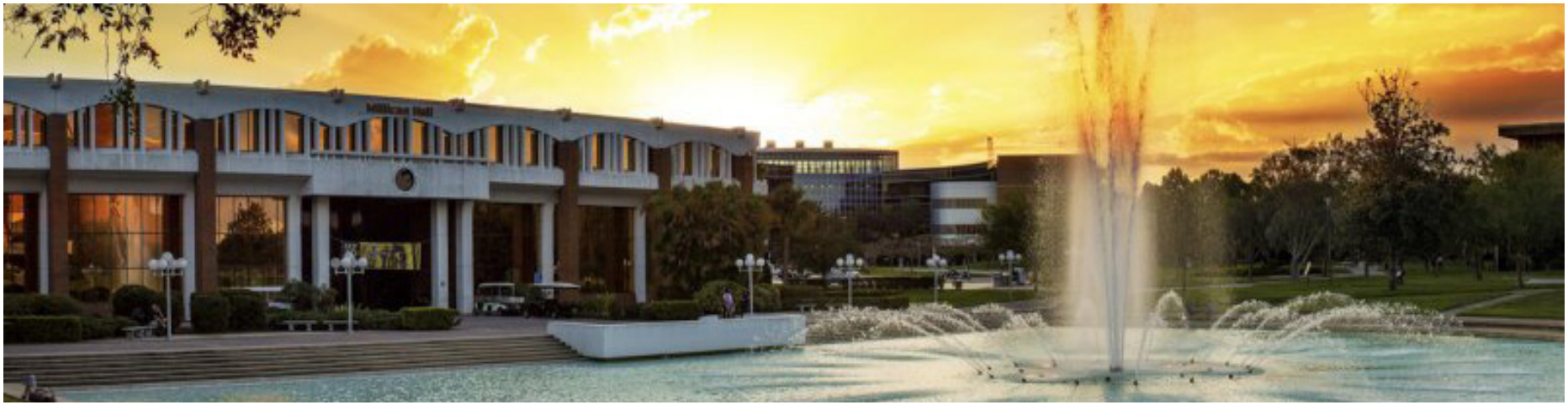
3.3 · P.52
Launch Readiness and Transition to the Permanent Academy

The interim model described below is intended to demonstrate one credible and executable pathway for opening the Academy in 2028.

At the direction of NASA and the State of Florida, the University of Central Florida is prepared to host the United States Space Academy during interim operations beginning in 2028, if that approach aligns with NASA's preferred implementation model. For planning purposes, UCF has developed a proposed framework in which the Academy could operate as a distinct college within the University, supported by the Space Research Consortium led by UCF and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. This framework demonstrates a path to begin instruction for approximately 300 inaugural students in 2028 while preserving the flexibility to implement the governance, academic and operating structure ultimately established by NASA and USSA.

Under this proposed framework, the college would maintain the Academy's independent identity, with an appropriate federal governance role established in coordination with NASA and USSA, while drawing on UCF's academic and operating infrastructure. The structure will also provide a pathway to transition to a separately accredited institution and the permanent campus anticipated for 2031, with the ability to provide additional support as requested by NASA.

Within Florida's coordinated response, UCF is prepared to offer an integrated campus model that can be tailored to NASA's requirements, giving Academy students access to a robust student experience while preserving a distinct Academy identity. UCF proposes the University Tower Building as a dedicated interim home for the Academy beginning in fall 2028. If selected as part of NASA's preferred approach, the facility could provide existing residential facilities, branded for the Academy that can scale with enrollment, and access to UCF classrooms, laboratories, faculty, libraries, dining, recreation, health services and administrative systems. These connected facilities would support a cohesive Academy experience, with transportation and schedules designed around the cohort.



As a subdivision of the State of Florida, UCF is prepared to work with NASA, USSA, and Space Florida to implement NASA's preferred interim operating model, whether through the framework described here or an alternative structure established by NASA. UCF is also prepared to support continued interim operations as needed through an agreed transition, with subsequent enrollment, facilities, staffing, and duration established through joint capacity planning. The proposed approach is therefore intended to demonstrate an immediately executable option while preserving NASA's authority to determine the final Academy structure and implementation plan.



**300**
INAUGURAL STUDENTS IN 2028

**97,573**
SQ FT UNIVERSITY TOWER

**7,000+**
ON-CAMPUS BEDS AT UCF

**$30M**
ANNUAL ROM COST OF INTERIM OPERATIONS

## 3.1 CREDIBLE CAPACITY FOR INSTRUCTION IN 2028

### A DEDICATED CAMPUS WITHIN A CAMPUS

UCF is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the accreditor of the U.S. Air Force Academy. Its proposed college structure would give the Academy an identifiable academic and administrative home, dedicated leadership and student support, and access to the University's established systems. NASA and USSA would guide the Academy's mission, federal identity, curriculum priorities, selection standards and institutional outcomes. During the interim period, these arrangements would operate within applicable accreditation requirements, with UCF retaining the academic oversight and institutional responsibilities associated with instruction and credit offered under its accreditation until the Academy is separately accredited. A written governance agreement would align these roles, including curriculum approval, faculty appointments, academic standards, student conduct, grade appeals and dispute resolution.

Academy enrollment would be restricted to the federally selected cohort under an agreed admissions process. UCF would support application processing, enrollment, registration and records as authorized. The implementation team would confirm the institutional and state approvals needed for this arrangement and establish an academic credit and accreditation pathway with NASA and the relevant accrediting bodies. Consistent with NASA's Q&A, the proposal does not presume that an accreditation or credit transfer approach has already been established. The agreement would specify credit issuance, transcript custody, degree authority and continuity protections before students enroll.

Simply put, Florida is committed to ensuring the model works, allowing NASA to begin instruction parallel with construction of the permanent campus. Florida is also prepared to leverage in-house resources within the State Government to ultimately have visible construction within the NASA timeframe and has also considered expedited models to allow for initial Academy classes to take the short ride to the Cape for classes on day one, of the interim campus.

### PROGRESSION BEYOND THE FIRST YEAR

Based on UCF's existing academic capacity, the following fields could be available to support the Academy's initial degree pathways: Aerospace Engineering; Electrical Engineering;



Industrial Engineering; Computer Science – Cybersecurity; Physics; Chemistry; Business Management; Economics; Data Science; Political Science; and Integrated General Studies. This list illustrates immediately available academic breadth and is not intended to predetermine the Academy's final degree offerings. NASA and USSA would establish the desired degree portfolio, with UCF aligning available programs, course sequences and any necessary new academic offerings to that direction.

The first year proposed plan would be tested against subsequent course sequences so that students can progress while the permanent institution develops. UCF and USSA would establish how credits, prerequisites, research and design work are documented and recognized, and identify a degree completion pathway if the permanent campus or independent accreditation is delayed. Faculty support could include shared assignments, dedicated instruction or joint appointments, subject to workload, funding and applicable eligibility requirements. NASA has not yet specified faculty citizenship or other eligibility criteria; staffing plans would be aligned when those requirements are issued.



### A COHESIVE AND DISTINCT ACADEMY EXPERIENCE

UCF proposes to make the entire 97,573-square-foot University Tower available as the Academy's interim home base beginning in fall 2028 for the first cohort of students. If NASA determines that this configuration best supports the interim Academy, the building could provide a dedicated home for Academy leadership and administration, advising, cohort meeting and study space, and instruction. Specialized laboratories and other courses would use appropriate UCF facilities. This arrangement would establish a visible Academy home while leveraging existing university capacity.

A facility plan would organize the full building around the Academy's needs, including classroom and meeting capacity, academic and administrative offices, student support, accessibility, technology, security and required fit out. UCF would coordinate space preparation and readiness for the inaugural cohort in fall 2028. Detailed room assignments, readiness work, operating responsibilities and funding would be documented in the implementation agreement.

### RESIDENTIAL COHORT, DINING AND DAILY MOVEMENT

UCF will be able to dedicate housing facilities for Academy cohorts and scale those facilities as the Academy grows. The specific residential model would be determined with NASA and Academy leadership based on cohort size, preferred room configurations, student life requirements, security considerations, and planned growth. With more than 7,000 on-campus beds and more than 3,700 affiliated beds adjacent to campus, UCF can identify the right community in partnership with NASA and dedicate buildings and residence halls that can be branded specifically for the Academy. The inventory includes shared bedrooms, single bedrooms and apartment style units, with connectivity to campus, recreational facilities, and Central Florida Research Park.

Housing planning would establish building allocations, availability, residential supervision, staff accommodation needs, security, conduct


CARL, BLACK & GOLD CARLINA
HOME OF THE
KNIGHTS
THE BOUNCE HOUSE
Addition
Coca-Cola

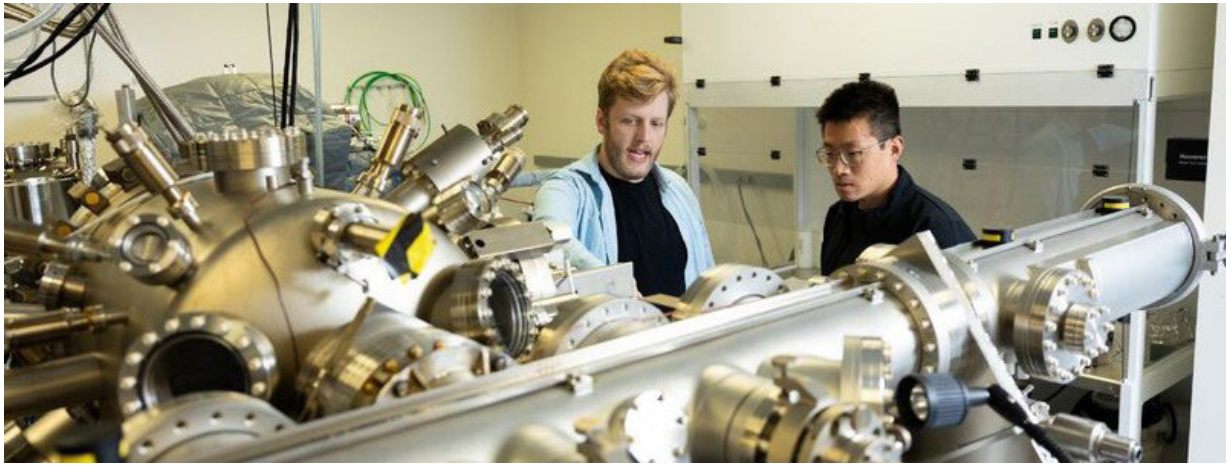
responsibilities and summer and break arrangements. Reservations would be coordinated with UCF's housing assignment cycle. Dedicated facilities and Academy branding would support a cohesive residential identity, peer relationships, structured study, leadership activities and access to support staff.

Dining arrangements would provide defined meal access, schedules and dietary accommodations consistent with the Academy's daily program, including early, late, weekend or break service where required. A coordinated mobility plan would connect housing, University Tower, classrooms, laboratories, dining and approved off-campus activities. Routes, travel times, accessible transportation and service hours would be validated before the class schedule is finalized. These arrangements would make the distributed facilities function as one interim campus for students.

### LEADERSHIP, FITNESS AND STUDENT LIFE

UCF can support a daily and weekly program that integrates academic work with the leadership development, physical fitness, discipline and public service requirements established by NASA and USSA. Academy leadership would define cohort expectations and standards; UCF would support agreed facilities, instruction, advising and activities. Scheduled access to recreation and wellness facilities, outdoor fields and other appropriate spaces would support fitness and team development. Facility reservations and staffing would be coordinated with existing campus uses.

| OPERATING FUNCTION | ILLUSTRATIVE UCF SUPPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS |
|---|---|
| **Academic administration** | Scheduling, registration, records, library and learning-system access; dedicated advising and tutoring coordination. Define academic oversight, transcript responsibility, progress monitoring and appeals. |
| **Health and well being** | Access arrangements for health, counseling, accessibility and student care services; referrals and crisis response. Confirm eligibility, coverage, hours and coordination with Academy personnel. |
| **Housing, dining and fitness** | Cohort housing, meal access, residential support and scheduled fitness or recreation facilities. Confirm allocations, calendars, staffing and conduct responsibilities. |
| **Technology and administration** | Academy-facing identity and access, learning platforms, help-desk support and agreed administrative services. Define data ownership, privacy, system interfaces, and federal cybersecurity requirements. |
| **Safety and transportation** | Public safety and emergency management coordination, laboratory safety and planned movement among facilities. Define jurisdiction, incident response, communications and continuity arrangements. |



During the interim period, Academy students could participate in approved student organizations, intramural activities, cultural programs, service opportunities, and campus events. UCF is a member of the Big 12 and Academy students would also have access to UCF's athletics events during the interim transition period, including on campus football and basketball games. These opportunities would complement dedicated Academy programming and a distinct federal identity. UCF's location and campus environment also offer a platform for recruitment and outreach conducted under the Academy's selection framework.

### MISSION RELEVANT RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

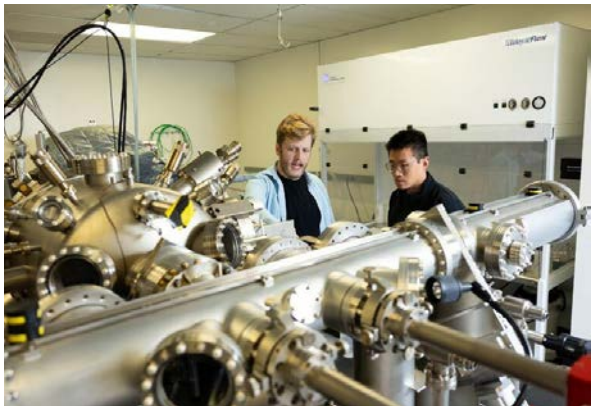
UCF can connect students to space related research and technical expertise through structured, supervised experiences. Potential resources include the Florida Space Institute and Exolith Lab for lunar and planetary science and testing; CREOL for optics, photonics, sensing and communications; propulsion research; computing, cybersecurity, autonomy and simulation; and the College of Medicine's aerospace medicine and human performance capabilities. Faculty involved in NASA's Lunar-VISE investigation illustrate the opportunity to connect classroom foundations with active mission work.

First year activities could include laboratory demonstrations, design challenges, faculty mentorship and team projects, with more advanced research placements as students acquire prerequisites. UCF would help translate its NASA, federal and industry relationships into specific opportunities with named hosts, learning objectives, schedules, and capacity. Access would depend on partner commitments, safety, sponsor restrictions, intellectual property and applicable security requirements; participation is not assumed from an existing relationship alone.

UCF's broader academic resources can connect technical education with the space economy, ethics, policy, and the human experience of missions. Florida's other universities could contribute complementary expertise through the State's coordinated proposal and separately defined commitments. UCF's host role would provide a point of integration for such contributions, while preserving the Academy's approved curriculum and accountability for delivery.







## 3.2 A FLEXIBLE OPERATING MODEL

To demonstrate a workable approach for 2028, UCF has developed a proposed Academy facing operating model supported by established University service units. The model can be adapted to the governance, staffing and service structure established by NASA and USSA. Under this approach, a designated State and UCF implementation lead of NASA's choosing could coordinate. Before launch, the parties would document service scope, eligibility, hours, staffing, charges and funding responsibilities, response standards and escalation procedures. Academy branded communications and coordinated support would give students a clear point of contact even where services are delivered through UCF systems.

NASA and USSA would retain the federal decisions and authorities assigned to them; UCF would be accountable for agreed institutional services and its responsibilities as the accredited host institution. The operating agreement would align federal direction with those accreditation responsibilities and identify decision owners and escalation paths where federal requirements and University policies intersect. Leadership, residential staff, academic advisers and service providers would use a common readiness and issue-management process to resolve dependencies before students arrive.



## 3.3 LAUNCH READINESS AND TRANSITION TO THE PERMANENT ACADEMY

IMPLEMENTATION MILESTONES

Subject to NASA's direction and the final implementation agreement, UCF proposes a joint implementation schedule anchored to instruction in 2028 and the permanent campus objective for 2031. NASA has not announced a final site selection date, so mobilization milestones would be tied to authorization and the agreed opening calendar. The immediate priorities are to establish governance and academic authority, secure facility and housing allocations, and approve the course and staffing plan. Summer arrival or orientation would be accommodated within the agreed calendar and service plan.

Mobilization and design. Establish a joint NASA/USSA-FLA/UCF implementation team, confirm decision owners, and develop the approvals register and integrated schedule. Complete the college and academic-credit framework; plan University Tower fit-out for fall 2028; select dedicated housing facilities; and define the inaugural academic and student life program. Identify long lead decisions, particularly housing reservations, technology, and faculty assignments.

Readiness for 2028. Complete required approvals and agreements, reserve instructional and laboratory capacity, assign faculty and cohort support staff, and make facilities and systems ready. Test enrollment and records processes, student access, dining and transportation schedules, safety communications and emergency procedures. A joint readiness review would confirm that academic, residential and operating requirements are met before student arrival, with accountable owners and contingency actions for unresolved items.

Interim operations and scaling. Review student progress, service performance and facility use throughout the academic year. As new cohorts enroll, confirm enrollment assumptions and the corresponding course sequences, faculty, laboratories, housing, dining and service capacity. UCF would plan to support the Academy's needs through the agreed transition, including additional interim support if required.

### IMPLEMENTATION MILESTONES

01 — STAGE 01
AT AUTHORIZATION
**Mobilization and design**

02 — STAGE 02
BEFORE FALL 2028
**Readiness for 2028**

03 — STAGE 03
2028–2031
**Interim operations and scaling**

04 — STAGE 04
BY 2031
**Managed handover**

The extent and duration of that support would be established through capacity, funding and approval decisions rather than assumed from the inaugural allocation.

### A MANAGED HANDOVER, WITH CONTINUITY FOR STUDENTS

If requested by NASA, Florida would assist in the development of a transition plan at the start of interim operations and maintain it with NASA and USSA as the permanent institution takes shape. Physical relocation and independent accreditation are separate milestones. The plan would align both with the academic calendar and use readiness criteria for each function, allowing agreed UCF services to continue after relocation where needed. The objective is an orderly transition to the permanent Academy anticipated for 2031, with uninterrupted academic progress and student support as requested by NASA.

For each function, the transition plan would name the receiving USSA owner, UCF counterpart, prerequisites, acceptance criteria, and target handover date. Academic work would include curriculum and credit alignment, student progress records, transcript and degree responsibilities, faculty arrangements and accreditation milestones. Operating work would cover student services, housing and dining, technology and data migration, safety, transportation, contracts, equipment and administrative responsibilities. Testing and joint acceptance would precede each transfer.

If a campus or institutional milestone is delayed, NASA, USSA, and UCF would review bridge arrangements before the affected academic term. Options could include continued instruction, records or administrative support and phased transfer of individual services, subject to agreed capacity and resources. Students would receive a documented progression and completion plan.

### FLORIDA'S UPFRONT INTERIM CAMPUS COMMITMENT AND POTENTIAL FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

- **Instructional Facilities:** Dedicated Facility; In-Kind Use of Additional Facilities
- **Residence Halls & Dining:** Dedicated Cohort-style Housing; Dining Plan
- **Transportation:** Dedicated and Branded Transportation Assets

### INTERIM HOME

With one of the largest University enrollments in the nation, UCF provides the ability to maximize value for the interim campus, allowing the Academy to be branded and operate independently. By leveraging the ±98,000 square foot University Tower building,



NASA would be provided with a dedicated interim home for the Academy that can scale with enrollment, alongside access to UCF classrooms, laboratories, faculty, libraries, dining, recreation, health services and administrative systems. UCF has also identified existing residential facilities that will be dedicated solely to the Academy that can scale with the Academy. The State of Florida would support interim construction needs, including outfitting the facility to meet NASA's needs. Further, UCF has identified methods to allow the Academy to operate under its accreditation while scaling into its own full accreditation. The rough-order-of-magnitude cost for interim Academy operations at UCF is manageable at $30 million annually. Both recreational fields and additional vacant parcels are located adjacent to University Tower, providing the ability for additional interim campus improvements as needed.

### TUITION AND OPERATING ASSISTANCE

Recognizing the importance of ensuring NASA autonomy while mitigating upfront cost constraints, the State of Florida is readying plans to allow classes under the interim campus to be defined as in-state students, leveraging Florida's lowest-in-the-nation tuition. As conversations progress, this is another example of state-supported up front costs while allowing NASA to maximize its resources for other permanent campus needs. Doing so would ensure the full value and use of UCF's existing facilities is not a financial burden on NASA or any student.

The State of Florida is also committed to leveraging the full breadth of the state's leading State University System in support of NASA's mission, including the in-kind use of available facilities throughout the state and those near defense installations as identified by NASA.

### FLIGHT TRAINING

Further, the State of Florida is actively in discussions with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) to fully cover the cost of offering flight training to all inaugural classes, allowing NASA-led instruction to be supplemented by ERAU resources. ERAU brings nearly a century of experience training civilian and military aviators, including a longstanding history of supporting U.S. military flight training, such as its role preparing new aviators at the start of World War II and many more thereafter. ERAU has recent experience offering flight training programs for federal partners, including the U.S. Air Force through an agreement signed in 2025 to provide Initial Pilot Training to commissioned officers selected for Undergraduate Pilot Training. Building on this legacy of training America's young leaders in aviation, the Academy's inaugural classes stand to benefit from a wealth of flight training opportunities that only ERAU can provide. ERAU estimates it can provide a private pilot's certificate with an instrument rating, and some multi engine time, providing 11 credit hours towards degree completion. The State of Florida continues to have active discussions with ERAU that leverage its facilities and assets for NASA led flight training for interim classes as requested by NASA. Further, ERAU projects its current courses would provide 11 credit hours towards degree completion.

### TRANSPORTATION

Given the proximity between campuses, Florida would also provide transportation services, including dedicated and branded transportation assets to allow for trips to and from the Cape and Central Florida—allowing interim campus students the ability to be trained within America's aerospace hub even before the permanent campus is completed.







MISSION 04

# 04

# INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

RFI Section 3 · Financial Capability – Cost and Partnership Interest


4.1 · P.56
Florida's Strategic Financing Tools

4.2 · P.58
Tested Delivery Model

4.3 · P.61
Strategic Support and Operational Partnerships

4.4 · P.62
Deep Heritage, Speed, Smart Investment

## 4.1 FLORIDA'S STRATEGIC FINANCING TOOLS

Because Florida is the only state that treats space as a mode of transportation, we can unlock transportation dollars to maximize funding for the Academy. Florida has already invested more than $680 million in space transportation infrastructure, 99.7% of it at or near the proposed site. Florida is further committed to leveraging its existing processes and funding programs to reduce costs through established and tested funding and project agreements. Recognizing the importance of partnership and long term success of the academy, Florida's response reinforces the opportunities, rather than a finite number, respecting the appropriations process that both NASA and Florida follow. Florida's record of success catalyzing its aerospace and defense industry stems from upfront financial commitments and creative financing tools. These proven tools will enable Florida to deliver the U.S. Space Academy for the nation in a way that minimizes upfront cost to the Federal government while giving NASA maximum control and flexibility over operations and planning. This financial commitment would be delivered through Florida's proven models it already deploys to support NASA and commercial projects across the Space Triangle. A rough-order-of-magnitude (ROM) estimate of the cost to establish the initial operating capability for the USSA at the proposed site varies based on design. With that said, initial estimates vary between $1.9-2.2 billion, before determining what can be provided through in-kind contributions by partners and other revenue sources. All designs will include the ability to scale as the campus grows, reducing the duplicative nature of master-planned college campuses with more predictable and repeatable phasing. This estimate assumes the mission critical facilities needed to support 1,200 students by the Fall 2031 academic term and includes local supporting infrastructure where needed. This ROM cost estimate assumes a focus on core functionality. Moreover, Florida would recommend NASA consider utilizing lease back models to allow for the long term value to be paid over time. Further, Florida welcomes further discussion on the Administration's preference for state-level investments as the RFI process continues. The rough-order-of-magnitude cost for interim Academy operations at UCF is $30 million annually. Florida anticipates addressing cost sharing through existing funded state programs, existing statutory financing authorities via Space Florida, and partnership structures that could reduce the overall development costs for both the state and federal government and accelerate the timeline delivery. The state looks forward to working with NASA as it finalizes its design requirements to match state tools with campus execution.

**$680M+**
INVESTED IN SPACE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**99.7%**
OF IT AT OR NEAR THE PROPOSED SITE

**2027**
GROUNDBREAKING

**Fall 2031**
PERMANENT CAMPUS OPENS

## FINANCING

Space Florida, in partnership with statewide agencies, is provided broad statutory authority to support aerospace and similar transportation mode workforce initiatives, such as on campus parking facilities, pads, hangars, and campus thoroughfares that can be funded through existing methods. These can be provided through lease purchase, in-kind contributions from the State or private partnerships, and through other funding mechanisms.

## INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING SUPPORT (HORIZONTAL)

The proposed campus sits adjacent to existing state-funded roadways. Additional roads and ground infrastructure could be quickly programmed and delivered through the FDOT State Work Program and the Space Florida Spaceport Improvement Program, both of which carry existing state allocations. Funds within these programs can be programmed toward Academy projects without a new appropriation, as it would be incorporated into current work program development processes outlined in statute, allowing Florida to move quickly once a site is selected. Both mechanisms have a proven record of delivering major infrastructure across the region, positioning Florida to advance the Academy's horizontal infrastructure on an accelerated timeline.

## FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR PHASED DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the referenced federal-state financing tools, Space Florida's authorities provide the ability to leverage privately financed, ground lease, and traditional P3 models. Business leaders across Florida's major sectors are in support of the state's effort and discussions continue with several potential partners who could support the development of specific portions of the campus, including residential and athletic facilities. Additional information, analysis, and proposed partnerships will be provided as discussions continue.

## CAMPUS FACILITIES FINANCING SUPPORT (VERTICAL)

To accelerate a Florida-based U.S. Space Academy while NASA seeks additional appropriations for USSA, Florida proposes multiple financing pathways for the vertical portion of the campus for consideration as discussed below. These are in addition to the state proposed in-kind horizontal investments.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| SPACE | 3 FAA LICENSED SPACEPORTS | 8 SPACEPORT TERRITORIES |
| AIR | 21 COMMERCIAL SERVICE AIRPORTS | 125+ PUBLIC-USE AIRPORTS |
| ROAD + RAIL | 2,700 FREIGHT RAIL MILES | 120,000+ ROADWAY MILES |
| SEA | 16 DEEPWATER SEAPORTS | |



## 4.2 TESTED DELIVERY MODEL

Florida has already done the work that slows most federal campus projects. The site, the agreement, the infrastructure, and the permitting path are in place, and the partners who will deliver the Academy have done this with NASA before. Florida has delivered on federal property alongside NASA many times before. Space Florida, the state's aerospace finance and development authority, already partners with NASA under agreements that put underused federal space assets back into service.

### SPACE FLORIDA + NASA KSC: FAST TRACK VIA A PROVEN MODEL

The Launch and Landing Facility (LLF) is also the proof that this model works. Under its agreement with NASA, Space Florida returned the former Shuttle Landing Facility to active service for commercial and test operations. Space Florida can own, finance, develop, and lease facilities on federal property. The Academy would follow the same model, so NASA gets a structure that is legally tested and already working, with the speed, cost, certainty, and control that come with it.

### PERMANENT CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION & LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

In Florida, we pride ourselves on getting things done. To ensure the rapid build out of the permanent campus, the State of Florida would provide dedicated support through both executive level project management alongside contractual project management support at no cost to NASA. In fact, the state has already identified several construction partners with turnkey credentialed workers ready to begin at NASA's request.

### SPACE ACT AGREEMENT

Florida understands the goal of balancing fiscal prudence while protecting speed of execution. To support such goals, we propose an option where Space Florida and NASA enter a design, build, and leaseback agreement, leveraging similar models utilized with the commercial sector through the attached draft Space Act Agreement (Appendix A). Rather than requiring the full or partial build amount be appropriated by Congress up front, a lease or reimbursable service agreement transfers the cost to an annual funds amount that, under a proposed reimbursable Space Act Agreement, creates an opportunity to execute with an efficient timeline subject to terms to be negotiated with NASA. This model allows for the accelerated construction of a dedicated campus with a lease guarantee, reducing upfront costs. Given



the dedicated revenue source arising from leaseback costs, Florida's upfront investment would have a dedicated payback mechanism, reducing the state's risk and any long term financing obligations reliant on state taxpayer funding.

### PROVEN TRANSFER APPROACHES

The structure of existing agreements between the state's LLF ground authority, Space Florida, and NASA KSC provides a roadmap for the efficient transfer of developed areas or facilities once a final plan is solidified. The most expedient approach is to amend the existing LLF property agreement (Appendix A) to include the site land as it is adjacent to the current property. Such an agreement provides the opportunity for Space Florida and partners to begin initial site readiness activities (e.g., design, permitting, etc.) almost immediately as a new agreement would not be required. Moreover, as NASA determines its final plans for full build out of the permanent campus, this agreement would offer the flexibility for Space Florida to complete desired development and transfer to NASA as outlined in current agreements at no additional cost.

### DESIGN SERVICES

As provided in the response, the State of Florida, through FDOT and Space Florida, has contracted with architectural and design firms when delivering a project of this magnitude. As proposals are reviewed, the agencies continue working with the contracted firms to finalize plans, while ensuring major decisions are held for NASA. Furthermore, these services would be offered as an in-kind expense for the duration of the engagement.

### PERMITTING & MITIGATION COORDINATION

Given the significant reduction in entitlement approvals on federal land, the proposed site is advantageous to ensure expedited construction. Understanding the authorities and jurisdiction NASA currently has over permitting, the state also offers multiple levers to help streamline and accelerate permitting processes, at NASA's discretion. As Florida has defined spaceport activities as a mode of transportation, the proposed site can leverage FDOT's dedicated permitting team or leverage existing partnerships with local KSC resources for swift execution of federal permit approvals, including NEPA. The agencies have also initiated modifications to existing plans to receive any necessary state level approvals in the coming quarter, to ensure that no hurdle impacts the timeline. Given the proximity of the site to natural Florida, the agencies would also provide mitigation assistance, through credits and in-kind contributions, to meet regulatory compliance.



MAINTENANCE & SUPPORT

To support the long term operations and maintenance of the facility, Florida could also explore and propose a similar long term investing arrangement as discussed in the interim section of the response, to include a per-pupil investment for campus maintenance, of a comparable value to a Florida bright futures scholarship. Such an arrangement would be submitted for appropriations consideration for transfer to Space Florida to assist in the long term success of USSA, a component missing from federal service academies today.

FUTURE PHASES: PREP SCHOOL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

As with all service academies, interest in the USSA will quickly outpace enrollment capacity. Recognizing the need for pre academy training through the traditional Prep School model, Florida welcomes the discussion on potential sites for a space-specific prep school in locations within the Space Triangle, including in Central Florida's NeoCity, Lake Nona, and Sunbridge Developments and additional opportunities in proximity to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, both within a quick drive or flight of Florida's proposed site.

Florida continues to have promising discussions with potential partners located within the Space Triangle to support housing, workforce, and quality of life amenities that will ensure that the staff and faculty of the Academy are well positioned to make a long term decision in making Florida their home base.







## 4.3 STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND OPERATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Florida's proposal is supported by a coalition of aerospace companies, academic institutions, government partners, industry organizations, and community leaders prepared to help establish and operate the U.S. Space Academy (Appendix C). These partners have pledged to support the Academy through expertise, facilities, research collaboration, workforce development, experiential learning, internships, mentorship, training, and connections to active civil, commercial, and national security space operations. Upon Florida's selection, this coalition would provide the Academy with an immediate network of operational partners.

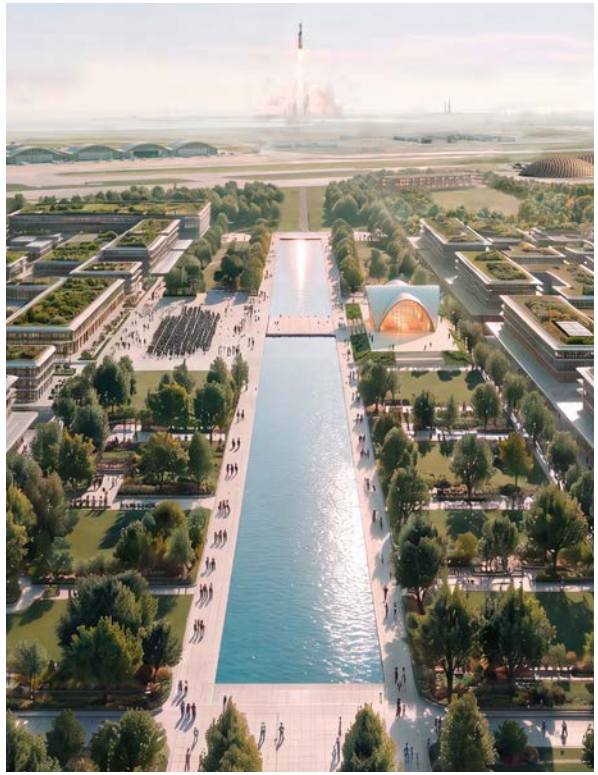
Relativity · STAR CATCHER · SeagateSpace · LONESTAR · SERAPHI

Florida Space Research Consortium · The Florida Council of 100 · Florida Venture FORUM



## 4.4 DEEP HERITAGE, SPEED, SMART INVESTMENT

Florida offers a home for the U.S. Space Academy that offers a deep heritage of aerospace excellence that began with the first commercial airline flight in 1914 and keeps moving forward with every exploration, every mission, every application for American commerce. Florida does not view space as the latest industry, but as a legacy to uphold, grow, and pass to the next generation. From one small step to the next great leaps we take together, Florida has made deliberate choices to build something worthy of what comes next. In Florida, the Academy sits at the intersection of America's civil, commercial, military, academic and research space enterprise, giving students access from day one to the people, infrastructure and missions they are being prepared to lead. Florida places the Academy inside an ecosystem that already exists. That convergence creates speed. Florida's proposed interim academic home at UCF, a 1,000-acre NASA-owned permanent site with a pathway through an existing property agreement (Appendix A), and infrastructure that can be extended from existing systems, creates a delivery schedule that matches the urgency of space leadership. Florida has committed design, project management, transportation, and infrastructure support to help move quickly. Florida pairs that speed with strategic financing. The state's transportation work program and Spaceport Improvement Program provide existing mechanisms for horizontal infrastructure investment, while Space Florida's authorities create additional options through lease-purchase agreements, ground leases, public-private partnerships and design-build-leaseback structures. Florida is continuing to refine additional investment models for state leadership, and the current federal selection timeline aligns closely with Florida's legislative calendar, providing another opportunity to expand the partnership. Florida offers optionality without sacrificing certainty. NASA can determine the Academy's final governance, design, operating model, phasing and financing structure while choosing credible pathways that Florida is prepared to execute. The campus can easily expand, interim services can bridge the transition to the permanent institution, financing can be matched to NASA's preferred delivery model, and the broader commercial, academic and government ecosystem can scale alongside it. Florida's proposal does not lock NASA into one path. It gives NASA multiple paths to the same outcome: an operational Academy sooner, a permanent institution built with less upfront federal burden, and the flexibility to adapt as America's space mission evolves. The question is therefore not simply where America can build a Space Academy. It is where the nation can build it fastest, surround it with the strongest mission ecosystem, finance it most strategically, and preserve the greatest flexibility for the next fifty years. Florida offers all four, in one place, from day one.



# GOVERNOR'S DESIGNATION LETTER

**RON DESANTIS**
GOVERNOR

November 13, 2026

The Honorable Jared Isaacman, Chair
Presidential Commission on the United States Space Academy
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20546

**Re: Florida's Response to NASA-USSA-RFI**

Dear Chairman Isaacman and Members of the Commission:

Enclosed you will find Florida's response to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Request for Information (RFI) on the creation of the United States Space Academy. Pursuant to the requirements of the RFI, the following individuals and agencies have been designated to represent the State of Florida:

***Responding Entity***
A U.S. domestic entity designated in writing by the Governor of the State to submit the official State response to this RFI:

| | |
|---|---|
| Responding Entity: | Space Florida |
| Point of Contact: | Col. Rob Long (ret.), President/Chief Executive Officer |
| Email: | rlong@spaceflorida.gov |
| Phone: | (321) 652-5300 |

***State Selecting Official***
The State official designated in writing by the Governor to coordinate and formally endorse the Responding Entity's response and, in the event of multiple responses from a State, to serve as the authoritative point of contact for resolving which response has the official endorsement of the State:

| | |
|---|---|
| State Selecting Official: | Executive Office of the Governor |
| Point of Contact: | Cody Farrill, Deputy Chief of Staff/Cabinet Affairs |
| Email: | cody.farrill@eog.myflorida.com |
| Phone: | (850) 717-9503 |

As the RFI process continues, any change to the designations above will be provided through the portal referenced in the RFI.

Sincerely,

Ron DeSantis
Governor

THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399 • (850) 717-9249

# ENDNOTES

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20 Space Launch Delta 45, "Space Launch Delta 45: The World's Premier Gateway to Space," 2026, https://www.patrick.spaceforce.mil/Portals/14/260915-X-BI493_PA%20SLD%2045%20Overview-v5_1.pdf.

APPENDIX

**A** Draft Space Act Agreement and Draft Amendment to Property Agreement

**B** Campus Master Plan

**C** Letters of Support

UNITED STATES
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FLORIDA IS A GO