



**MAT-SU BOROUGH REGIONAL AIRPORT SYSTEM PLAN
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING No. 5
MEETING NOTES**

SUBJECT: Mat-Su Borough Regional Airport System Plan

GROUP: Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 5

DATE/TIME: August 8, 2007 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Wasilla Multi-Use Sports Complex

ATTENDANCE: See attached sign-in sheet

MEETING

MATERIALS:

- 1) PowerPoint presentation
- 2) Handouts of Location Alternatives and RASP tables
- 3) Sign-in Sheets

STAFF PRESENT: Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) – Brad Sworts

DOWL Engineers (DOWL) – Tom Middendorf, John Jones, Jenni Kuentzel, and Steve Pavish

I. INTRODUCTIONS & AGENDA OVERVIEW

The meeting began with Tom Middendorf, the Project Manager, welcoming the Technical Advisory Committee. He then reviewed the meeting agenda and provided a project update.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Technical Advisory Committee discussion items are summarized in the following meeting notes with *staff comments and responses to questions in italics*.

II AIRPORT LOCATION STUDY

John Jones gave an overview of the South MSB and South Denali airport site selection criteria, sites evaluated and dismissed, and sites that were selected for a more detailed evaluation. He presented potential airport layouts and an evaluation matrix for the sites selected for more detailed evaluation. He noted that this evaluation was based on site visits and review of site data that could be readily found. More detailed analysis would be required for any final site selection. Sites selected for more detailed evaluation in the South MSB were at Big Lake Airport, Goose Bay Airport and at 7 Mile Lake. Sites selected for more detailed evaluation at South Denali area included sites at miles 121 and 131 of the Parks Highway.

South MSB

- Would Eklutna gravel pit sites be subject to fog and is it big enough for a floatplane base? *Eklutna sites are being evaluated by DOT&PF so we have not completed a detailed analysis as part of this study. We are not aware of fog issues. DOT&PF's consultant has prepared a layout showing a possible floatplane facility without an adjacent runway.*
- Why was the Lake Lucille option dropped? *Because of community opposition, no place for a wheeled airport, and limited public lands around the lake. Archie Giddings with the City of Wasilla reported quite a bit of resident concerns about noise and land uses around this lake.*
- What is the distance between the runway and floatplane pond at Goose Bay for Alternative A? *It is outside the runway object free area but not far enough away for simultaneous operations. It would require operating the runway and floatpond as a single runway. The Alternative B layout has sufficient separation for simultaneous operations.*
- How did DOWL assess the ability to obtain a precision approach? *DOWL only looked at the Runway Protection Zone requirements and the ability to meet Part 77 requirements. Additional TERPS analysis and discussions with the FAA would be needed as part of final master planning of the selected site.*
- Perhaps a better way to describe the precision approach capability of a site that meets Part 77 and Runway Protection Zone requirements would be to say it “appears to be a candidate for an instrument approach” and/or to note additional analysis would be needed.
- Big Lake Alternative B – floatplane pond appears to conflict with the runway since they are at right angles to each other. We are trying to fix this problem elsewhere. We shouldn't create a new problem here when building a new facility. *This option was shown at the request of FAA to see how a floatplane runway would work if it were aligned with prevailing winds.*
- Big Lake Alternative B – during the LRTP a possible road alignment for the extension of the Point MacKenzie Road was shown in this area east of the airport.
- Big Lake Airport has some existing community conflicts west of the airport.
- How does the Knik Arm bridge affect the options? *It would hopefully make any option a bit more viable if some of the based aircraft could be from Anchorage residents or from increased population growth east of Palmer/Wasilla. Goose Bay and 7 Mile would be a bit closer to Anchorage than the Big Lake Airport site.*
- How close is 7 Mile to the growing Settler's Bay area? *It is at least 10 miles. It is also about 7 miles from the proposed prison site.*
- Were power requirements included in the costs? *We included a rough utility “placeholder cost” without a clear idea at this time of what power would be available at the time the airport is built.*
- Is the airport for recreational or commercial use? *Both*
- Is the Point MacKenzie freight airport still an option? *It was not recommended in prior ANC Master Plans and is not recommended in this plan.*
- Check for several tower locations in the South MSB area.

- Several Committee members commented that the 7 Mile Lake site appeared to be the best site because of least community impact, most space to build what is truly needed, public land availability, potential for longer floatplane pond and crosswind pond, adds to the total mix of airport facility choices and locations (versus improving an existing airport), and still allows for growth at the other airports. Some of the disadvantages of cost and lack of existing access were noted. *At this stage we think it may be premature to select a final site until more detailed wind, engineering and environmental information is collected and more public input is given, but we agree these are some of the advantages and disadvantages.*
- *There is some risk that a dug out floatpond could fail to hold water or could require an expensive ongoing well operation to replenish the water supply. An existing lake is less risky.*
- The plan should note that a public floatplane facility benefits not only those who tie down aircraft there, but also others who will bring aircraft to the site for fuel, maintenance, etc. It will also concentrate traffic and noise that is now spread out among private strips to a central facility. Neighbors of a public airport will be more aware of its presence, and have less justifiable complaints about being unaware when they purchase property, than neighbors of a private airport.

South Denali

- What is the status of the Coast Guard tower at Mile 121? *The site coordinates provided by the Coast Guard don't match our mapping and we are trying to get this straightened out. We also want to ask the Coast Guard whether their site could be relocated. We heard rumors the tower is far from certain and may not be funded. We wonder if an airport site were approved here, would the tower be sited elsewhere? We will try to find out.*
- Is DOWL aware of the private strips in the South Denali area? *Yes there are 3 known private strips just north of the bridge and no other strips to the south until Trapper Creek.*
- Were sites north of the Princess Lodge considered? *No, we stayed to the south to avoid the State Park and terrain issues.*
- The trail to the north of site 121 is called the East-West Express and it is a popular snowmobile trail leading to Petersville.
- DOWL should get pilot comments on which option is best. Preliminary comments from Talkeetna pilots favor the Mile 131 site.
- Utilities are likely to be extended to Mile 131 area as the area develops.
- Why was the Summit Airport not considered a finalist? *It is too far from the South Denali area.*

III. AIRPORT OWNERSHIP OPTIONS

Steve Pavish presented a range of airport ownership and operation options.

- Are the options addressing all MSB airports or only the proposed new airports. *Primarily addressing the new ones, but the logic and rationale discussed could also apply to the existing airports.*
- Could the MSB get airport grants directly from the FAA without going through the DOT&PF? *Yes*

- Could a public airport be operated by a private party? *Yes*
- Do airport authorities typically have taxing powers? *Some have taxing powers, but most operate entirely with airport revenue.*
- Could a public airport that has limited winter demand such as South Denali be operated seasonally only? *FAA would prefer year-round operations but seasonal operations could be a way to reduce costs and yet meet the predominant tourist and non-winter demand.*

IV. REGIONAL AVIATION SYSTEM PLAN

Time was short, so Tom Middendorf just gave some highlights of the RASP recommendations, all of which have had discussion at prior meetings.

- How would an airspace determination be handled for a floatplane lake that does not have a marked sea lane? *It would only apply to a lake with commercial operations.*
- Requiring registration for existing airstrips could be controversial. *It may be but it is already a requirement of the FAA.*
- You will need to provide a definition of an airport. Does it include a gravel bar where there is regular use? *According to the FAA definition, it might. Maybe it should.*
- Several members noted the MSB should not let this plan “sit on the shelf”. The MSB should use the good work completed and continue the process with input of an ongoing Aviation Advisory Board.
- The report should give the MSB Assembly recommendations on priority/timing of implementation. A first priority would appear to be formation of the Aviation Advisory Board. *We agree.*
- The report should give suggestions to the Assembly on implementation issues noted. *We will at least discuss some of the options.*
- What would happen to an airport that cannot get a favorable airspace determination? Would some use restrictions be imposed during a conditional use permit? *This could be considered.*

V. USAF REPORT

Lt. Colonel Scott Babos reported on the US Air Force interest in reaching out to user groups such as Mat-Su general aviation community to educate about military operations and address any issues. His full time position to do this has been based in Alaska since July, 2006 in recognition of Alaska’s importance to the US Air Force mission. He noted registering airports with the FAA has the added benefit of allowing the Air Force to route their training flights away from the airport. If the airport is not registered, the Air Force would not know it’s there. He noted that he would work with DOWL to update the project maps to show the current areas being used for training. He offered to continue to work with an ongoing Committee formed to implement the RASP.

The Committee thanked him for coming and for his service to our country.

VI. NEXT STEPS

Tom Middendorf requested Technical Committee comments by August 22 so that the report can be amended and released for public comment in September and public meetings held in October. Planning Commission and Assembly review would occur in November/December. A

Committee member asked that copies of the CDs be sent to the Technical Committee after it is adopted by the Assembly.

Tom George invited members to attend the Aviation North Expo in Fairbanks on October 18 – 20 and asked that the public meetings for the RASP avoid these dates.

Brad Sworts and Tom Middendorf thanked the Technical Advisory Committee for their active involvement in the planning process and encouraged them to stay involved in the public meetings and as the plan is implemented.

The meeting concluded at 9:30 p.m. followed by more informal discussion.

Attachments: Presentation
 Sign-in sheets