



**MAT-SU BOROUGH REGIONAL AIRPORT SYSTEM PLAN
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING No. 3
MEETING NOTES**

SUBJECT: Mat-Su Borough Regional Airport System Plan

GROUP: Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 3

DATE/TIME: December 14, 2006, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Wasilla Multi-Use Sports Complex

ATTENDANCE: See attached sign-in sheet

MEETING

MATERIALS:

- 1) Agenda
- 2) PowerPoint presentation
- 3) Several handouts/display boards
- 4) Sign-in Sheets

STAFF PRESENT: Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) – Murph O’Brien

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

I. INTRODUCTIONS & AGENDA OVERVIEW

The meeting began with Tom Middendorf, (DOWL) Project Manager, welcoming the Technical Advisory Committee (Tech Committee). He then reviewed the meeting agenda, the role of the TAC and provided a project update.

II. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

The Tech Committee divided up into two groups for approximately 45 minutes. One group discussed airspace and communications issues and alternatives, while the other group discussed land use compatibility issues and alternatives.

1. Communications and Airspace

The Tech Committee members in the communications and airspace group looked at a variety of proposed alternatives (discussed below). Any comments regarding the alternatives are also listed.

Communications

1. Reassign radio frequencies in selective areas
 - A high priority in terms of the level of research and analysis for the RASP report.
2. Mapping to Improve Pilot Awareness
 - A high priority in terms of the level of research and analysis for the RASP report.
 - The FAA representative noted while this is a good idea, he would not want to see a situation occur where the FAA encourages pilots to use frequencies other than those used by Air Traffic Control.
3. Increased pilot education about: public and private strips, CTAFs, and radio use; reporting points and arrival /departure routes; military airspace, and; aviation safety.
 - A high priority in terms of the level of research and analysis for the RASP report.
 - Target instructors and students in the area when disseminating information.
 - Post information at places where aviation fuel is sold is a good way to disseminate information.
 - The group felt increasing the number of big, obvious reporting points (i.e. Wal-Mart or Lowe's) would be helpful. If reporting points are added, give careful thought as to how the new information will be disseminated so that every pilot, not just local pilots, will be aware of the additional reporting points.
4. Expand RCO coverage in MSB
 - A medium priority in terms of the level of research and analysis for the RASP report.
 - While there are several RCOs east of Palmer, there are not that many in the western and northern areas of the MSB.
 - Additional RCOs would benefit pilots more than additional radar coverage would.
5. Expand radar coverage east of Palmer
 - A low priority in terms of the level of research and analysis for the RASP report.
 - The additional coverage the planned SR-11 radar system in Anchorage will significantly improve the Anchorage Approach's radar coverage of the Mat-Su Valley.

Airspace

1. Encourage airport owners to register airports with FAA
 - A high priority in terms of the level of research and analysis for the RASP report.
 - This alternative should include ways to educate airstrip owners on how to register an airport.
 - One group member asked if an airstrip should have FAA approval before being platted.
2. Include public notice and comment with airport registration process
 - A medium priority in terms of the level of research and analysis for the RASP report.

- Overall, the group was not very excited about implementing a MSB-enforced ordinance/regulation regarding registering airports, but would like more information on what this would entail.
- One group member asked if a MSB ordinance would be necessary (assuming one was implemented) because there is a federal requirement to register airports.
- If the MSB decides to regulate/enforce ordinances, it is important the ordinances are applied to the land surrounding public-use airports. This could prevent encroaching development of conflicting land uses with public airport operations and expansion.
- There needs to be better dissemination of information on the MSB's part on how to plat an airport.

3. Advisory only arrival/departure routes/corridors to direct aircraft away from the highest concentration of airports and minimize conflicts in high traffic areas

- A low-to-medium priority in terms of the level of research and analysis for the RASP report.
- Some members felt corridors are a good idea, while others were not so sure.
- If there is not a strong need to separate light and heavy air traffic, corridors may not be beneficial.
- The corridors would need to be charted on the sectional; including them in the Supplement is not enough (not the best way to disseminate information).
- The skydiving area in the MSB needs to be charted better.

4. Encourage lights-on (landing lights) operations

- A high priority in terms of the level of research and analysis for the RASP report.
- The group was supportive of this idea.

5. Review and coordinate low flying military flights

- A high priority in terms of the level of research and analysis for the RASP report.
- Is it possible to have an FAA liaison that specializes in military operations attend the next Tech Committee meeting?

6. Encourage implementation of Capstone in MSB

- A low priority in terms of the level of research and analysis for the RASP report.
- Capstone program not currently planned for the MSB.
- Average aircraft flying around the MSB is most often a private aircraft; would be harder to implement the program here than it has been in the Y-K Delta region (mostly commercial operations in that region).
- The program would be cost-prohibitive in the MSB.

7. Airspace impacts of a low-minimum instrument approach

- The group requested the project team look at this issue in the RASP report.
- Precision approaches result in restrictions to VFR flight.

2. Airport Compatibility

Notification to Adjacent Landowners

- Level of notification may vary depending on type of airport/level of activity of airport.
- Plats are not updated often, are not often looked at, and would not necessarily capture more recent airports if the plat is old. Therefore using plats to notify neighbors of proximity to an airport may not be effective.
- Would be more effective to use platting process to notify neighbors of the proposed airport.
- There are so many airports in MSB that there should almost be a blanket assumption you will be living in the vicinity of an airport.
- Use Title Report to notify neighbors?
- If Real Estate Disclosure were used, it would require development of an official map of airports and some entity to maintain the map. Real estate disclosure form is controlled by the Real Estate Commission and it would be very difficult to change.
- MSB or FAA mapping disseminated on MSB website and communicated to real estate, developer, and other groups is preferable to adding a new disclosure or notification requirement.
- Mapping should identify functional level of airport in some way.
- Conclusions:
 - Notification of existing airports through MSB mapping widely disseminated would be best.
 - Use platting process to notify of future airports.

Registration

- MSB airport registration seems like a basic first step that should be implemented in a simple common sense way, building on the existing FAA registration.
- All existing airports should be registered.
- New airports should be registered and be approved through a platting or CUP process.
- Some discussion of whether to require registration of airports off the road system.

Conditional Use Permit

- If implemented, consider different levels of review based on type of airport or development proposed. An administrative approval may be sufficient for some airports.
- Best if there is a simple objective process not requiring significant expertise by Planning Commission since there will probably not be aviation expertise on the Commission.
- Some discussion about possibly requiring a conditional use permit for an existing airport that changes its level of activity beyond a certain threshold. Otherwise existing airports would be grandfathered in.

Platting

- Platting of airports would be desirable.

Template

- Templates should be developed. At this time it's not clear whether they should be mandatory or advisory for private airports. Maybe templates would be mandatory for airparks or busy private strips but advisory only for other private strips.

SPUD Process

- SPUD would only apply if the area were already covered by a comprehensive plan.

Zoning

- Protection of airports from encroaching development is best accomplished through zoning, and this may not be practical at this time, except in selective areas.

III. IMPLEMENTATION

- Concern about creating a plan for this study that will sit on a shelf. The project staff foresees the creation of a group that would move forward with the framework and ideas resulting from the RASP.
- If a group is formed, it should be created by the MSB rather than AOPA or the AK Airmen's Association.
- It is best to form a new group, rather than have the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) move forward with the RASP framework. The TAB deals mostly with roadways. It may be necessary to change the name of the TAB; otherwise people might incorrectly think they also deal with aviation issues.
- The State of Alaska has an advisory board that contains a variety of stakeholders that make for a well-rounded group. Apply that same idea to any groups that may be formed.

IV. AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED AT EXISTING PUBLIC AIRPORTS

The Airspace/Communications small group discussed airport improvements that are needed or planned for some of the public-use airports in the MSB:

1. Palmer:

- The Airport Manager would like to update the Master Plan.
- In the process of finalizing land acquisition for the crosswind runway protection zone.
- Construction of a man-made floatplane facility in the area is often mentioned.

2. Summit:

- Weeds at the airport are pretty high.

3. Talkeetna:

- Area pilots asked Tech Committee member Sandra White to mention their support for keeping Christianson Lake open for floatplane operations.
- There is not a lot of room to expand the airport infrastructure. Sandra sees a demand in the future for increased business growth. Could some land be reserved in the Talkeetna/Trapper Creek area for a new airport?
- The idea of building an air traffic control tower at the airport comes up often, but not sure of how much of a need for a tower there really is (certainly more demand in the summer versus the winter). Would it be possible to get a cost estimate?

4. Other:

- There needs to be a good public seaplane base in the MSB. One Tech Committee member lives in the MSB but keeps his floatplane in Fairbanks, because there is no secure facility in the valley.

V. AIRPORT SITING STUDY BACKGROUND INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

- The findings of the 2002 Anchorage International Airport Master Plan as well as the 2006 Lake Hood Master Draft Airport Plan were discussed.
- It is logical that any floatplane facility constructed should be located near a runway.
- It looks like the planned prison could be constructed near the Goose Bay Airport; should be taken into consideration during any airport siting analysis.
- Who would take ownership of a seaplane facility if one is constructed?
- Land should be reserved now near the Trapper Creek area for a future airport in the north part of the borough.

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