
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has the highest concentration of public and private airports in the nation. With 10 public airports and over 200 private airports, over 1,000 aircraft, more pilots per capita than most of the rest of Alaska and the nation and millions of dollars of economic impacts to the region's economy, aviation is vitally important to the economy of the region and lifestyle of its residents.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is also the fastest growing region of Alaska, having more than doubled in population over the last 20 years and with predictions of more than doubling again in the next 20 years. With this rapid population growth has come the growth of aviation infrastructure and services as well as some conflicts within aviation and between aviation and other uses.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has undertaken the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Regional Aviation System Plan to identify the current state of aviation in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, how that might change over the next 20 years, and any actions that should be taken to ensure aviation can grow in a positive way for Matanuska-Susitna Borough citizens. While the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is not currently an airport owner and operator, it does have responsibility for land use planning and promoting economic development, and is interested in working with aviation interests and the public to promote/preserve aviation and encourage compatibility with other activities in the region. A corollary Airport Location Study also examines the need for new public airport(s) to meet the future needs of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. This Regional Aviation System Plan implements a recommendation of the MSB Long-Range Transportation Plan.

While the Regional Aviation System Plan does discuss aviation in the entire Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the geographic focus of the plan is on airports on the road system. This is because aviation needs, issues, and aviation and non-aviation growth is the greatest in areas served by roads. The study area is shown in Figure 1.

A wide range of issues and alternatives were evaluated in the Regional Aviation System Plan and discussed with a Technical Advisory Committee and the public. The recommendations of the

plan are summarized below. More detailed recommendations can be found in Chapter 5.0 of this report.

Involvement of the Aviation Community

Aviation Advisory Board - An Aviation Advisory Board shall be established to assist with implementation of Regional Aviation System Plan recommendations, address ongoing aviation issues in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and advise the Matanuska-Susitna Borough during detailed planning and construction of new airports recommended in the Location Study. The composition of the Aviation Advisory Board would include a diverse mix of aviation and non-aviation interests, including representatives from airport businesses, private pilots, public and private airport owners, community leaders, business leaders, airport neighbors, and others.

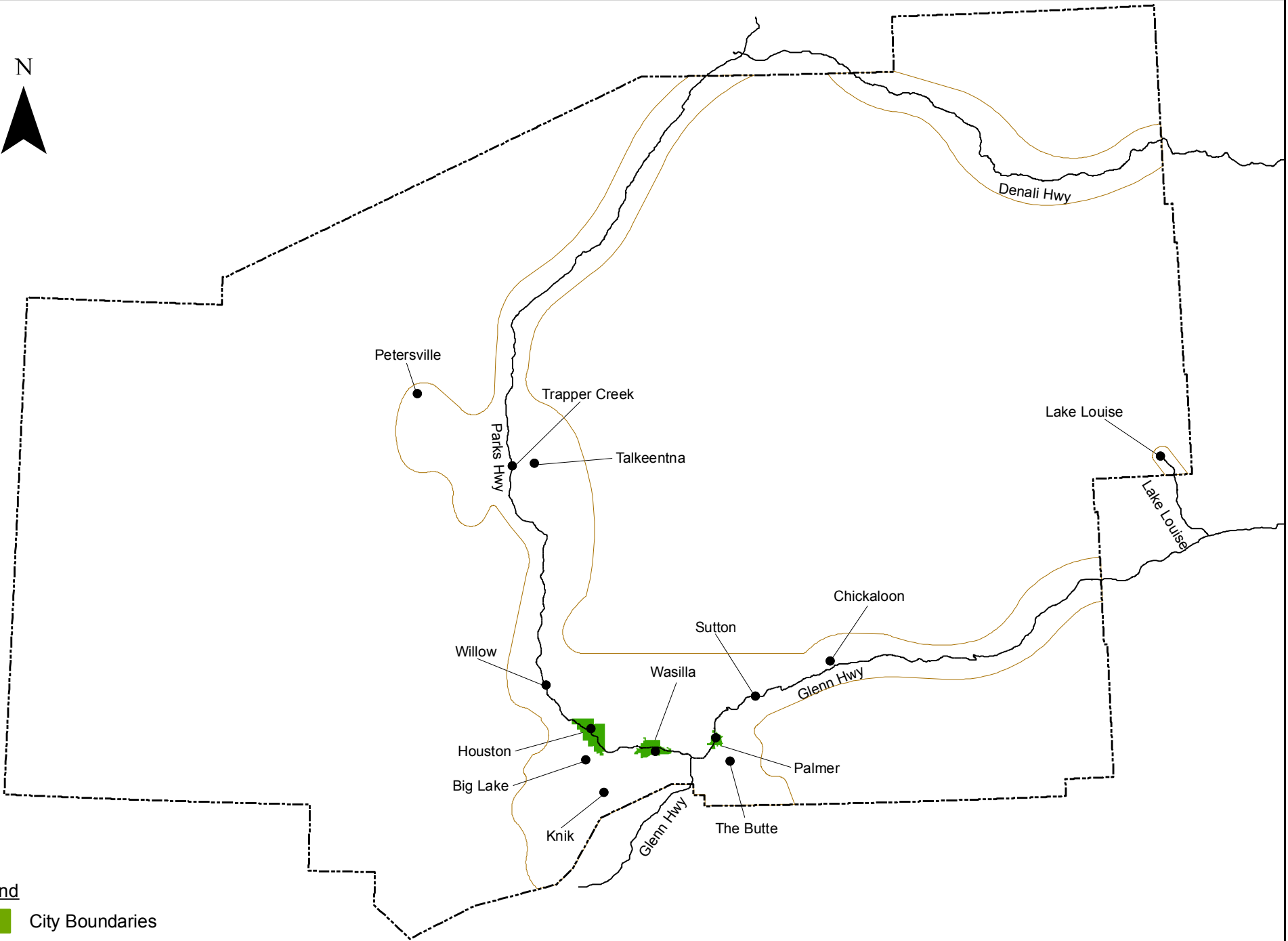
Airspace



Airport Registration - All existing and new airports, commercial floatplane bases, helipads and heliports should be required by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to obtain a Federal Aviation Administration airspace determination and registration. Airspace determinations would help minimize airspace conflicts between existing airports. Registration would ensure the airport location is properly mapped for use by the Federal Aviation Administration in its evaluation of future airports and by Matanuska-Susitna Borough property owners who may be unaware of airport locations.

Encourage Lights-on Operation - As part of a comprehensive pilot education program in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, pilots should be encouraged to fly with their landing lights on when possible to increase their visibility to other aircraft.

Review Low-Level Military Operations - The Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Federal Aviation Administration, and Aviation Advisory Board should continue to meet to address military airspace issues and communicate their findings to Matanuska-Susitna Borough pilots.

Support Capstone in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough - The Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Federal Aviation Administration, and State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities should encourage the implementation of Capstone-type services in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.



- Legend**
-  City Boundaries
 -  Study Area

Communications

Reassign Radio Frequencies - The Federal Aviation Administration should continue to ensure that radio frequencies assigned to airports in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough follow a logical geographic pattern.

Communicate about Private Airports and their Radio Frequencies - The Matanuska-Susitna Borough or State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities should incorporate the inventory mapping from this project into their Geographic Information System and make maps of the airports available on their website for interested pilots.

Reporting Points and Military Routes/Airspace on Sectional and/or Supplement - The Federal Aviation Administration should establish a set of standard Visual Flight Rules reporting points for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The Federal Aviation Administration and military should provide information on military routes in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to local pilots as part of a pilot education program. This information should be published on either the Sectional Map or in the Supplement as appropriate.

Pilot Education - A comprehensive pilot education program should be implemented by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough on topics such as the location of private strips, radio frequencies, reporting points, military airspace, “fly friendly” noise abatement procedures, and safety topics such as use of radios and landing lights in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Pilots and airstrip developers should be educated about land use rules to consider when siting new airports.

Expand Radio and Radar Coverage - The addition of remote communication outlets and radar coverage in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is a lower priority recommendation compared to the other RASP recommendations.

Airport Compatibility

Property Owner Notification - The Matanuska-Susitna Borough should notify property owners of the location of airports through Geographic Information System based mapping on the Matanuska-Susitna Borough or State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities website. The availability of the mapping should be widely communicated to real estate groups, builders, and developers with hopes that this information would be considered during

development and sale of property near an airport. Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning staff should also communicate to property owners about airport locations when they meet with property owners about development requirements during the land use permit process. Property owners near private airparks and public-owned airports should also be formally notified of close proximity to an airport through a note written on the plat.

Comprehensive Plans and Special Land Use Districts - The Matanuska-Susitna Borough should address airport compatibility during comprehensive plans and Special Land Use Districts. Some of the alternatives identified in this plan that have been rejected for borough-wide implementation, may be appropriate in a subarea of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Lake Management Plans - The Matanuska-Susitna Borough should involve the Aviation Advisory Board in Lake Management Plans that address restrictions on aviation activities.

Consolidate Antennas - The Matanuska-Susitna Borough should amend its existing tower ordinance to encourage the consolidation of tall towers and to include the input of a future Aviation Advisory Board when new towers are proposed.

Siting Public Facilities - The Matanuska-Susitna Borough should consider proximity to an airport when siting public facilities. Factors that should be considered include sensitivity of the facility users to airport noise and safety considerations of locating facilities where they would be routinely overflown by aircraft. The type of facility, frequency of aviation activity and distance from the airport should be considered in the siting evaluation.

Conditional Use Permit, Planned Unit Development, or Land Use Permit - The Matanuska-Susitna Borough should require a conditional use permit, planned unit development, or land use permit for new airports, commercial floatplane bases and helipads and heliports on the road system. Prior to applying for a conditional use permit, planned unit development, or land use permit, the applicant would first obtain a favorable airspace determination from the Federal Aviation Administration. The permit would ensure the airport has adequate runway length and meets minimum airport development standards shown on an airport template. Some examples of airport templates are described in the report. The final template to be used for this permit would be defined during the development of the ordinance creating the conditional use permit, planned

unit development, or land use permit process. These processes shall be implemented concurrently with changes to Title 27 to create a coordinated approach to approving airport locations.

Platting - The Matanuska-Susitna Borough should amend Title 27 of the code to define specific platting requirements for airports, which would specify standards to be met for airports to be implemented concurrently with changes to Title 17 creating a coordinated approach to approving airport locations. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough shall require an airport, commercial floatplane base, helipad, and heliport to be shown on a plat if subdivision of land is required. This requirement would help ensure that adequate land is provided for approach and departure clearances and development setbacks from runways, and that the aviation facility's compatibility with surrounding land uses are considered before a plat is approved. The airport template(s) adopted by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough would provide the criteria for clearances and setbacks.

Public Airport Improvements

Capital improvement needs and services for public airports were recommended by the public through the project survey and in public meetings and are reported here. The airport owners shall consider these needs when planning future airport improvements.

Table 1: Summary of Regional Aviation System Plan Recommendations

Issue	Recommendation
Involvement of Aviation Community	Form Aviation Advisory Board
Airspace	Require airport airspace reviews and registration by the Federal Aviation Administration.
	Encourage continuous operation of aircraft with landing lights on.
	Hold ongoing discussions with military on use of Matanuska-Susitna Borough airspace.
	Support implementation of Capstone in Matanuska-Susitna Borough.
Communications	Continue to reassign radio frequencies to follow a logical geographic pattern.
	Communicate frequencies and airport locations to pilots.
	Identify reporting points and military routes/airspace on the Sectional and/or Alaska Supplement.
	Conduct ongoing pilot education about all of the topics addressed in the Regional Aviation System Plan.
	Expand radio and radar coverage in Matanuska-Susitna Borough at a later date, if demand and need grows.
Airport Compatibility	Notify property owners of locations of airports on Matanuska-Susitna Borough or State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities maps and on plat notes for properties near busier airports.
	Address airports in comprehensive plans and Special Land Use Districts.
	Involve Aviation Advisory Board in Lake Management Plans that address aviation.
	Encourage consolidation of towers and involve Aviation Advisory Board in tower reviews.
	Consider airport compatibility when siting public facilities near airports.
	Require a conditional use permit, planned unit development, or land use permit for new airports, commercial floatplane bases, helipads, and heliports. Adopt airport template(s) that address minimum airport safety standards.
	Amend Title 27 to define platting requirements specifically for airports. Require airports to be shown on a plat if subdivision of land is required.
Public Airport Improvements	Airport owners should consider RASP public comments about future airport improvement needs.