



**MAT-SU BOROUGH REGIONAL AIRPORT SYSTEM PLAN
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING No. 1
MEETING MINUTES**

SUBJECT: Mat-Su Borough Regional Airport System Plan

GROUP: Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 1

DATE/TIME: August 8, 2006, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Wasilla Multi-Use Sports Complex

ATTENDANCE: See attached sign-in sheet

MEETING

MATERIALS:

- 1) Agenda
- 2) PowerPoint Presentation
- 3) Airport Registration Status Maps
- 4) Assigned CTAF Frequency Maps
- 5) Mat-Su Composite Airspace and Military Airspace Maps
- 6) Maps of Existing Arrival and Departure Route Configurations
- 7) Small Group Discussion Handouts
- 8) Comment Forms
- 9) Sign in Sheets

STAFF PRESENT: Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) – Murph O’Brien, Brad Sworts, Teresa Fredrickson

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

MEETING INFORMATION:

The meeting began with Murph O’Brien welcoming the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Tom Middendorf, DOWL Engineers (DOWL) Project Manager briefly reviewing the meeting agenda and the role of the TAC. Introductions were made by all present members and/or their representative, and the DOWL staff.

The following topics were presented at the meeting:

1. Project Scope Overview and Status
2. Goals/Objectives/Issues
3. Inventory
4. Forecasts
5. Land Use

6. Airspace and Airport Registration
7. Site Selection
8. Next Steps

Committee members had the following questions or comments during the presentation. Responses to questions and concerns are in italics.

- It would help the process if the FAA was involved in the process/meetings. Another member seconded that, and others agreed. *DOWL agreed to pass this request onto the FAA.*
- A committee member noted that the heliport at the hospital is just across the Parks Highway from the end of runway 33 and uses a different frequency.
- Greg Albjerg was asked to review the airport registration process.
- A Committee member stated that the notification of construction impacts on airports doesn't apply to a seaplane base unless it has a designated waterlane. *Greg responded that the FAA under FAR Part 77 does not notify private airports or seaplane bases of proposed construction that might affect the airport or seaplane base. FAA only looks at impacts to public airports. If FAA knows about a private airport, that has been registered, they might notify them of a proposed tower (for example), but they are not required to do so.*
- What are the ramifications if the FAA issues an objectionable airspace review determination? *Greg responded that the FAA can't prevent the airport from being built, but it could make it harder to get insurance.*
- Does it matter if an airport is registered? *Greg responded that some insurance companies might consider whether an airport is registered. Also, if a private airport is registered, the FAA can help oppose a proposed new private airport that is located too close to the original airport, for safety reasons.*
- A private-use airport in Fairbanks completed the FAA 7480 but not the 5010. A 5010 helps 'protect' airports from nearby development.

SMALL GROUPS DISCUSSIONS:

The TAC was divided into 3 groups of approximately 6 to 8 members and asked to address questions relating to (1) Issues (2) Land Use and (3) Forecasts.

The TAC reconvened after the small group discussions. The group facilitators/note-takers recapped the discussions, which are noted below:

Group 1: Facilitator: Steve Pavish

Notes: Nan Llewellyn

Issues Discussion:

- Noise issues:

- There have been some conflict issues between those who live on lakes and operate floatplanes and their non-pilot neighbors.
 - Generally noise is an issue at lakes on the road system (not a problem at remote lakes).
 - Those who own waterfront property and complain about aircraft noise tend to be supported by the government (lake management plans seem like a way the government is intervening on behalf of property owners who do not have an aviation interest).
 - One way to help resolve the issue is to insert plat notes in subdivision plats putting property purchasers on notice about aircraft use of the lake. If someone buys lakefront property, aircraft noise potential would be disclosed.
 - Realtors need to let prospective lakefront property buyers know about floatplane use of the lake; prospective property buyers need to do their homework as well.
- Agreed there should be some type of land use guidelines for private airports
 - Existing airports should be “grandfathered in,” while new airports should be subject to an FAA review process (as is the current situation) as well as a review by the MSB government.
 - MSB should have some uncomplicated guidelines to judge whether a new airstrip should be approved.
- Discussion about the importance of including state-run airports in this study
 - The management of state-run airports influences aviation activity in the MSB.
 - If the Willow runway were paved, there would likely be a significant increase in aircraft operations at that airport.
- Communication towers need to be well-lighted and clustered into centralized locations.
- Aircraft access needs to be protected for lakes that do not have a designated waterlane for seaplane operations, but are still used by seaplanes (floatplanes).

Land Use Discussion:

1. Public airports are required by FAA grant assurances to work for land use compatibility – should the MSB promote land use compatibility for private airports and airparks?
 - Existing airports should be “grandfathered in”, while new airports should be subject to a FAA and MSB review process.
2. Should landowners be notified of proximity to an airport when they purchase property?
 - Yes, people should know up front if their property is near an airstrip.
 - Noting proximity to nearby airports on subdivision plat notations is one way to notify potential landowners of nearby airports.

3. Should the MSB encourage FAA registration of private strips and airparks?
 - Land use regulations should apply to airports close to the road system (perhaps the cut-off could be within 2 miles of the road system).
 - No need for remote lakes and airports away from the road system to be required to comply with any type of land use regulations.
4. Should commercial floatplane operations be allowed on any lake in the MSB?
 - The group felt the question would be more relevant if it were reworded to ask, “Should commercial operators be allowed to be based on any lake in the MSB?”
 - There should be some restrictions on basing commercial aircraft on lakes, but not on itinerant operations.
5. Should the MSB consider airports when siting public facilities and utilities?
 - Yes
6. Should the MSB direct towers to be consolidated in certain areas?
 - Yes
7. Should the MSB provide guidelines/standards for airports and setbacks around airports?
 - Yes
8. Are any other land use ideas worth considering?
 - From a safety standpoint, it might be a good idea to designate some practice areas away from population centers and air traffic corridors where training aircraft can practice maneuvers.

Top Issues:

1. Towers need to be consolidated.
2. Grandfather in existing airports, but FAA and MSB review process for new airports.
3. Determine how to deal with conflicts between airports and neighbors with non-aviation interests.
4. How do we protect floatplane waterlanes that are not designated?

Group 2: Facilitator: John Jones

Notes: Carrie Licht

Issues Discussion:

- Will this plan lead to more government control? Should it?
- Building/development needs permits/planning. Why shouldn't construction of a runway?
- Aviation community needs to try and police itself, so it is involved in the process and not pushed by government.
- Ultralights/Sports Pilots/Gliders: Ultralights fly in Birchwood “Bubble” for weather and safety reasons as conditions are suitable.
- What areas/airports are not heavily trafficked by other aircraft and could be suitable for ultralights/gliders?

- Ultralight/glider groups are trying to increase radio usage for monitoring only, including radio gifts to members of ultralight groups.
- Perhaps wind conditions should be studied to find areas most conducive to glider usage or ultralight airport.
- A good idea would be to chart information regarding glider/ultralight usage areas for aircraft pilots.
- Towing gliders out of Palmer began recently.
- FAA should be doing more with airspace studies, including identifying a notification/coordination process.
- Airspace study requested for Willow Airport for usage and conflict of adjacent airstrip and Willow Lake traffic.
- Economic impact of Mat-Su airports?

Land Use Discussion:

- Grandfather clause needed for existing airstrips (grandfather clause removed if property sold). Not sure of time frame or process, but some regulation is needed.
- Do existing airstrips have priority over adjacent land development?
- Education program needed for FAA standards at private airstrips.
- What rights do you have as a private airstrip owner?
- Willow Lake issues: Lake owned by State, and land around lake has various owners.
- Get DNR involved since DNR controls State lands that DOT&PF does not. Each region for DNR and DOT&PF is different and does not have standard practices/answers. DOT&PF is mainly in transportation/aviation business where DNR is not and is not as familiar with aviation issues.
- Private use airstrip protection: what is appropriate in the MSB?
- Will growth in Borough require new airstrips?
- Need for 1 or more public floatplane facility with land based support/property/fuel, etc.
- Perhaps look for a floatplane facility that is not attractive for swimming/boating/houses, a marshy location could work.
- Need notification process for adjacent land owners.

Forecast Discussion:

- How do you calculate the monetary/economic impact aviation has on the Mat-Su Borough?
- If Anchorage airport cargo or passenger operations moved to Point McKenzie, how will it impact airspace for the surrounding area?
- Proposed prison needs to be near airport for reduced cost of transportation access.
- How fast do you think aviation is going to grow in the Mat-Su Valley?
- How much pent-up demand is there at Lake Hood and how much of that demand might move across the KABATA bridge?
- Ask “why do you have a private airstrip” in survey.

Group 3: Facilitator: Teresa Fredrickson Notes: Jenni Kuentzel

Issues Discussion:

- Limited zoning in MSB is an issue for airports and adjacent lands.
- Developers buy large parcels of land with airstrips. They are popular and profitable. Land values are double with airparks.
- Property buyers usually have knowledge of nearby airstrips.
- The potential for more airspace conflicts is an issue.
- The potential demand for more airparks is an issue.
- The FAA has templates for public airports; these should be considered for private airports too.
- Some airstrips are closing due to taxes and conflicts with new development next to the airstrips - Hart Lake, Lucille Lake, Palmer/Wasilla Highway @ Diversified Tire.
- With growth in MSB, how do we preserve aviation and how do we mitigate conflicts?
- Palmer Airport is establishing aviation easements.
- We don't get highest and best use without zoning.
- There are no standards for airparks; should there be templates for private airstrips for safety?
- Should MSB be in the business of establishing standards?
- Research how others handle this and the liabilities involved.
- Runway safety areas need additional property.
- How to deal with existing airstrips?
- There is potential demand for new commercial aviation services from the new visitor center at Denali. Talkeetna Airport could not handle the potential traffic. Maybe a new commercial airport will be needed.
- Consider the military routes in the MSB airspace.
- Consider the Knik Arm Crossing and the potential need for a cargo airport in the MSB.
- The growing number of sport pilots and planes are an issue.

Land Use Issues:

- Real estate disclosure forms currently ask whether airplane noise is a problem.
- Use plat notes to identify proximity to an airport.
- Look at the proximity to an airport when siting public facilities.
- Develop MSB maps showing the location of airport facilities.
- Use the Airborne Law Enforcement Association (ALEA) website to inform the public and Homebuilders Association of the location of airports. Make presentations at their meetings.
- Seek land use compatibility around airports.
- Lake property is valuable for recreation homes and even more valuable if there is floatplane access.
- Establish a process to review and approve commercial floatplane operations on lakes. Contact area owners and look at current use, noise and CCR's in the area prior to allowing commercial floatplane operations.

- MSB should encourage registering airports – airport approval should consider the number of users and operations.
- Use the platting process to help determine where an airport should be sited, provide buffers, and avoid traffic conflicts/accidents with increased activity. Take advantage of topography when possible for airstrip layout.
- Regulation of airports should be less in outlying areas. Consider different requirements for different densities.
- More traffic will generate more airspace conflicts.

Top 5 Issues:

1. Establish standards and apply to new facilities
2. Protect land use/aviation overlay zone. Acknowledge airport exists and have building standards for neighboring developments.
3. Classify land use. Method for airspace use.
4. CTAF frequencies – VFR recording points, establish radio standards (worst safety issue).
5. Safety – aviation, best management practices (vehicular, signage, platting process, etc).

The Mat-Su should consider whether there is a future need for a new large airport. Consider patterning the airport layout after Fairbanks International Airport, with its mix of commercial, GA, & floatplane facilities. There were mixed opinions regarding mixing large commercial aircraft and GA aircraft at the same airport and whether an airport of this type was even needed. DOWL agreed to recap the Anchorage International Airport Master Plan’s study of an international airport in the Mat-Su at the next meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9:15 p.m. followed by more informal discussion.

Attachments: Presentation
 Small Groups Questions
 Sign-in sheet