



Kotzebue Airport Relocation *Feasibility Study*

Meeting Notes

SUBJECT:	Kotzebue Airport Relocation Feasibility Study
ADOT PROJECT NO.:	61317
GROUP:	Public
DATE:	January 9, 2007
TIME:	6:00 to 8:30 pm
LOCATION:	Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Chambers
MEETING OUTREACH:	Post card mailed to every resident in Kotzebue; Small supply given to outlying villages; <i>Public Service Announcement on KOTZ-FM radio</i>
MEETING ATTENDANCE:	19
MEETING MATERIALS:	<i>Handouts:</i> Agenda; PowerPoint Presentation slides; Evaluation Criteria Worksheet; Comment Sheet <i>Graphics:</i> Land Use Map, PowerPoint Presentation
STAFF PRESENT:	<i>ADOT& PF:</i> Donna Gardino; <i>PDC, Inc.:</i> Royce Conlon; <i>Brooks & Associates:</i> Anne Brooks
MEETING INFORMATION:	

The meeting was broadcast on KOTZ-FM radio.

Donna Gardino provided an introduction of project team members, Royce Conlon with PDC and Anne Brooks with Brooks & Associates, the public involvement coordinator. Royce Conlon narrated a PowerPoint presentation, which provided an overview of the work accomplished to date and the project team's next steps in the project development.

Following the presentation, there was a question and answer session between the community members and the project team. A summary of the general comments is provided below. The comments are alphabetical by topic.

Airport Leases

- Concern was expressed about how the existing leases at the Kotzebue airport will be handled. The project team responded that the leases of the existing buildings will be valued based on an appraisal and the FAA will participate in the relocation costs should the airport be relocated.
- The public wanted to know how existing airport leases at the airport would be handled. The project team responded that many of the airport leases have a 50-year term. If a lease renews during this study or before a final decision, it will be up to the leasing folks at DOT to determine how the period of the lease will be handled. It is generally tied to the amount of

time that the lease has on it and how long it will be extended. They might extend it for a shorter amount of time. It also depends on the amount of the improvements. If the airport is relocated the lease period will have to be worked out.

Cost/Funding

- The public noted that the community is considering a deep-water port at Cape Blossom that will require a 12-18 mile road. The newly constructed Ted Stevens Way is already heaving and falling apart. The cost of a new road will be rising as time passes.
- The public wanted to know who would pay for the airport relocation and the access road. The team responded that the project would fund the airport relocation, if it is feasible, and the road to the relocated airport.
- A member of the public noted that the cost of relocation could be high because of high ice concentration in area soils.
- The project team noted that the airport is expensive whether we improve the existing airport or relocate the airport. Many factors need to weigh into the decision process. The project team is gathering information to help with the relocation feasibility analysis.
- The public wanted to know what the team meant by “cost to users” in the evaluation criteria. The project team reported that the surveys completed by Kotzebue residents indicate that some residents think that their travel costs will increase if the airport is moved. For example, they will have to take a longer cab ride, which will cost more.
- The DOT has invested over \$79 million at the Kotzebue airport and other Kotzebue airport projects are in the planning stage. DOT will continue to maintain the existing runway while we plan, design and construct the airport in a new location—if it is feasible to relocate.
- DOT has never funded an airport project of this size and has asked the consultant to consider innovative funding techniques.
- The project team noted that the FAA would fund capital projects but not maintenance for the projects once they are completed. The DOT would assume maintenance of the airport and access roads.

FAA Requirements

- Community member noted that projects are often justified in the name of safety, no matter what the cost. Which planes have a problem with the less than 1000-foot safety area and how often do these problems occur? Does the FAA always get what they want everywhere?
- The FAA requires that for any improvements or upgrades made to the airport, they want the safety areas improved.
- One aircraft landing or one aircraft take off is counted as an enplanement. So for one typical trip, 2 enplanements are counted.

Future Growth

- The project team shared information about future growth of the community and needs of the airport. The aviation forecast, or the number of trips projected in the future, is accomplished by looking at historic operations and passenger enplanements (people getting on and off of the airplanes), cargo and Kotzebue-based aircraft.

Location

- The public commented on global warming, relocation of communities that might be necessary with rising sea levels and noted that the airport relocation feasibility is part of a larger community discussion. They noted that the community is making decisions and the location of the airport is important.
- A community member commented that in her experience, when you move a major facility, such as an airport, everything goes or moves with it. Most of the town will eventually move nearby, if not all of it.
- One commenter noted that this is a subsistence community. The folks here like their subsistence lifestyle. If you move the airport to the coast, it will impact a lot of the environment that this community loves the most. There are other places where we have high ground. Any location suggested may be a favorite spot to go for subsistence activities.
- A commenter noted that if the airport is relocated, the community will want to move with it.
- A community member commented that the relocation cost is high due to high ice concentration in the area soils. Consider relocation where the soils are not as ice rich.

Community Relocation/Global Warming

- Commenters raised the issue of rising sea levels and Kotzebue's vulnerability since it is a coastal community. The study should be looking at the implications of a warming climate and the potential airport relocation.
- One commenter felt the study should expand beyond the relocation of the airport because if sea level rises the whole community may need to be relocated. Kivalina, Deering, Kotzebue, Noatak...are coastal communities that will be impacted by global warming. Residents have seen the affects of rising sea levels and recorded it in the last few years and some feel that everything needs to be studied. The project team stated that this was outside the scope of the project and noted that the Corps of Engineers (COE) has a program to move communities. Newtok, Shishmaref, Kivalina and others are looking for relocation dollars.

Runway

- If we assume jets will continue to fly to Kotzebue, extending the existing runway will be necessary, and this may affect the cemetery and the water source.
- The runway does not meet FAA standards. To fully meet FAA standards it would need to be longer and wider, for example. It will take a significant investment to make the existing airport meet standards. It would also take a significant investment to relocate the airport. Someone will have to come up with the relocation funds, construct the new runway and relocate businesses all while maintaining the existing airport.

Related documents on file:

Sign in Sheets
Handouts
Meeting Graphics
Contact List