



# Kotzebue Airport Relocation *Feasibility Study*

## Meeting Notes

SUBJECT: Kotzebue Airport Relocation Feasibility Study  
ADOT PROJECT NO.: 61317  
GROUP: Citizens' Advisory Committee  
DATE: November 14, 2007  
TIME: 2:00 to 4:00 PM  
LOCATION: Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Chambers  
MEETING OUTREACH: Email and telephone calls to committee members  
MEETING ATTENDANCE: See below  
MEETING MATERIALS: *Handouts:* Agenda; PowerPoint Presentation slides; Alternative Evaluation Matrix; Comment Sheet  
*Graphics:* Relocation Areas Map, Existing Airport Improvements Map, PowerPoint Presentation  
STAFF PRESENT: *DOT&PF:* Donna Gardino, Project Manager; Judy Chapman, Aviation Planner; Ryan Anderson; Patty Miller  
*PDC Inc.:* Royce Conlon, Project Manager; Rachel Armstrong  
*Brooks & Associates:* Anne Brooks, Public Involvement Coordinator

### MEETING INFORMATION:

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Donna introduced the project by explaining selection of the consultant, PDC. She noted that this is the final meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Committee for the project. The purpose of the meeting is to present the results and seek input on the Draft Kotzebue Airport Feasibility Study Report.

Everyone then introduced themselves.

The following are questions or comments directed to the project team during and after the presentation. The questions or comments from the CAC are shown in *italics* and the team responses in regular type. Statements in < > were added to provide context or clarification to the questions or comments.

*What is a reasonable cost?* We will get into that in the presentation.

*I read in the report somewhere where the FAA is making a new rule regarding runway lengths. Where does this figure into the balancing of cost, safety, natural environment, and community?* It fits in the Safety category as part of the FAA requirements. FAA has issued a Safety Alert to Operators and is planning to make it a regulation to increase the runway length requirement by

15% when runway conditions are poor. <This is outfall from the aircraft crash in Chicago a couple years back>.

The design aircraft is determined based on the number of operations by the most demanding aircraft with 500 operations or more. An operation is one take off or one landing.

*Is FAA making the runway length requirement change nationwide or are they prioritizing the airports based on the history of accidents at airports?* They are applying the standard nationwide and the history of accidents is not a factor.

*Is this for any rural airport in the USA?* These requirements apply to primary or hub airports. They do not apply to smaller airports – Selawik, Buckland, etc. They only apply to airports receiving jet service.

*How much did the hillside removal project improve the glide patterns?* The slope was improved from a 20:1 to a 34:1. With the 15% rule it doesn't seem to be gaining us much. We don't have data about missed approaches before and after the excavation.

The cost of extending the airport the full 7,500 feet is in the \$560 million dollar range. We used unit prices from the obstruction removal project in Kotzebue.

*Did I tell you about having FAA here last spring. They came and pulled up what they had on Kotzebue—their drawings didn't show water on both sides of the airport. These are the people you are dealing with.*

<Related to the value of the improvements at the airport being brought forward to 2006 dollars on individual comments> *If it was paid in full back then – it is 1950's dollars.* True, however, the costs have been adjusted to present worth for comparison purposes.

*How much money is going into the Fairbanks and Anchorage airports?* Multi-millions however, Fairbanks and Anchorage projects are funded with fees collected by the airports including revenue from passenger tickets.

*What would happen if you should structure this into a phased structure? Doing one part, and then the following year, doing another increment, etc.* The project could be phased, however, the overall available funding is still not likely enough to make it work. We discussed other funding options.

The cost estimates assume barged material, except for Area 1, where the cost for using local or barged material was estimated. Area 1 is on a ridge, but the apron and lease lot area fall off the side of the ridge and require a significant amount of fill.

*The fill doesn't have to be gravel. You could use sandy material in the core.*

*KIC has a permit pending for the Pipe Spit area and has plans to conduct a geotechnical survey to confirm the presence and amount of gravel available. KIC estimates that 100 million yards of gravel are available at this site.*

*What material costs were used for cost estimating? \$75 per cubic yard based on barging material to the site and \$35 per cubic yard based on using local materials.*

*If you are looking at the needs based on safety – safety is a priority. Then why worry about the dollar? Sure I would worry about the dollars – but we need to concentrate on the safety. Do what needs to be done. I know money is short – being spent on Iraq war. It seems like we could work with the existing runway. Doesn't have to be done tomorrow. Continue to use the old runway and start the process on constructing the new runway.*

*If FAA adopts the increased runway length requirements and makes them a new rule, what are the repercussions for not complying with the new rule? The rule would be directed to the aircraft operators and any repercussions would apply to them, but they in turn could lighten loads (not desirable) or put pressure on DOT to lengthen the runway*

*If FAA is so concerned about the safety they should come up with the \$? FAA allows hunters to carry firearms across the runway.*

The point about approving the safety is a good one. We will be doing the project one step at a time.

*Noatak airport – is that going to be a jet strip? That way Red Dog workers can come directly to work rather than going through Kotzebue. Will it be 4000-feet long? It is ultimately planned for 4000' but whether it gets constructed to 4000' is based on available funding. We understand this could be an alternate to the Kotzebue airport when the weather is poor.*

*Fuel is being flown into Noatak. If we could get fuel flown into Kotzebue it would cost us less.*

We've done better job lengthening airports in the Northern Region area than other parts of the state.

*How is Noorvik maintained? I believe we have a contractor that bids on the contract to maintain the airport. They are on contract to DOT as long as their contract allows them. In the Northern Region – we have 50-60 contracts. At the smaller airport we have a couple of pieces of equipment to maintain the airports. FAA fund the purchase of equipment used for Snow Removal.*

<Still related to Noatak> *In the spring –there is a lot of water is on the runway and a compactor would be useful. Why don't you get a compactor? The state doesn't have a source of funding for that equipment. We know there are more needs than funding available.*

*What was the FAA's Airport Improvement Program funding level 5 years ago? It was about the same as now, but construction costs have increased. <Meaning less overall improvements are being made>*

*For Part 135 and Part 121 – do we pay a fee on Part 121? The carriers are certified, the Part 121 applies the larger jets, Part 135 the smaller planes. They do not pay a fee for this certification.*

*Why not partner with local folks? Deal with them, make this \$\$ available and start working on the airport.*

*When is the Airport Master Plan scheduled for completion? In Federal fiscal year 2008 – October 2008 would be when the master plan update project will begin.*

*Wouldn't raising the runway about 10-feet, make it easier to achieve a 7,500-foot runway and to provide for the beach access road? It could be done, however it becomes complicated with existing buildings, aprons that would have to be raised too. There are grade requirements for aprons, taxiways, etc.*

*The first thing to go when we have a flood would be the airport. Raising the runway would allow the airplanes in and out during a flood.*

*I did some calculations -- thinking to raise it about 10 feet – 640,000 cubic feet of material would be needed.*

Royce pointed to the sketches and talked about why the threshold was placed in different places to allow use of the beach road.

*Why don't we put some sort of a tunnel for the airport beach road? It could be looked at it. It just can't go too deep because of Kotzebue Sound. We can look at that as an option to be considered <in the MP update>.*

*There is a watershed to the east of the runway and properties on the north and south side of the runway that will need to be considered in the master plan update.*

*How long will it take to complete the master plan update? About one year.*

*Coordinate the Area 1 exploration with KIC. Ernie Norton will help to discuss.*

*Clarify for me when you would do the drill work? It couldn't be done this winter, the earliest would be winter 2009.*

*Who is coordinating the Cape Blossom Road? Ryan Anderson – he needs to coordinate with Dean Westlake from the City of Kotzebue.*

Donna handed out a summary of DOT projects underway within the Northwest Arctic Borough. Everyone was thanked for their time and attention. Thank you gifts were provided to the committee members, past and present.

Attendance:

*Committee Members Present:*

Dean Westlake, City of Kotzebue; Kim Franklin, NWAB Planning; Noah Naylor, Kotzebue IRA Council; Walter Sampson, NANA Corporation; Hazel Apok, Maniilaq Association

*Committee Members Unable to attend:*

Brianna Triplett, Student; Clement Richards, NWAB Assembly President; Jackie Hill, Maniilaq Association; Linda Joule, Kotzebue IRA Council; Martha Whiting, Mayor, NWAB; Richard Atoruk, Student; Sandy Schroyer-Beaver, KIC;

Related documents on file:

Sign in Sheets

Handouts (Agenda, PowerPoint Presentation printout, Table 5-1, Alternative Evaluation Matrix from the Feasibility Study)

Meeting graphics

Contact List