



www.kotzebueairport.info

Background

Kotzebue's Ralph Wien Memorial Airport is a regional hub that serves eleven area communities in the Northwest Arctic Borough as well the Red Dog Mine. The airport is the principal means of transporting people to these communities, and plays a significant role in the transportation of mail and cargo to Kotzebue and the outlying communities.

The Kotzebue Airport as it is today does not meet current Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) standards. The airport has two runways, a primary runway and a crosswind runway. The paved primary runway is 800 to 1,600 feet short of meeting FAA requirements for serving Boeing 737-200 aircraft, and the safety area is an additional 1,700 feet short. So, the DOT&PF looked at

the feasibility of relocating the airport or making major upgrades to the existing airport to both improve safety and to bring it up to current FAA standards.

The project team recognized the value of local knowledge and kept the public engaged in this study by having one-on-one conversations, holding public meetings, seeking input through questionnaires, and exploring issues in depth with a Citizen's Advisory Committee. (Detailed responses to the questionnaires can be found on the project web site: www.kotzebueairport.info)

Where can I see a copy of the report?

A copy of the report is available for you to review at the Borough and City of Kotzebue offices. Check with your local Village Coordinator to review an electronic copy. It is also on the project web site (www.kotzebueairport.info).

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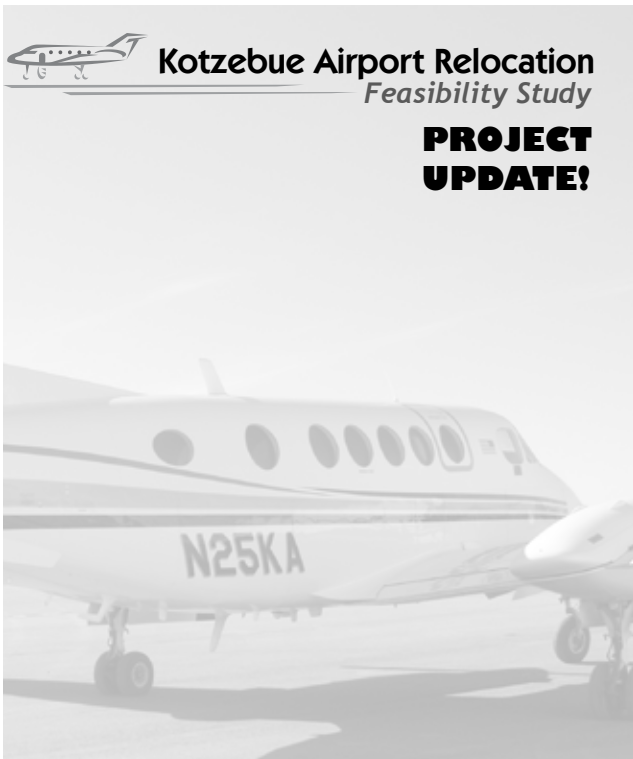


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Kotzebue Airport Relocation Feasibility Study

DOT&PF Project No. 61317

Final Airport Relocation Feasibility Study Report Released

In January 2008, the DOT&PF and the FAA released the final Kotzebue Airport Relocation Feasibility Study Report. The study examined the feasibility of relocating Kotzebue's Ralph Wien Memorial Airport—the regional hub that serves eleven communities and the Red Dog mine.

The report concludes that given the magnitude of the costs and the need to compete with other high priority projects for a limited pot of funding, either constructing a relocated facility or making significant improvements to the existing facility would only be feasible if funding could be secured. The report recommends maintaining the functionality of the existing airport through incremental safety enhancements.

Strategies for moving forward



A strategy for determining what improvements are feasible at the existing airport is to work backwards by establishing reasonable funding levels for the next 20 years or beyond and then developing an improvement plan to meet this funding. This strategy would protect the \$44.8 million dollar investment made in the airport between 1950 and 2005.

This plan would require careful consideration and discussion with FAA and the major air carriers to establish the priority of pressing improvements needed to maintain the functionality of the Kotzebue Airport. The aircraft size and operation numbers that could be reasonably served by the resulting facility would be determined from the improvement plan. Then the improvement plan could be evaluated by assessing the impacts on Kotzebue and the surrounding communities of service by changing to a less demanding design aircraft.

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Estimated costs to...

1 Move the airport

The estimated cost of moving the Kotzebue airport ranges from \$760 million to more than \$1.2 billion (this is more than \$100,000 per resident in the Northwest Arctic Borough). This wide range is due partly to location and partly to factors that are unknown without further study (soil and permafrost conditions, topography, availability of local materials, etc.)

One of the key conditions influencing the study's findings was the expectation of poor soil conditions combined with limited suitable materials for construction. KIC plans to conduct soil investigations along the Pipe Spit Bluff this spring (in hopes of finding a local source of material). We will combine efforts with KIC to conduct reconnaissance drilling at the Airport Site 1 during the same time frame. A source to fund relocation has not been found at this point in time. Knowledge of subsurface conditions will assist in truing up the costs of relocation for future decision making, if a funding source to support relocation is found.

2 Expand the existing airport

Expanding the existing airport to meet most of the FAA facility requirements is estimated to cost around \$560 million, but the airport would still have approach limitations after the expansion. Also, any further improvements at the existing site beyond those considered in this study would be extremely difficult to accomplish.

Update the Kotzebue Airport Master Plan

The Kotzebue Airport Master Plan was last updated in 1999. The master plan update project should include planning for economically feasible improvements to the existing airport. Studies to support the master plan update include material site reconnaissance, a water source impacts study, and climate change impacts study.

