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**From:** Solstice AK  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 4, 2017 3:49 PM  
**To:** Solstice AK  
**Subject:** Seward Airport Update: Scoping Complete, Scoping Report Online, Alternative Selected

Thank you for your continued interest in the Seward Airport Improvement Project. You are receiving this email as a project update to inform you that project scoping is complete, the scoping report is now online, and a preferred build alternative has been selected.

The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) completed Phase I. Project Scoping. The *Seward Airport Improvements Scoping Report*, summarizing the project background (scope, project history, purpose and need, project team); existing conditions; aviation activity and forecast; facility requirements; project alternatives; and environmental conditions is available on the project website Document Library online at [www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents.shtml](http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents.shtml). Alternative 2.2 was selected as the preferred build alternative for this project. A position paper summarizing selection of this alternative is available on the project website at [www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents/Position-Paper.pdf](http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents/Position-Paper.pdf).

DOT&PF has started Phase II. Environmental Documentation. PDC Inc. Engineers, in conjunction with DOT&PF, is preparing the Environmental Assessment for the project. Please check the project website Current Events page at [www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/current\\_events.shtml](http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/current_events.shtml) for updates.

For more information, contact Barbara Beaton, P.E., Project Manager, DOT&PF, at [barbara.beaton@alaska.gov](mailto:barbara.beaton@alaska.gov) or telephone at 907-269-0617 or Robin Reich, Public Involvement, Solstice Alaska Consulting, Inc. at [robin@solsticeak.com](mailto:robin@solsticeak.com) or 907-929-5960.

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## Solstice AK

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**From:** Brad Snowden <brad@seward.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 4, 2017 4:10 PM  
**To:** Solstice AK  
**Subject:** Swards Future  
**Attachments:** Airport Runway.jpg

Don Young told me he would help if the City of Seward would simply send him a letter asking for it.  
Brad Snowden

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**From:** Brad Snowden [<mailto:brad@seward.net>]

**Sent:** Saturday, October 14, 2017 9:20 PM

**To:** Beaton, Barbara J (DOT)

**Cc:** 'Brad Snowden'

**Subject:** Seward Airport and the future!

Hello Barbara,

I used Paint to copy and past this photo here.

PN&D did this overlay for me years ago.I asked them to put a 6,000 foot runway at “our” airport.

Fine tuning is required of course but...

**HERE IS SEWARDS FUTURE!!!**

**CRUISE SHIP PASSANGERS IN THE SUMMER AND ??? WINTER  
TOURISIM, CONVENTIONS, MEETING and IMAGINATION IN**

# THE WINTER



If you find interest in my findings and Alaska Airlines. Princess Cruises and Holland America's response to using Seward just ask!

Thank you

Brad S.

PS; Brad Snowden  
Hotel Seward  
221 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seward Alaska

## Airport Expansion

November 1, 2004  
Report to the people of Seward

On Friday, October 29, 2004, at 2:00 pm, a meeting was held at Alaska Airlines Corporate Office, Seattle, WA. In attendance at the meeting were:

Don Garvett, Vice President, Alaska Airlines  
Charlie Ball, President Princess Tours  
David E Beagle, Vice President Holland America  
Brad Walker, Director Leisure Marketing, Alaska Airlines



Brad Snowden, Owner/Manager Hotel Seward

Telephonic Attendees:

Vanta Shafer, Seward Mayor

Phil Shealy, Seward City Manager

Brad Garland, FAA/Airports

Mark Mayo, Transportation Planner, State Of Alaska

Todd VanHove, Area Planner, DOT, State Of Alaska Airport Design

Subject discussed was the potential of Alaska Airlines flying their jets and landing in Seward, for the purpose of transporting tour ship passengers.

- Don Garvett stated that Alaska Airlines would haul passengers out of Seward if there were an airport that could handle their jets.
- Chralie Ball and Dave Beagle would use that airport to haul their passengers if the cost was comparable to Anchorage or less.
- Brad Garland expressed support.
- Vanta Shafer felt that Seward would support this airport.
- Todd Vanhove stated that there would be some difficulties.
  - a) The physical characteristics of the airport.
  - b) Establishing the importance of the expansion to rise up on the State's list of airport projects.

In conclusion, I find that if Seward would like to see continued cruise ship dockings in Seward. And numerous possibilities that it would be in Seward's best interest to pursue this further.

Sincerely,

Brad Snowden

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**From:** Solstice AK  
**Sent:** Friday, November 10, 2017 9:36 AM  
**To:** brad@seward.net  
**Cc:** Beaton, Barbara J (DOT)  
**Subject:** RE: Seward Airport and the future!

Dear Mr. Snowden:

Thank you for your comments regarding the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Seward Airport Improvement Project on October 4 and October 14. You have been added to the project mailing list, and your comments have been recorded and passed along to the project team.

We understand that you support construction of a longer runway and appreciate your vision looking towards Seward's future. At this time, Alternative 2.2, upgrading Runway 16/34 from an A-I facility to a B-II facility, has been selected to move forward into the environmental document phase of the project. The Position Paper online at [www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents/Position-Paper.pdf](http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents/Position-Paper.pdf) summarizes the selection of the design alternative.

With that said, please be aware that extensive research and interviews were conducted during the scoping process for this project, including options to extend the runway. Alternative 3, close Runway 13-31 and Reconstruct Runway 16-34 to a runway length of 4,000 feet, was developed based upon potential economic activity. Commercial airlines were contacted during the initial scoping process for this project, and interviews and research indicated that there is not currently sufficient demand for a longer runway.

Without sufficient demand, the Federal Aviation Administration, the federal agency funding the majority of the Seward Airport Improvements Project, indicated that a "build it, and they will come" scenario would not meet this project's needs. Without funding, this Alternative was dropped from further consideration. However, the new Airport Layout Plan will include this option, and development of Alternative 2.2 will not preclude a future runway extension. See the Seward Airport Improvements Scoping Report online at [www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents.shtml](http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents.shtml) for additional information about the scoping process and the research, interviews, and consultations that occurred.

While Alternative 2.2 has been selected to move forward at this time, your comments have been documented. Please respond if you would like additional information.

Thank you.

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**From:** Brad Snowden <brad@seward.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 12, 2017 3:43 AM  
**To:** Solstice AK  
**Subject:** RE: Seward Airport and the future!

Having read the below I find myself remembering an Airport I built on an Island just a short time ago that you folks did that meets none of the criteria you listed. Perhaps you remember it? It was for a village that had a population of what? 89 people. It was built on Akun for Akutan.

Now, with that being said, and with the proper research your office, well funded I might add, would find what I found. In the years I have spent in researching the viability of such an airport for Seward. Some number of years ago, driven by an insatiable appetite to help, in this case, my town and my home. The help I speak of is Seward's economy. I have lived in Seward since 1964. I have seen our town as I have seen a number of towns and cities grow. This growth happens where there is the opportunity for economic development. This opportunity is what provides the jobs that allow us to feed both ourselves and our families. It allows us to provide a roof over our heads. It allows us to put clothes on both, our backs, and also our families. Quite frankly, without those opportunities one would have to ask, "Where would we be?" Imagine, if you will. Where would you and your department be? Where would the money come from? As we know, if it wasn't for those that had foresight to see, given the tremendous size of our state and the meager population, coupled with the high cost associated with the often remoteness of many communities that we Alaskans could not afford the cost of providing those essential ingredients that are needed. Among these ingredients are a transportation link that is appropriate to facilitate meeting the highest and best use in order to take advantage of the many locations and their possibilities.

Seward has suffered, like so many communities in our state with low employment and high cost in the winter time. Through the years I have often heard and experienced (over 50 years now) these winters.

The possibilities are endless with the building of an Airport of the size I have forwarded to you.

I can and will at a later date, provide some of those possibilities. For now I simply want to respond to your letter with what I took as condescending although I doubt that there was any intent in that direction. My response is motivated more by my love for Seward and knowing the importance of our desperate need for a robust winter.

If one takes a look at the Air transportation needs in Seward it probably can be easily overlooked the incredibly large demand for larger jets to bring passengers that arrive and depart from Seward all Summer long. Because, in its need to be answered the need does not become as apparent as it truly is.

Early on in its infancy and remember, I was here, there were many "work around" that were done to help facilitate a "new" business to Alaska! That business was and is Cruise Ship.

While there was need for a dock large enough to dock these ships, the cost and bureaucratic hurdles were more difficult to overcome than to make do with what we could. So...rather than building a new dock, located in a more desirable location for the customer who, let us remember, what that industry is about. The work around solve was to use the freight dock in an industrial area. This is not the best location but it has served itself well. A conversion has been made of The warehouse in order to facilitate the needs of those passengers and services of those ships.

In order to get those passengers both in and out of town, couches were provided to transport these people to the nearest airport, Anchorage. This puts more pressure on an already over burdened highway with the seasonally natural high demand. All the ramifications of what that does is almost worthy of a full page addressing them but simply, it is not safe!

When they were asked in a meeting that was set up over 10 years ago, in Seattle, I. Princess "Would you use an airport that landed Alaska Airlines 737's the answer was yes!" 2. Holland America, "Would you use an Airport that landed Alaska Airlines 737's,? The answer was Yes!". 3. Alaska Airlines, "Would you fly in and carry those passengers if there was an airport large enough to land your planes and the answer was yes!".

Now... When the right answer is so obvious why is it that we need to do the old "political process of Politics as usual?" This is the right thing. In every direction I have looked through the years the answer has come back YES!

Times have changed. That which we did 20 years ago as a work around has come to "Now is the time to build for today".



As I continue to work on all the avenues that one can think of and build a consensus of the INFLUENTIAL, can your office please take another look at Seward. You do not have to set up a meeting in Seattle like I did. You can simply pick up the phone and call Alaska Airlines CEO, Princess President, Charlie Ball and The President of Holland America. Thank you for your courteous response and opening the door to receive this response. I believe that if you give this the thought that I have you will reach the same conclusion I have. There is no other reasonable conclusion based on the criteria that I have provided.

Again, I thank you

Brad Snowden  
Alaskan and Seward resident  
PO Box 670  
Seward, Alaska 99664  
[brad@seward.net](mailto:brad@seward.net)  
[bradsnowdenalaska@gmail.com](mailto:bradsnowdenalaska@gmail.com)  
907-310-7610

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**From:** Solstice AK  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 7, 2017 2:10 PM  
**To:** Brad Snowden  
**Subject:** RE: Seward Airport and the future!

Mr. Snowden:

Thank you for your further comments. They have been added to the project record and shared with the project team.

Thank you.

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Email Received from Jerry Olive on October 5, 2017

----- Forwarded message -----  
From: <[jolive@gci.net](mailto:jolive@gci.net)>

comments2	Jerry Olive
name	Jerry Olive
satisfied	add to list
comments	Please let me know when there will be public hearings on this project. Extending the short airstrip in Seward will permanently demolish one of the most beautiful estuaries in this area. You will displace thousands of migrating birds, including a mating and nesting area for Arctic terns! Please consider putting the \$3,000,000 into repair the existing long airstrip in Seward. Please! personally invite you to go with me on a trip around the small lakes and beach that this project will effect. I'm serious, I personally invite you to go with me on a guided walk in the area that is proposed to be destroyed. I wait for your acceptance of this invitation. Thank you! Jerry Olive Seward
zipcode	99664
comments1	
email	<a href="mailto:jolive@gci.net">jolive@gci.net</a>

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**From:** Solstice AK  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 7, 2017 1:30 PM  
**To:** jolive@gci.net  
**Subject:** RE: Seward Airport Improvements feedback

Hello Mr. Olive:

Thank you for your email regarding the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Seward Airport Improvement Project and your invitation to walk the airport site. Your comments have been documented. We understand that you have environmental impact concerns regarding Alternative 2.2, upgrading Runway 16/34 from an A-I facility to a B-II facility, which has been selected to move forward into the environmental document phase of the project.

The DOT&PF recognizes the gravity of this project and its potential impacts and opportunities for improved safety and services in Seward. Recognizing the safety and service needs at hand, DOT&PF chose a Seward Airport Improvement Project alternative that is reasonable and responsibly meets the project needs. A summary of the design alternative selection is on the project website (see [www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents/Position-Paper.pdf](http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents/Position-Paper.pdf)), which provides context regarding how Alternative 2.2 was selected. Responses to the specific points raised in your email are below.

The next public meeting will be scheduled once the draft Environmental Assessment is released, which will likely be summer of 2018.

The proximity of this project to important habitats and wildlife has necessitated consultations with regulatory agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). DOT&PF believes that Alternative 2.2 is the alternative that satisfies the project's purpose and need while providing the least environmental impact. The USFWS, the federal agency with statutory authority that is responsible for enforcing the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and other environmental laws, did not express concerns about bird impacts with regard to Alternative 2.2. We are currently using bird species sightings, documentation, and habitat information to determine potential impacts to birds. If the analysis indicates there are considerable impacts to bird habitat as a result of project construction, we will provide mitigation to offset any impacts.

The extensive research completed to date has included many airport site visits and onsite field studies. While we appreciate your offer to tour the project area, we must decline at this time.

Thank you.

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**From:** gci <jolive@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 10, 2017 9:33 AM  
**To:** Solstice AK  
**Subject:** Re: Seward Airport Improvements feedback

I would like to know specifically what the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had to say concerning this project. Thank you. Can you also please provide specific names of people from this agency whom I may contact for they stand on this issue. Thanks



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**From:** Solstice AK  
**Sent:** Monday, February 12, 2018 4:21 PM  
**To:** jolive@gci.net  
**Subject:** RE: Seward Airport Improvements feedback

Thank you for the questions.

Following the January 24, 2017 Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities agency scoping letter (that identified the project's purpose and need, described project alternatives, detailed site conditions, identified preliminary environmental research, and requested agency scoping comments), an agency scoping meeting was held on March 2, 2017. At this meeting, USFWS noted the need to identify active eagle nests in the environmental document and emphasized the importance of considering impacts of the project on nests. USFWS provided written scoping comments on March 23, 2017 that commented that the project is following the recommended time period for avoiding land disturbance and vegetative clearing for nesting migratory species and is coordinating with USFWS for bald eagle nests, thus USFWS had no further comment. The USFWS contact who attended the March 2, 2017 meeting and provided comment on March 23, 2017 is Leah Kenney, Biologist, (USFWS, Fisheries and Ecological Services, Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office). Note that Doug Cooper, Branch Chief, (USFWS, Fisheries and Ecological Services, Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office), was also invited to the meeting, expressed interest in the project, and received project information but was unable to attend the agency scoping meeting. No other comments were provided from USFWS other than those summarized from Ms. Kenney.

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On Thursday, October 12, 2017, 2:56:08 PM AKDT, Boydston, Mark A (DOT) <[mark.boydston@alaska.gov](mailto:mark.boydston@alaska.gov)> wrote:

Tasha,

I am working on the draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed Seward Airport Improvements project (project # 54857). In your June 2, 2016 email (attached) which you cc'd Robin Reich at Solstice (who forwarded it to me). You

mention an Arctic tern nesting colony apparently on airport property. Do you have Lat/long coordinates for the nesting colony?

Do the terns tend to nest in the same area each year or is the nesting location spatially separated over seasons? The eBird has one lat/long for all observations so I cannot tell where the nesting colony might be.



Mark Boydston, Environmental Impact Analyst II

Alaska Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities

Preliminary Design and Environmental Section  
P.O. Box 195800, Anchorage, Alaska 99519-8800

Phone 907.269.0524 | Fax 907.243.6927

**From:** Tasha DiMarzio [mailto:tjbluebird@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 13, 2017 5:32 PM  
**To:** Boydston, Mark A (DOT) <mark.boydston@alaska.gov>  
**Cc:** Robin Reich <robin@solsticeak.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Seward Airport Improvements project /

Hi Mark,  
Thank you for contacting me.

The Arctic Terns that nest on the beach rye dune on the south side of the pond nest in the same area every year. There have been two years that I know of, that there has been major disturbances to the colony and people thought that they may move to another location or re-nest; this colony does not do that. They are easily disturbed and do not adapt to changes.

GPS coordinates are as follows:

Main Arctic Tern Colony Critical Habitat :

60 728.58 N  
149 2513.72W

Sub-Colony 1

60 727.30 N  
149 2443.58 W

Sub-Colony 2

60 727.57 N  
149 2427.87 W

I have attached a map of the location of the main colony, there are also 2 areas that I am calling "sub-colonies" that small numbers of terns sporadically nest in but their nest are not in ideal habitat and seem to fail each year. The main colony area is very important as it is the only adequate habitat in the greater Seward/ Kenai Peninsula area for Arctic Terns.

I also read the 2008 Environmental Assessment Plan and in section 3.4.4 Wildlife Hazards, this chapter failed to address that this stream and pond area is a Pink and Chum salmon spawning area, Bears and River otters, coyotes fish in the ponds and creeks, and many species of birds nest in this area besides Arctic Terns.

Birds that have or currently nest in the airport pond area are: Northern Pintail, Gadwall, Mallard, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Savanna Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, Semi-palmated Plovers, Least Sandpipers, Common Snipe, Greater Yellowlegs, warblers, Great Horned Owl, and Bald Eagle

Not only is this area an important habitat for wildlife but it is also a very important migration stop over for many species of birds from around the world of which their numbers are in decline.

Banded Dusky Canada Geese have been spotted here along with a Banded/Flagged Bar-Tailed Godwit from New Zealand and Flagged and Banded Western Sandpiper from Chile!

Many species of shorebirds utilize this area along with Sandhill Cranes this past spring there was a fallout (when weather conditions drastically change during migration forcing birds to be grounded) over 1100 Sandhill Cranes, Hudsonian Godwits, Bar-tailed Godwits, Cackling Geese, Greater white-fronted, Whimbrel, Black-bellied plovers, Snow Geese and any species of songbirds were seen at the pond area. If this land was not there these birds most likely would have perished as some of the birds remained grounded for up to seven days.

There is also a large family group of Trumpeter Swans that nest nearby and each year as soon as their cygnets can fly they move them to the airport ponds to feed and continue to grow.

It is also key to know that these birds can be a major hazard to aircraft. If a runway is built in the only suitable habitat in this migration corridor birds will have no where to land to refuel and will become large displaced flying hazards.

On top of the wildlife concerns is the hydrology of the area. Winter and summer are very different in this area; flooding, extreme high tides, surf and ice build up push water past the ponds, overflowing the sloughs and southern field each winter. A runway that extends out into and past the pond would be destroyed in a matter of years. A thorough environmental assessment needs to be conducted in each of the seasons especially the Spring and Winter.

I am surprised at how few public comments were submitted. I believe people have not been properly informed of this project and its implications. I would speculate that more recreational users visit the airport, ponds and beaches than pilots, and if the hunters, dog walkers, birders, beach combers ect new about this project ("Airport Improvements" vs Habitat loss and recreational area loss) you would have more input.

It's really a special area to "Sewardites" and other Alaskans, it is the only remaining inter-tidal wetlands in Resurrection Bay.

If there is any other information I can give you I will be happy to help.  
Thank you for reading my response and taking the time to research this project.

Tasha

## **Stakeholder Working Group Meeting #4 Correspondence and Documentation**

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**From:** Robin Reich  
**Sent:** Friday, September 15, 2017 10:23 AM  
**To:** bca.alaska@gmail.com; mike.edelmann@faa.gov; terryc@akrr.com; rlong@cityofseward.net; kubitzi@akrr.com; spresley@kpb.us; sean.montgomery@alaska.gov; BearLakePilot@gmail.com; dennis.perry@alaska.gov; hendricksonc@akrr.com  
**Cc:** Olivia Cohn; barbara.beaton@alaska.gov; RoyceConlon@pdceng.com; joy.vaughn@alaska.gov; kevin.knotek@alaska.gov; Angela Smith; Erica Betts  
**Subject:** October 4, 1:00 PM Seward Airport Improvements Projects Telcon

Good morning-

Thank you for responding to the Seward Airport Improvements Project Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) Doodle poll.

Please save the date for the Seward Airport Improvements Project SWG teleconference meeting that will take place on: **Monday, October 2, 2017 at 1:00 p.m.**

*Conference Call Line: 800-315-6338*

*Access Code: 58571*

The status of the Seward Airport Improvements Project, including alternative selection and future tasks, will be discussed. An agenda and meeting materials are forthcoming.

Thank you,

Robin Reich, President  
Environmental Planner

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**From:** Olivia Cohn  
**Sent:** Friday, September 29, 2017 10:36 AM  
**To:** bca.alaska@gmail.com; mike.edelmann@faa.gov; terryc@akrr.com; rlong@cityofseward.net; kubitzj@akrr.com; spresley@kpb.us; sean.montgomery@alaska.gov; BearLakePilot@gmail.com; dennis.perry@alaska.gov; hendricksonc@akrr.com  
**Cc:** barbara.beaton@alaska.gov; RoyceConlon@pdceng.com; joy.vaughn@alaska.gov; kevin.knotek@alaska.gov; Angela Smith; Erica Betts; Robin Reich  
**Subject:** Reminder: October 2, 1:00 PM Seward Airport Improvement Project Telcon  
**Attachments:** SWGMtg\_4\_AgendaforOct2,2017.pdf; SWG Mtg 3\_04-20-2016\_MtgNotes\_07262016.pdf

Good morning:

We look forward to the Seward Airport Improvement Project Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) teleconference meeting on Monday, October 2, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. ***At that time, call 800-315-6338, and use access code 58571.***

Attached, please find a meeting agenda as well as April 2017 SWG meeting #3 notes.

In advance of this call, please take time to review the Seward Airport Improvement Scoping Report, which is now online here: <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents.shtml>.

Prior to the meeting, you will also receive a copy of the Seward Airport Improvement Alternatives Position Paper.

Thank you.

# MEMORANDUM



**Date:** October 2, 2017

**To:** Barbara Beaton, Project Manager  
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

**From:** Robin Reich and Olivia Cohn (Solstice Alaska Consulting, Inc) with input and review from Angela Smith and Royce Conlon (PDC Engineers, Inc.)

**Subject:** Summary of 10/02/2017 Stakeholder Working Group Meeting #4 – Seward Airport Improvement Project (#Z548570000)

This document provides a summary of the fourth Seward Airport Improvement Project Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) meeting held on October 2, 2017, which was held via teleconference. The SWG meeting began at 1:00 pm and ended at approximately 2:30 pm.

Materials distributed in advance of the meeting included the meeting agenda (Figure 1); Scoping Report; Alternatives Position Paper; and April 20, 2016 SWG Meeting #3 notes. These items were distributed via email (project website link and attachments) on September 29, 2017. *Note: post-meeting follow-up information is provided in brackets throughout this document.*

## Introductions and Purpose

Robin Reich, Solstice Alaska Consulting, Inc (SolsticeAK), began the meeting with a welcome and introductions. Table 1 lists the meeting participants.

**Table 1. Meeting Participants (via teleconference)**

SWG Membership	Name
Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	Jim Kubitz, Brian Lindamood, Dwayne Atwood
Alaska Wing Civil Air Patrol	Brandon Anderson
City of Seward	Invited; [Ron Long provided input through a post-mtg. telephone call (see attached telephone log)]
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)	Mike Edelmann
Kenai Peninsula Borough Seward/Bear Creek Flood Service Area, Water Resource Manager	Stephanie Presley
Lease Holder, General Aviation Pilot, Community Member	Dennis Perry
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Maintenance	Sean Montgomery
DOT&PF Project Management, Central Region Design and Engineering	Barbara Beaton, P.E., Project Manager, Joy Vaughn
DOT&PF, Peninsula District	Kevin Knotek
Consultant: PDC Engineers, Inc.	Royce Conlon, P.E., Consultant Team Project Manager, Angela Smith, P.E., Project Engineer
Consultant: SolsticeAK	Robin Reich, Olivia Cohn

Following introductions, Ms. Reich reminded participants that this was the fourth SWG meeting and articulated the meeting's purpose: to regroup on the process and review alternatives moving forward. Figure 1 presents the agenda, which documents the meeting's format.

**Figure 1. SWG Meeting #4 Agenda and Overview**



*Pre-meeting packet: Alternatives Position Paper, SWG meeting #3 notes*

Barbara Beaton, DOT&PF, reiterated the meeting welcome saying that she would provide a project recap., introduce the position paper, and that Royce Conlon, PDC Engineers, would summarize the project status and next steps.

### **Recap. of the Project**

Ms. Beaton reviewed progress to date, noting that the planning process included the following.

- Reviewing alternatives from the 2008 *Seward Airport Master Plan and Environmental Assessment* [online at [www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents.shtml](http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents.shtml)].



- DOT&PF consultations with a hydrologist following continued flooding events.
- An aviation activity and forecast, which included extensive interviews.
- Refinement and carrying forward three alternatives that meet existing and future aircraft operations and were designed to meet Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidance.
  - The three alternatives fit within the primary constraints of the geographic locations of the river, bay, railroad, and highway.
  - FAA is providing approximately 94 percent (%) of the project funding, which impacts the need to follow FAA guidelines.
- Extensive research and interviews, that identified that the main runway (RW) was more than sufficient for meeting airport operations' needs.
- A flood forecast, which included determining how to raise the RW to meet design.
  - With a two-foot freeboard, flooding was modeled at three feet to look at impacts to surrounding properties.
- Creation of a Public Involvement Plan.
  - Public and stakeholder insight was gathered through two public meetings and three SWG meetings. The input from these meetings is documented in the scoping report.

The planning process is documented in detail in the Scoping Report, which is now online [[www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents.shtml](http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents.shtml)]. To simplify documentation of the process for selecting the design alternative in a readable format, an alternatives position paper was also written, [which was made available online after the meeting [www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents/Position-Paper.pdf](http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents/Position-Paper.pdf)]. This document summarizes the project and shows how feedback was acknowledged and considered.

### **Project Alternatives Position Paper**

Ms. Beaton introduced the position paper. She highlighted the following points that are explained further in the position paper.

- The Resurrection River floodway continues to move, and the main channel is now adjacent to the main RW.
- The river continues to flood and overtop the main RW.
- The main RW's safe weight changed, as determined from a thumping test, and it continues to decline in capacity.
- The preferred alternative design would satisfy all general aviation aircraft operations, including the B200 aircraft, which was used as the aircraft for developing design.
- The project could not justify enough demand for a long RW. The City expressed interest in the long RW; however, there are currently not more than 500 operations per year. More than 500 operations per year are needed to show need for the longer RW.
- During interviews, commercial operators said they needed increased demand, which is not likely, and a better approach to the airport to justify regular flights into Seward.
  - A non-circle public approach is not feasible with the existing terrain; a private approach could be possible but would require additional equipment in the airplane and additional equipment training.

- An alternatives analysis detailed the three alternatives: Alternative 1.1, reconstruct RW 13/31 (main RW) and raise it above the 100-year flood level; Alternative 2.2, upgrade RW 16/34 (crosswind RW) from an A-I facility to a B-II facility; and Alternative 3, close RW 13-31 and reconstruct RW 16-34.
  - Per the scoring criteria for this process, it was determined that Alternative 2.2 had more advantages and less disadvantages than the other alternatives.
  - The longer RW was kept as the ultimate condition in the airport master plan.
- Impacts from flooding are a project concern.
  - Alternative 1.1 would require fill in the regulatory floodway that would significantly raise the base flood elevation (BFE) for a 100-year flood event up to four feet in some locations. Raising the BFE would: affect about 160 acres more than Alternative 2.2; require a FIRM (flood insurance rate map) revision; require undergoing the LOMR (letter of map revision) process; and increase flood insurance rates for those who would be impacted.
  - Alternative 2.2 does not have as many flood impacts. It is a better fit than Alternative 1.1 and would impact about 22 acres, much less than the area potentially impacted by Alternative 1.1.
- Environmental impacts are a project concern.
  - Alternative 1.1 has impacts to the River's navigability and fish habitat.
  - Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) had stated it prefers Alternative 2.2.
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) must permit the least environmentally-damaging alternative and had stated preference for Alternative 2.2.
- Last winter, airport maintenance was difficult due to budget cuts.
  - Although most DOT&PF funding is federal; maintenance work is state-funded, and more budget cuts are expected.
  - The main RW by the river could have more flooding than Alternative 2.2, which is not within flooding on the FIRM map. Alternative 2.2 would require less maintenance.
- The project studied wind coverage at the airport.
  - The crosswind RW orientation wind coverage is preferred aside from occasional winter winds when the long RW is preferable.
  - FAA requires 95% wind coverage; Alternative 2.2 has more than sufficient wind coverage.
  - Tour operators were interviewed regarding wind. They primarily operate during summer. Of the two operators that operate during winter, one did not have winter wind issues, and the other sometimes has to wait out winter winds. Medivac providers said that they send an ambulance from Anchorage. Seward's hospital is available for emergencies.
- Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) issues are a safety concern.
  - For Alternative 1.1, the Alaska Railroad and Seward Highway are within the RPZ, creating a safety hazard.
  - For Alternative 2.2, shifting the RW and RPZ removes this danger, and the Seward Highway and Railroad penetrate the far corner of the RPZ and is much safer.



- Under Alternative 2.2, the main RW would be available during construction work on the shorter RW; therefore, medivac service would remain available while the project is implemented.

Ms. Beaton summarized the position paper conclusion [online at [www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents/Position-Paper.pdf](http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/sewardairport/documents/Position-Paper.pdf)] describing how significant research was completed resulting in the development of three alternatives, and ultimately resulting in the selection of Alternative 2.2 as the preferred alternative. An Environmental Assessment is now being prepared.

Ms. Beaton offered an opportunity for questions and indicated that follow-up questions and comments may be directed to her by telephone [907-269-0617] and email [[barbara.beaton@alaska.gov](mailto:barbara.beaton@alaska.gov)]. Ms. Conlon offered the floor for questions before she summarized next steps.

#### **SWG questions/comments**

**Glide slope intersection ARRC property:** Jim Kubitz, ARRC asked whether the glide slope of Alternative 2.2 intersects ARRC property. Mr. Kubitz further noted that ARRC may complete a project that may utilize ARRC property to keep river sedimentation out of the property.

- Ms. Conlon noted that there should be no public gathering in this area and said that Brian Lindamood was given the airspace alternatives that detail contours. Ms. Beaton noted that these documents are not final but are current and are very close to final.

**Long RW potential:** Dennis Perry asked if the RW ends up at 4,000 ft, would the railroad projects be within the RPZ, and if so, would that prevent the extension?

- Ms. Beaton said it would not really prevent extension because of the airport contours.

**Taxiway length:** Mr. Perry further asked if, under Alternative 2.2, the taxiway would extend to the end of the RW, and Ms. Conlon responded that no, it would be in the first one-third of the RW and not at the end.

- Mr. Perry expressed concerned with RW back-taxiing safety; Ms. Conlon noted that this is not a concern because of Seward airport traffic. She commented that a parallel taxiway usually makes sense for airports with more than 20,000 operations.

**South/Bear Lake access:** Mr. Perry commented that he flies out of Bear Lake in the summer and winters his float plane at his hangar at the Seward Airport. When he has to launch his float plane at the south end of the airport, he must back downward to avoid water. He asked if this area will be impacted and whether float plane access will be maintained.

- Ms. Beaton answered that there will be an access road to tidelands, but there would be a new design. Mr. Perry noted that he is concerned with the length.

**Corporate pilot operations:** Mr. Perry commented that the project does not see the traffic from corporate pilots because corporate pilots must plan based on the existing approach and access.

He is working on an approach with AOPA and wants a future opportunity to increase the RW length to 4,000 ft.

- Ms. Beaton said that the intention is to maintain an opportunity to increase the RW length to 4,000 ft when demand increases to meet FAA requirements, and it will be shown in the updated airport layout plan.
- Mr. Perry further commented that, based on a previous business example, airplanes can depart with average precision instruments. Getting into Seward requires more precision. When pilots were stationed in Seward and flights originated there, they were able to fly more often in the morning. When pilots were pulled out of Seward, ridership was significant, but when it changed, the utilization and demand decreased. Ms. Beaton clarified that the project must plan by the lack of demand information that is available.

### **Next Steps**

Ms. Conlon noted that the next steps will include the following.

- Alternative 2.2 will be carried forward as the preferred build alternative. An impacts analysis will be conducted for Alternative 2.2 versus a No Build Alternative, which would not meet the project's purpose and need. Natural and environmental impacts, including impacts to wetlands, will be assessed.
- To expedite collecting public input, the environmental document will be released in sections to the SWG. The first chapters will be available in approximately one month. The project team aims to complete the environmental document by August of 2018.
- The project will undergo the permitting process concurrently with design development.
- The project will require a field survey and geotechnical work. The aerial survey was previously completed.
- The project is working through erosion protection.
- The project will undergo a Right-of-Way acquisition and mapping process, which will take approximately eight months and could impact the project schedule.
- The project is estimated to go to bid in April 2019. The property acquisition process could change this schedule. During this process, the project team will work with FAA to redesign the circling approach and move visual approach slope indicators (VASIs) from the second RW to the new RW.
- A public meeting allowing comments from the SWG and public will be conducted once the environmental document draft is available.
- An environmental document is needed before property may be acquired.
- The airport access road to the highway may change as part of the railroad permit effort.

The floor was opened for additional questions and comments, and none were given. It was noted that community members expressed interest in pursuing the long RW, and the process to select the best preferred alternative for the airport has been long and detailed.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting concluded at approximately 2:30 p.m.

## TELEPHONE CONVERSATION LOG

**Date:** October 3, 2017

**Project:** Seward Airport Improvement Project

**Subject:** Follow-Up to Stakeholder Working Group October 2, 2017 Meeting  
Comments/Questions After Not Being Available to Attend Meeting

**Call From:** Ron Long, City of Seward

**Call To:** Barbara Beaton, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF)

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### Conversation Notes:

DOT&PF spoke with Mr. Long, who wanted to let DOT&PF know that the City of Seward is still interested in the 4,000-foot (ft) runway option.

Mr. Long is looking at generating funding for the option. DOT&PF relayed that the project would need to have this information (regarding availability of funding) very soon. DOT&PF discussed reaching the 4,000-ft option at some point in the future.

Ms. Beaton explained that the project would look at obtaining tidelands interest to accommodate the runway extension in the future and that the new airport layout plan (ALP) would show the 4,000-ft runway as an ultimate condition.

Ms. Beaton also explained that DOT&PF had discussed the issue with the Federal Emergency Management Agency as it would result in a Conditional Letter of Map Revision/Letter of Map Revision action to adjust the location of the VE Zone. Mr. Long confirmed he understood and wanted to verify.



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## **Agency Scoping Comments and Correspondence**

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**From:** Boydston, Mark A (DOT)

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 24, 2017 11:00 AM

**To:** ak\_fisheries@fws.gov; erin\_knoll@fws.gov; Moore, Eric A (DNR); DNR, Parks OHA Review Compliance (DNR sponsored); Ashton, William S (DEC); Lidren, Grant M (DEC); Heil, Cynthia L (DEC); Litchfield, Virginia P (DFG); Smith, Jimmy C (CED); Lidren, Grant M (DEC); Davis, Tammy J (DFG); Selinger, Jeff S (DFG); Kubitzj@akrr.com; Brian Lindamood; Hcd.Anchorage@noaa.gov; jeanne.hanson@noaa.gov; dglenz@cityofseward.net; cepoa-rd-kenai@usace.army.mil; MBest@kpb.us; bharris@kpb.us; ncarver@kpb.us; knoyes@kpb.us; tdearlove@kpb.us

**Cc:** Elliott, Brian A (DOT); Beaton, Barbara J (DOT); ak-airport-env@faa.gov

**Subject:** Seward Airport Improvements / Agency scoping letter

To All:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Central Region is requesting comments on the proposed Seward Airport Improvements project. See the attached Agency Scoping letter, Preliminary Environmental Research and Figures 1 through 8. Comments are due no later than February 24, 2017.



**Mark Boydston, Environmental Impact Analyst II**  
**Alaska Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities**  
**Preliminary Design and Environmental Section**  
P.O. Box 196900, Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6900  
Phone 907.269.0524| Fax 907.243.6927



January 24, 2017

Project: Seward Airport Improvements  
Project No.: TBD / Z548570000

## Re: Request for scoping comments

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), is soliciting comments and information on a proposed project which seeks to upgrade airport facilities as well as protect the airport from further damage caused by recurrent flooding. The proposed project is located within Section(s) 34-35, T1N, R1W and Sections 2-3, T1S., R1W, on USGS Quad Map Seward A-7, Seward Meridian; Latitude 60.1307°N, Longitude -149.4188°W, in Seward, Alaska (Figure 1).

## Purpose and Need

The Seward Airport is located within the floodplain of the Resurrection River; portions of the airport are within the defined Floodway. The main runway (R/W 13/31) is located adjacent to the river and as a result, has been overtopped 18 times in the last 5 years (2011-2016), resulting in damage to all the airport facilities. Erosion from the river and regular flood damage require a continued maintenance effort to keep the airport usable, especially R/W 13/31. The purpose of the Seward Airport Improvements Project is to provide a reliable working airport that satisfies current FAA design standards for an Aircraft Design Group (ADG) II facility and that also conforms to the state's requirements for a Community Class Airport. These improvements should meet the near term aviation demands as well as plan for future demand. Specifically the airport needs to:

- Maintain a minimum R/W length of 3,300 feet, to accommodate current and near term aircraft including medevac operations.
- Meet the R/W width and taxiway (T/W) dimensional standards of ADG II.
- Construct flood protection to prevent erosion damage from the 100-year flood.
- Provide a minimum of 95% wind coverage for the ADG II aircraft; cross-winds.
- Construct a R/W with sufficient bearing capacity to allow for occasional operations by larger aircraft such as Beech 1900, Dash 8, and small charter type Business jets.
- Provide reliable airport lighting for night operations.
- Mitigate approach obstructions and incompatible RPZ uses to the extent practicable. Accommodate the need for aircraft owners to change out from floats to wheels
- Ensure the airport has sufficient service roads.

## Alternatives under Evaluation

### *Airport Construction*

Two build alternatives are under consideration. Both Alternative 1.1 and Alternative 2.2 satisfy the purpose and need outlined above.

Alternative 1.1 would include the following (see Figure 2):

- Reconstruct and raise R/W 13/31 above the 100-year flood level (up to 4 feet).
- Install riprap to protect the embankment. Adjust elevations of R/W 16/34 and T/Ws B and C to match the new R/W 13/31 elevation.
- Eliminate or reconfigure T/Ws A, D, and E to comply with new FAA guidance.

Alternative 2.2 would include the following (see Figure 3):

- Close R/W 13/31 and discontinue maintenance.
- Reconstruct and raise R/W 16/34 above the 100-year flood level (less than 1 foot). This includes shifting the R/W east to provide the required R/W and T/W separation.
- Install riprap to protect the embankment from flooding.
- Relocate T/W B and adjust T/W F to match new R/W elevation.
- Eliminate or reconfigure T/Ws A, C, D and E to comply with the new FAA guidance.

Both Alternatives would include the following:

- Repave other airport surfaces as needed.
- Install new airfield lighting and an electrical enclosure building.
- Relocate, repair or replace navigational aids, and markings.
- Construct service roads.
- Install security fencing.
- Property Acquisitions.
- Construct an access road and ramp to accommodate float plane floats to wheel change-outs

#### *Material Site*

No material sites are included for evaluation as part of this project. There are commercial material sources available near the project area.

#### **Existing Site Conditions or Facilities**

The State of Alaska owns and operates the Seward Airport, which includes a paved main R/W (R/W 13/31), a paved secondary R/W (R/W 16/34), multiple T/Ws, and two aprons. R/W 13/31 is 4,533ft x 75ft and R/W 16/34 is 2,289ft x 75ft. The Seward Airport primarily serves the City of Seward and residents in the area between Seward and Moose Pass. Local residents use the airport for travel to Anchorage and Prince William Sound. Tour operators also use the airport as a base for sightseeing tours of Kenai Fjords National Park via airplane and helicopter. There is no scheduled commercial service. The number of operations at the airport is much higher in the summer than in the winter. Although Seward is connected to other communities by rail, road and the marine highway, the airport provides essential access during medical emergency or disaster situations when other access (single rail line and single highway) may be vulnerable.

Most of the Seward Airport is located within the floodplain of the Resurrection River Delta. A significant portion of R/W 13/31 lies within the floodway. The frequency with which R/W 13/31 has been overtopped by the Resurrection River has increased significantly in recent years. These instances were limited initially to the fall, but they are now occurring in the summer as well (June to November). Recent changes in channel morphology have rendered the existing riprap along the eastern side of the R/W inadequate. Without raising this R/W and installing additional erosion protection, overtopping of the R/W will continue and DOT&PF will keep pouring maintenance funds into the airport.

Recent testing of the main R/W embankment shows an insufficient bearing capacity to support large aircraft. Frequent flooding is thought to have contributed to a weakened embankment under the pavement. As a result, use of the R/W has been restricted to small aircraft with a weight of 12,500 lbs or less.

**Preliminary Environmental Research**

The environmental impacts of the two alternatives are not clearly established at this time so an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared. An EA was completed in 2008 for improvements outlined in the Seward Airport Master Plan. A Finding of No Significant Impacts was issued on July 1, 2008. Since then various factors have delayed long term improvements to the Seward Airport. Due to the lapse of time, increases in the flooding frequency, as well as revisions to environmental regulations and proposed actions, DOT&PF in coordination with the FAA, plan to prepare a new focused EA that will cover changes to the proposed Airport improvements and current environmental conditions in Seward. DOT&PF conducted preliminary research using the most current available data to identify environmental resources within the proposed project vicinity (attached). To ensure that all factors are considered in developing the proposed project, please provide your written comments, recommendations, and the additional requested information to our office no later than February 24, 2017.

If you have any questions on the environmental effects, please contact Mark Boydston, Environmental Impact Analyst, at (907) 269-0524, or via email at [mark.boydston@alaska.gov](mailto:mark.boydston@alaska.gov). Questions concerning the engineering aspects of the proposed project can be directed to Barbara Beaton, P.E., Project Manager, at (907) 269-0617 or via email at [barbara.beaton@alaska.gov](mailto:barbara.beaton@alaska.gov).

Sincerely,



Brian Elliott  
Regional Environmental Manager

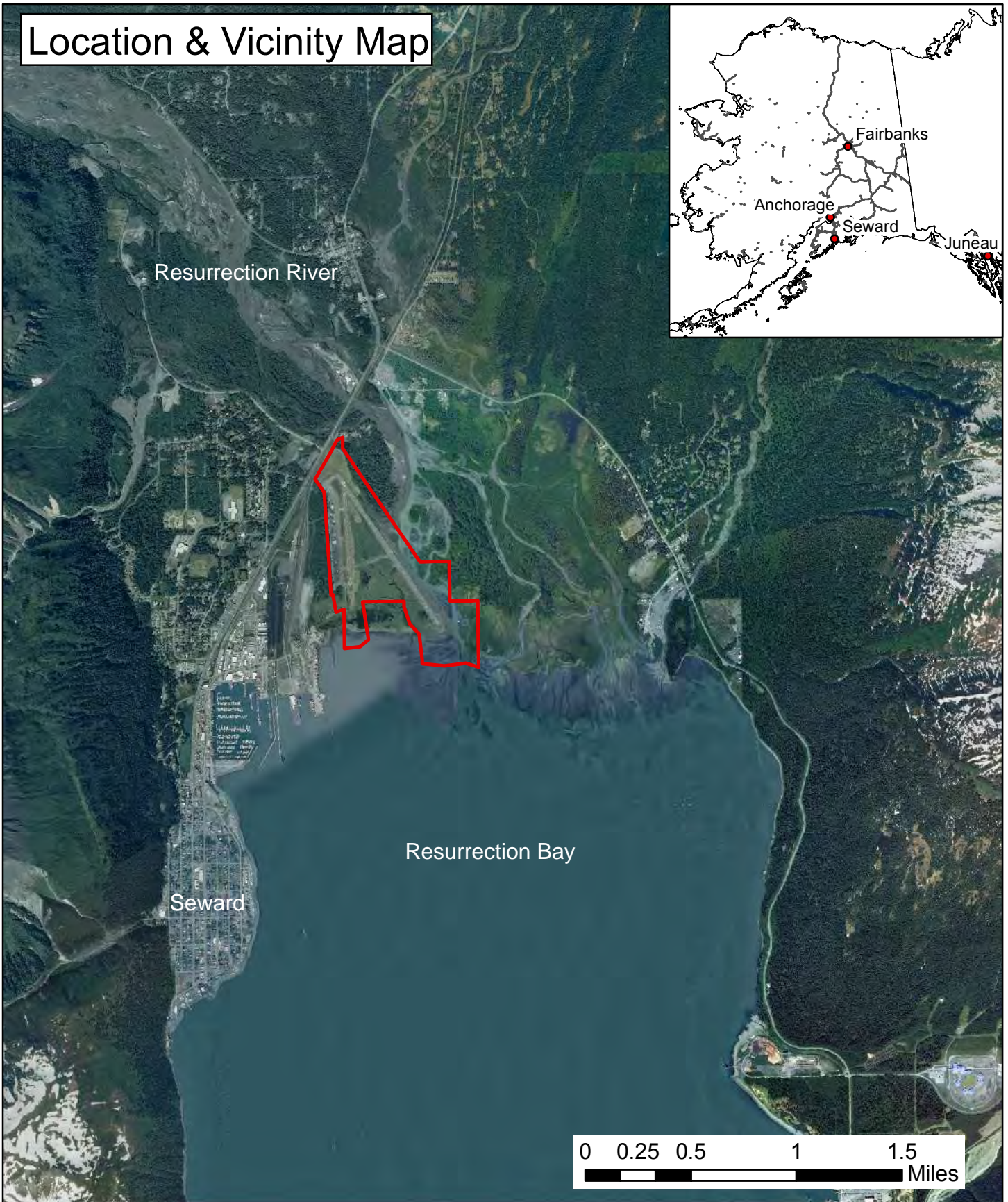
**Attachments:**

- Figure 1 Location and Vicinity Map
- Figure 2 Alternative 1.1 Plan View
- Figure 3 Alternative 2.2 Plan View
- Figure 4 Existing Conditions -100 year Flood Map
- Figure 5 Alternative 1.1 - 100 year Flood Map
- Figure 6 Alternative 2.2 - 100 year Flood Map
- Figure 7 Alternative 1.1 - 2016 updated wetlands and imagery
- Figure 8 Alternative 2.2 - 2016 updated wetlands and imagery
- Preliminary Environmental Research

cc: Barbara Beaton, Project Manager, DOT&PF Aviation Design  
Leslie Grey, Environmental Program Manager, FAA Alaskan Region, Airports Division



# Location & Vicinity Map



**Location**  
Section: 34, 35 - 2, 3  
Township: 1N - 1S  
Range: 1W  
Meridian: Seward  
USGS Quad: Seward A-7



## Legend

 Seward Airport

State of Alaska  
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
Central Region  
**Seward Airport Improvements**  
Date: 12/12/16 Figure: 1



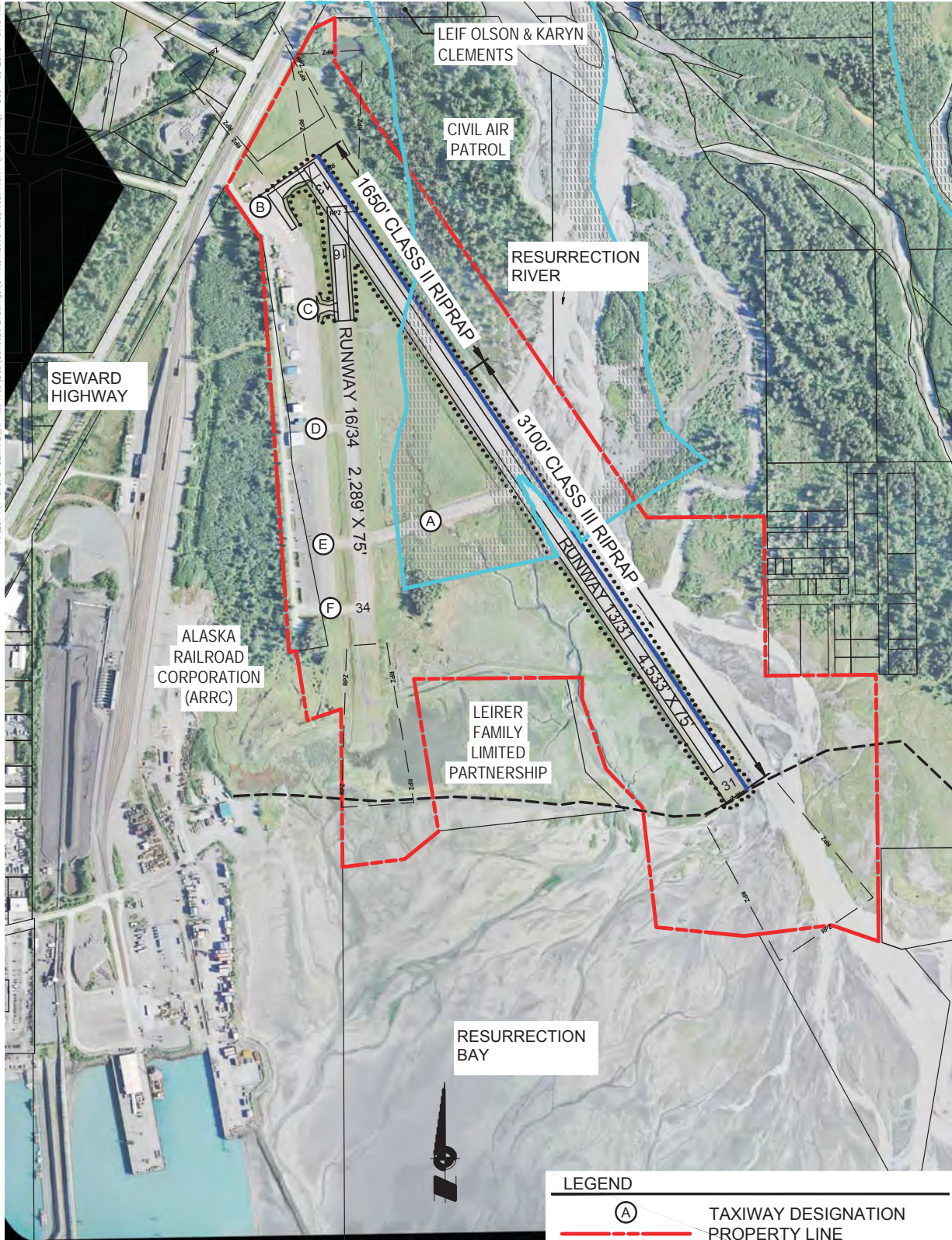


Figure 2. Alternative 1.1



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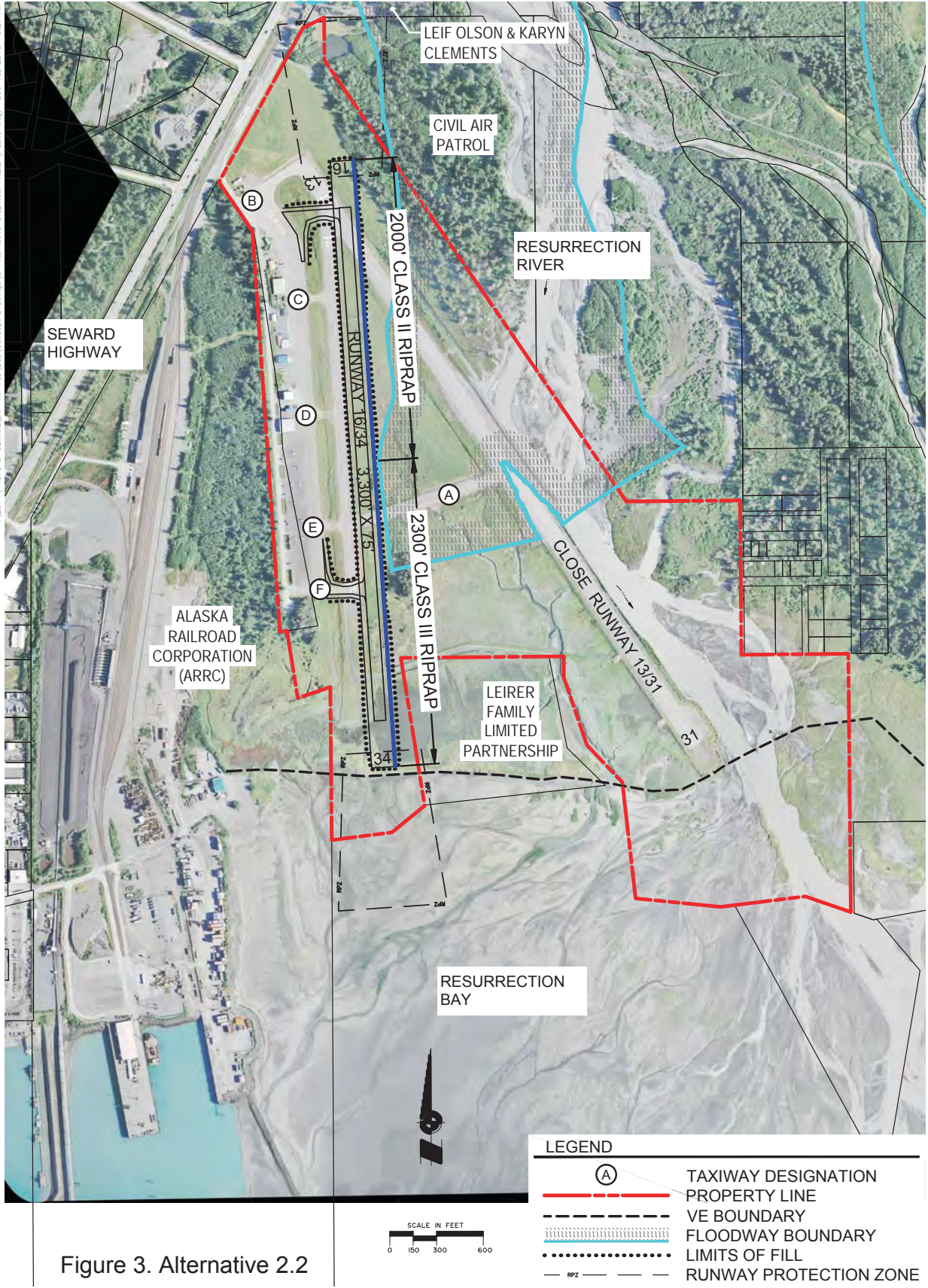


Figure 3. Alternative 2.2



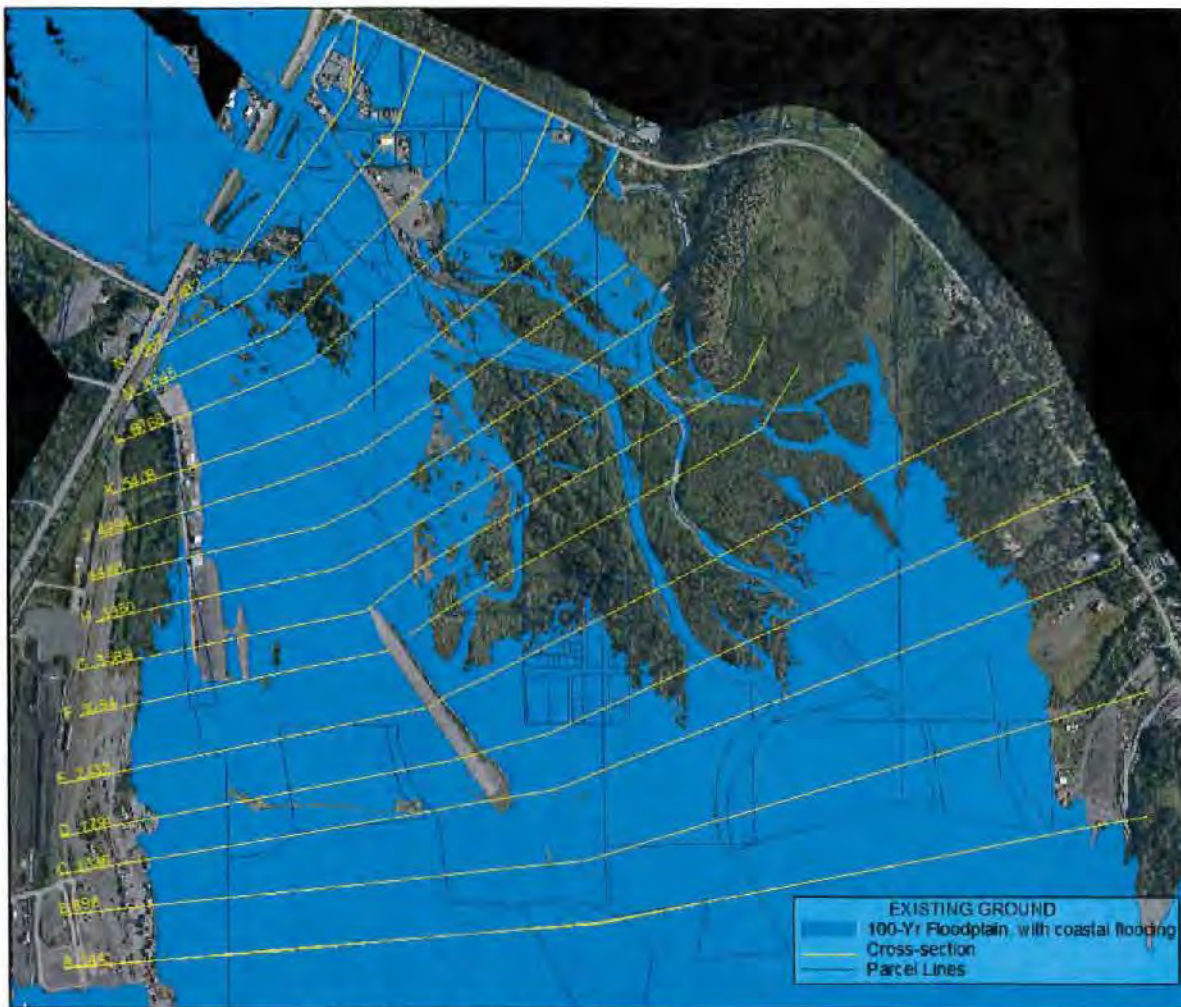


Figure 14. 100-year flood map for Existing Conditions.

EG-Figure 14 shows that the 100-year flood will inundate most of the Seward Airport, including the upper half of Runway 13/31 and most of Runway 16/34. The private parcels in the middle of the Resurrection River floodplain are almost completely inundated as well, but that inundation is primarily due to the effects of coastal flooding from the 1-percent-annual chance tide event, which govern up to Cross-section E on the Resurrection River.



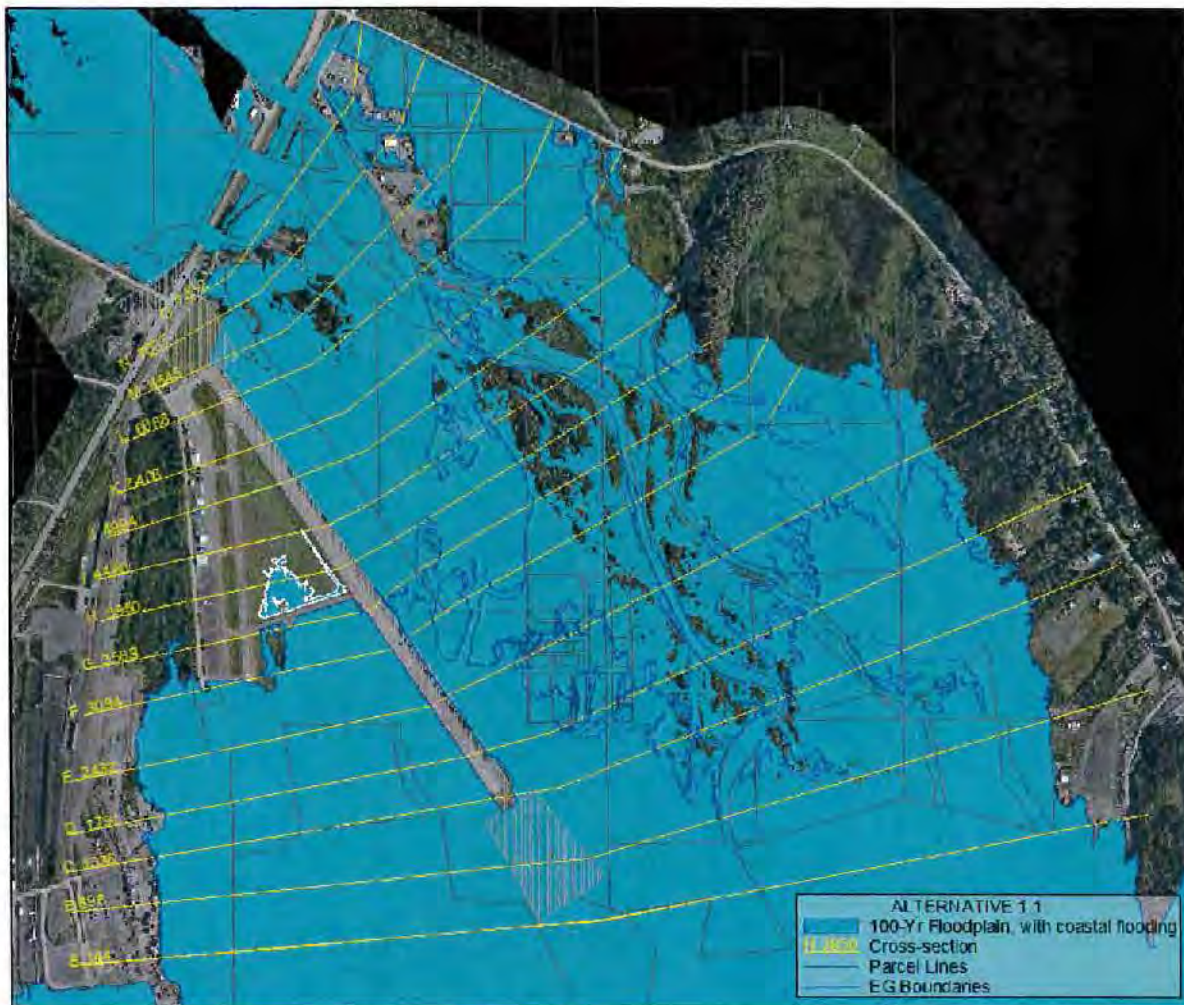


Figure 15. 100-year flood map for Alternative 1.1.

**Alt 1.1-** This design alternative raises the elevation of Runway 13/31 above the 100-year flood with a 2-ft freeboard. Both runways remain above the base flood elevation. As a result, the water surface elevations across the floodplain east of the runway are significantly higher than those of the existing conditions model. Water surface elevation increases of greater than 1 foot occur from Cross-section D to Cross-section J. The maximum water surface elevation increase is 4.04 feet, and occurs at Cross-section F. The private parcels in the middle of the Resurrection River floodplain are completely inundated. At some area of the 100-year floodplain between the Seward Highway and Resurrection Bay, the eastern limit has expanded. Compare the dark blue lines in Figure 15, which represent the 100-year floodplain boundary for the existing conditions model, to the cyan-colored 100-year floodplain of the Alt 1.1 model.