

## 2 PURPOSE AND NEED

This chapter describes the Talkeetna Airport and the issues associated with its design and operation.

### 2.1 Features of the Existing Airport

#### 2.1.1 Overview

The AASP classifies Talkeetna Airport as a local airport. Local airports serve as secondary access for communities and include recreational and emergency airports. The airport has been at its current location since 1941. It is located at approximately 62° 19' 13.8" Latitude and 150° 05' 37.3" Longitude, with an elevation of 109 m (359 ft) mean sea level (MSL).

The following sections provide information concerning existing air service, airspace, air traffic control, navigational aids (NAVAIDs), and airport facilities. This information will be used in subsequent chapters of this report to establish the baseline conditions from which development alternatives will be considered.

#### 2.1.2 Local Air Service

Talkeetna does not have scheduled air service, but is served by many non-scheduled air taxi operators. Locally and non-locally based operators use the airport for operations, especially during the summer season. The Talkeetna Airport is frequently used as the base for guide service operations to outlying areas. Air taxi service to support the Mt. McKinley summer climbing season is a major aspect of aviation activities at the Talkeetna Airport. Additionally, flightseeing is an increasingly popular activity in the DNPP.

The U.S. National Park Service (NPS) operates both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters at the Talkeetna Airport during the Mt. McKinley summer climbing season. In addition, there are summer charter and air taxi helicopter operations at the airport. These operations generally occur on the designated helicopter apron on the southern end of the commercial apron and lease area.

### **2.1.3 Airspace And Air Traffic Control**

Talkeetna Airport does not have an air traffic control tower (ATCT). The FAA provides advisory services through the Talkeetna Flight Service Station (FSS). The Talkeetna FSS operates from 0800 to 1700 hours Monday through Thursday, and from 0600 to 2100 hours Friday through Sunday. At other times, pilots must contact the automated FSS located in Kenai for information concerning the Talkeetna Airport.

The airspace surrounding Talkeetna Airport is classified as Class E, General Controlled Airspace, from 0800 to 1600 hours daily. At other times, the airspace is classified as Class G, Uncontrolled Airspace.

### **2.1.4 Navigational Aids**

NAVAIDs are installed at Talkeetna Airport to assist both local and en-route aircraft. A very high frequency omni-directional range (VOR), identified as "TKA," is located 2.04 km (1.1 nautical mi) south of the runway. Distance measuring equipment (DME) is colocated with the VOR. There is a published approach to Runway 36 which uses DME for position identification, and a separate approach to the airport which does not require DME. The Peters Creek non-directional radio beacon (NDB), located .4 km (.25 mi) northwest of the airport, provides a second level of non-precision approach capability at Talkeetna Airport. The FAA has also published a global positioning system (GPS) approach to Talkeetna Airport.

While the airport is located in a relatively rural area, there are airspace conflicts with aircraft using the Talkeetna Village Airstrip, Christensen Lake, and aircraft flying at low altitudes using the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) tracks for visual navigation.

### **2.1.5 Airport Lighting**

Talkeetna Airport's runway is equipped with medium intensity runway lighting (MIRL) and runway threshold lights. Medium intensity taxiway lighting (MITL) is installed on both sides of the existing taxiway and along the outer edge of the apron. The airport is not equipped with an approach lighting system. A visual approach slope indicator (VASI) is installed near each

end of the runway. A rotating beacon is installed next to the FSS.

### **2.1.6 Runways**

The airport has a 1,067-m (3,500-ft) long by 23-m (75-ft) wide runway, paved with 50-mm (2-in.) bituminous surface course, which is in structurally sound condition. The runway has non-precision markings and a 45-m (150-ft) wide runway safety area (RSA) which extends 90 m (300 ft) beyond each runway end. The runway is constructed to support aircraft weighing less than 13 360 kg (30,000 lbs).

### **2.1.7 Taxiways**

A 10.5-m (35-ft) wide full parallel taxiway is located on the west side of the runway. The taxiway centerline is 72 m (240 ft) from the runway centerline.

### **2.1.8 Aircraft Parking Apron**

Talkeetna Airport has two aircraft parking apron areas. The first is a paved apron, located on the west side of the runway and connected directly to the runway and the taxiway. It is approximately 366 m (1,200 ft) long by 61 m (200 ft) wide for a total area of 22 326 m<sup>2</sup> (26,667 sy). The apron can accommodate about 50 aircraft at a time and provides parking for air taxi, commuter, military, and other government agency aircraft. A second gravel apron was constructed in 1997 and adds an additional 7425 m<sup>2</sup> (8,880 sy) near the FSS to accommodate about 20 general aviation (GA) aircraft. The aircraft parking aprons do not have perimeter security fencing.

### **2.1.9 Terminal Area Facilities**

Talkeetna Airport does not have terminal or passenger facilities owned or operated by the airport. Terminal area facilities have been constructed at Talkeetna Airport by many of the lease lot holders. There are currently 14 developed lease lots at the airport. There are no T-hangars at the airport.

### ***2.1.10 Vehicle Parking***

There are no rental car agencies in Talkeetna; transient passengers must use local transportation. There is limited designated vehicle parking at Talkeetna Airport; lease holders provide vehicle parking for their customers. During peak periods, vehicle parking demand can exceed capacity. Vehicles are sometimes parked on or adjacent to the aircraft parking apron. Vehicles also cross the apron, interfering with aircraft during busy periods.

### ***2.1.11 Airport Access***

The only access road to the Talkeetna Airport and the adjacent residential community is Second Street, which crosses the ARRC tracks. There are times when a train is stopped on the tracks in Talkeetna, blocking Second Street.

### ***2.1.12 Fire And Other Emergency Response Services***

Talkeetna Airport is not required to maintain an aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) facility because there is no scheduled service to the airport by commercial passenger aircraft. The Talkeetna Volunteer Fire Department, which has a fire station on the west side of Talkeetna Spur Road, would respond to any fires occurring at the airport. The Talkeetna Volunteer Fire Department also provides Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

### ***2.1.13 Airport Maintenance Equipment Facilities***

The maintenance and operations (M&O) facility located at the northwest end of the airport houses equipment and provides office space for personnel. DOT&PF provides an airfield manager/maintenance worker who is responsible for maintaining all airfield facilities, the aviation parking apron, and the airport lighting system. Snow removal, minor pavement repairs, runway and taxiway cleaning, and general upkeep of the airport are several of the tasks performed by the maintenance person. The equipment for this work is provided to DOT&PF with funding assistance by FAA.

#### ***2.1.14 Airport Security***

Airport security is the responsibility of the Alaska State Troopers, who routinely patrol the airport. The State Troopers are stationed at Mile 97.8 of the George Parks Highway, approximately 1.6 km (1 mi) south of the Talkeetna Spur Road intersection. There is no security fencing at the airport.

#### ***2.1.15 Fuel Facilities And Aircraft Services***

There is no centralized fueling station at Talkeetna Airport. Individual lease holders are responsible for their own fueling, usually through a fuel vendor who trucks the fuel to the aircraft. Talkeetna Aero Services provides limited aircraft maintenance at the airport for the general public.

#### ***2.1.16 Fixed Base Operators***

Fixed base operator (FBO) service at Talkeetna Airport is provided by K-2 Aviation, Hudson Air Service, Doug Geeting Aviation, McKinley Air Service, Talkeetna Air Taxi, and Talkeetna Aero Services.

#### ***2.1.17 Airport Utilities***

Limited utilities are available at the airport. Local public telephone service is provided by Matanuska Telephone Association, and long distance telephone service is provided by AT&T Alascom. Electric power for airport lighting and the operation of NAVAIDs is provided by Matanuska Electric Association. Water and sewer service is provided by a community system.

#### ***2.1.18 Airport Land Use***

The State of Alaska owns most of the land in the Talkeetna area—about 80 900 ha (200,000 acres). The Talkeetna Airport is the largest single block of state land near the Talkeetna townsite.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) owns approximately 7300 ha (18,000 acres) of land,

which is used primarily for recreational purposes. There are several parcels along Christensen Lake that are used for a park and public recreation. The Cook Inlet Regional, Inc. (CIRI), Native corporation owns 2700 ha (6,700 acres) of land in the Talkeetna area. Private individuals own smaller parcels of land in the area.

The MSB adopted the *Talkeetna Comprehensive Plan* in January 1998. The plan identifies specific recommendations for land development and use in the Talkeetna area. While the airport and lands surrounding the airport are not formally "zoned," there is a process within the Borough for designating the use of land intended for development. The MSB recognizes the Talkeetna Community Council as the local advisory body for local planning and land use issues.

The airport property consists of approximately 270 ha (670 acres) of land. Land on the west side of the airport is developed for both residential and commercial uses. The land directly bounding the airport on the northwest side is privately owned residential lots and has been designated by the MSB as a residential land use district (RLUD). The Talkeetna townsite lies further west of the residential area, and west of the ARRC tracks. This area comprises the historic area of old Talkeetna and the majority of tourist-oriented businesses, such as restaurants, drinking establishments, and gift shops, are located there.

Land on the north side of the airport is privately owned and remains largely undeveloped. There are scattered residential units north of the airport, between the airport land and the Talkeetna River. On the east side of the airport there is very little development between the airport and Christensen Lake. The majority of development is along the lake shore. South of the airport are the Talkeetna Spur Road and the Susitna River. There are a few residential developments situated between the road and the river. There are also a number of residential developments along the southwest side of the airport. The Talkeetna Library, Talkeetna Elementary School, a restaurant, a service station, and some residential buildings are located in this area. All development on the southwest side of the airport is located west of the ARRC tracks.

The Talkeetna River Subdivision, adjacent to the airport, has been approved as an RLUD by the MSB. The Denali Subdivision adjacent to the airport to the northwest is also designated as an RLUD. Some residences have been built in this subdivision, although the land is not intensively developed. The Talkeetna Heights Subdivision lies to the west of the Denali Subdivision.