



MEETING NOTES

COMMUNITY AVIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MAY 11, 2010 • 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

The following is a summary of the first Community Aviation Advisory Committee (CAAC) meeting. Q = CAAC member question, R = Project team response, C = Comment. *Project staff comments are italicized.*

1. Introductions

See sign-in sheet for attendees. Willow Lake residents, WACO, and MSB stakeholders were unable to attend.

2. Project Overview

Q. Who is funding the Willow Airport Master Plan?

R. *FAA is funding 95% of the study, and DOT&PF is funding 5%.*

3. Public Involvement

C. Educate the community about aviation facilities: define parts of an airport and use graphics to supplement information.

C. Many people don't understand the relationship between the airport and lake. They think the facilities are completely independent of each other. They need to be educated on how closely connected these facilities are.

C. Calculate the airport's economic benefit to the community. Get hard numbers before making decisions about alternatives. Contact the MSB, DCCED, Census, and Division of Labor to obtain economic information.

C. Have a short presentation before Open House portion of next public meeting to explain the purpose of stations.

C. Posting sticky notes with comments on aerial photo at the last public meeting worked well.

4. Land Use / Grant Assurances

C. *Revenue is a primary reason for nonaeronautical land use leases on airport property.*

C. *This study will address how DOT&PF should handle nonaeronautical leases at the airport.*

C. Determine if airport can operate in the black and revenue generated from airport land.

5. Possible Alternatives to Evaluate

The project team asked for feedback on the following alternatives that may be considered when the alternatives evaluation gets underway this summer:

1. *Do nothing. Airport and seaplane base remain in current locations with no improvements.*

2. *Airport and seaplane base remain in current locations with improvements identified during master planning process.*

3. *Relocate both the airport and seaplane base.*
 4. *Airport remains in current location. Relocate seaplane base.*
 5. *Other alternatives to consider? Highway alternatives?*
- C. It doesn't make sense to have one facility without the other one next to it.
- C. One value of this airport is its location in the community. People fly in from remote places and walk to businesses.
- C. Floatplanes sometimes land at Willow Lake when it's too windy to land on lakes near Wasilla or Talkeetna. Willow Airport is used for the same purpose by wheelplanes.
- Q. What is the future of the highway?
- R. *When the demand warrants it, likely 20+ years into the future, the highway in the Willow area will be upgraded to a four-lane controlled access highway with frontage roads.*
- C. The process for determining the role of the Parks Highway role in the Willow area is:
 1. Comprehensive Plan makes a recommendation to Assembly
 2. Adopted Comprehensive Plan recommendation is rolled up into the MSB LRTP
 3. Parks Highway Visioning Document considers LRTP recommendation
- C. *Gabriel noted that the MSB is in need of a commercial seaplane base.*
- C. *Steve noted that as the MSB grows, more private airports could close and the land sold for residential development. This could result in a need for increased capacity at publicly operated airports in the MSB to house aircraft previously located at private airports.*
- C. *Gabriel asked the group to consider what the airport's role should be in the Mat-Su Borough's system of airports. Should it be a Regional airport serving larger aircraft and having low minimums, or a GA airport serving smaller aircraft?*
- C. CAAC members at the meeting would like the airport (including the seaplane base) to remain in their current locations as GA facilities.
- R. *The project team will consider CAAC comments but may still choose to evaluate constructing a Regional facility in the Willow area.*
- C. Who would come to an airport that is far away from Willow?
- C. A Regional airport at Point MacKenzie or Wasilla makes more sense. Willow is not the center of activity/demand for float planes in the MSB.
- C. Evaluate the cost of relocating the airport and seaplane base and share this with the public so they're aware of the amount.

6. Identified Needs and Improvements

- Q. Why aren't the Part 77 Surfaces shown on the lake?
- R. *Because the seaplane base isn't shown on the ALP, and there isn't a designated sea lane on the lake. A sea lane must be identified with buoys by the airport sponsor. The buoys*

currently in place on the lake are meant to mark certain use areas, not designate a sea lane.

C: Determine Part 77 Surfaces for the lake so it can have more protection.

Q: Is it possible to avoid designating sea lanes and still call it a seaplane base?

R: *Yes. That's how it is currently.*

ISSUES IDENTIFIED DURING WILLOW AIRPORT MASTER PLAN PHASE 1 STUDY

The following is a list of needed improvements that have been identified to date as part of this Study. CAAC member comments about specific improvements are documented in red.

1. Airside

- Runway length
 - Square off taxiway and provide run-up pad on Runway 31 for a longer takeoff run and improved visibility.
 - Reevaluate length needed. Shorter is not better.
- Fleet mix
 - Larger aircraft including DC-3's and military planes, and fixed wing and helicopters conducting medevacs flights sometimes land at the airport. At one point there was discussion about basing a medevac service at Willow, but it went to Wolf Lake.
- Pavement
 - If airfield paved in the future, be sure to construct a gravel/ski strip.
 - Consider how ski aircraft would taxi to parking if airfield is paved (skis and pavement don't mix). Need gravel parking next to ski strip. Would be nice to have ski aircraft parking on west side so people can walk to town.
- Railroad turnaround spur
 - Crane parked on spur is a hazard; consider removing spur.
- Railroad tracks east of the runway penetrate Part 77 Airspace (Transitional Surface)
- A portion of the Runway 31 runway protection zone (RPZ) is off airport property
- Excavation north of Runway 13
- Better instrument approaches needed
 - Do not need instrument approach capabilities for jet aircraft.
- Visibility issues caused by trees
 - Trees provide good dust control but won't be needed if the airfield is paved.
 - Extensive tree removal effort has already taken place; need updated aerial photography.
- No taxiway connecting Runway 13 and apron
 - Confirmed this taxiway connection is needed for safety reasons.
- No designated helicopter parking
 - Area currently used for helicopter parking works well but needs signage.
 - Locate helicopter operations away from fixed wing tie downs. Existing area is good but does not have good road access.
- More tiedowns/apron space/lease lots needed
 - Construct transient parking on south end of airport closer to town
 - Reevaluate the BRL location.
- Additional signage needed
 - CTAF frequency
 - Transient parking location

- Helicopter parking location
- Road
- Access road
- Leasing and tie down contact information

2. Landside

- No public vehicle parking available
- Access road does not extend to all lease lots
 - Extend lease lot access road north and south to reduce unauthorized vehicle traffic on the apron.

3. Willow Seaplane Base

- Aviation and non-aviation users
- Aircraft noise
- Shallow
- Short takeoff surface (some people disagreed with this).
- Island in middle of lake
- Trees
- Seaplane fuel facilities needed
 - Confirm whether or not lake tenant has fuel available for public sale
- More transient aircraft slips/tiedowns needed
 - Only enough room to pull 2 or 3 airplanes up on the beach; more room needed
- South end filling up with silt and vegetation

4. Maintenance and Operations

- The RAP currently being used works well at controlling dust, but dust is still an issue
- Additional building space needed to house M&O equipment
- Need a boat to maintain Lake and install/remove buoys

5. Safety and Security

- Lack of fencing has resulted in vandalism and unauthorized access to aviation facilities
- Shared road between community vehicle traffic and aircraft
 - Identify a new senior center access road separate from the taxiway connecting the lake and airport.
- Aircraft crossing highway
- Spectators crossing highway during the Iditarod Race restart

AVIATION ACTIVITY

Historic Charter Traffic at Willow Airport by Carriers Offering Scheduled Service 2002 to 2008

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<i>Enplaned</i>							
Passengers	32	0	2	0	0	0	9
Freight (lbs)	350	0	0	0	20,697	31,872	0
Mail (lbs)	0	0	0	0	201	354	0
Flights	4	0	1	0	9	12	1
<i>Deplaned</i>							
Passengers	24	0	0	0	0	0	6
Freight (lbs)	0	0	0	0	7,425	10,331	0
Mail (lbs)	0	0	0	0	201	399	0
Flights	7	0	1	0	8	12	1

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

Note: Although the carriers reporting this data provide scheduled air service, they do not provide scheduled service to Willow. The flights reported here are on-demand charters.

Willow Area Air Traffic Activity Estimates, Base Year – 2009

	Willow Airport	Willow SPB	Outer Willow Area	Total
Operations	15,814	2,182	26,251	44,248
Air Taxi	4,947	744	210	5,901
Local GA	4,678	473	10,488	15,639
Itinerant GA	5,946	965	15,554	22,464
Military	244	-	-	244
Enplanements (air taxi)	3,500	1,000	200	4,700
Based Planes	100	6	44	150

Sources: FAA Airport Master Records, 2009; Matanuska-Susitna Borough Regional Aviation System Plan, 2008; and 2009 interviews with air carriers, aircraft maintenance businesses, airport management, and other knowledgeable parties.

Air Traffic Forecast Willow Airport – 2009 through 2029

Aircraft Operations	2009 (Base)	2014	2019	2024	2029
	15,814				
	Low	17,460	19,277	21,284	23,499
Forecast	Moderate	19,056	22,962	27,670	33,342
	High	20,668	27,013	35,304	46,141
Enplaned Passengers	2009 (Base)	2014	2019	2024	2029
	3,500				
	Low	3,864	4,266	4,711	5,201
Forecast	Moderate	4,217	5,082	6,124	7,379
	High	4,574	5,979	7,814	10,212
Based Aircraft	2009 (Base)	2014	2019	2024	2029
	100				
	Low	110	122	135	149
Forecast	Moderate	120	145	175	211
	High	131	171	223	292

Source: Southeast Strategies, October, 2009.

Growth Rates: Low = 2.0% per year.
 Moderate = 3.8% per year.
 High = 5.5% per year.

Air Traffic Forecast Willow Seaplane Base – 2009 through 2029

Aircraft Operations	2009 (Base)	2014	2019	2024	2029
	2,182				
	Low	2,293	2,410	2,533	2,663
Forecast	Moderate	2,469	2,793	3,160	3,576
	High	2,592	3,078	3,656	4,342
Enplaned Passengers	2009 (Base)	2014	2019	2024	2029
	1,000				
	Low	1,051	1,105	1,161	1,220
Forecast	Moderate	1,131	1,280	1,448	1,639
	High	1,188	1,411	1,675	1,990
Based Aircraft	2009 (Base)	2014	2019	2024	2029
	6				
	Low	6	7	7	7
Forecast	Moderate	7	8	9	10
	High	7	8	10	12

Source: Southeast Strategies, October 2009.

Growth Rates: Low = 1.0% per year.
 Moderate = 2.5% per year.
 High = 3.5% per year.