

8 COORDINATION

The public involvement process is ongoing and will continue beyond the release of this final report. The activities conducted to date are discussed below.

8.1 Agency Coordination

An agency coordination meeting/teleconference was held in Fairbanks on August 23, 2006. Participants in Fairbanks included representatives from DOT&PF, PDC, ABR, and ADNR-OHMP. Representatives from the City of Kotzebue, Native Village of Kotzebue, NMFS, ACMP, NANA Development, FAA, and KIC participated by teleconference.

In general, concerns with the project are minor until a specific site is chosen. The local agencies asked that the airport relocation feasibility be studied in coordination with a road to Cape Blossom and/or a deep-water port. Some also asked to attend the field reconnaissance trip being planned at the time by PDC. See Appendix F for the complete meeting notes, as well as Section 2.5, Environmental Overview, for preliminary research results on specific environmental concerns.

8.2 Public Involvement

The project team recognized that relocating this airport is a serious consideration and committed to working with the public and affected stakeholders to ensure that their concerns are consistently understood and considered. To engage the public and key stakeholders in the project and the public process, several tools are being used, as discussed below.

8.2.1 Web Site

A web site (www.kotzebueairport.info) was established to provide project information and updates to the public and for them to easily provide their comments and feedback to the project team. The web site is updated to include meeting notices, meeting summaries, photos and other project related documents as they are developed.

8.2.2 Newsletters and Postcards

Three newsletters are planned for this project. Newsletters #1 and #2 have been released, with the third newsletter to be released at a future date. Newsletter #3 will present the final feasibility report findings and outline the next steps in the project development.

Public outreach for the project also includes postcard mailers providing notice of public meetings to Kotzebue area U.S. Postal Service box holders. Postcard mailers announced each of the public meetings held to date. See Section 8.2.3, Public Meetings, for details.

Newsletter #1 - April 2006

The first newsletter introduced the project, the project team, and the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) to the community. It also gave a brief summary of the January 18, 2006, public meeting and the comments received from the public about the study. A Community and Regional Users Questionnaire was included with the newsletter. Readers were asked to complete and return the questionnaire to the project team. See Section 8.2.5 below for further discussion, as well as Appendix F for a copy of Newsletter #1.

Newsletter #2 - November 2007

The second newsletter announced the release of the Draft Kotzebue Airport Relocation Feasibility Study Report for public review and comment. In addition, the newsletter informed folks how they could see a copy of the report – paper copies were placed at the City and Borough offices, as well as posted on the project web site. The newsletter also announced the upcoming public meeting on November 14th, in which the project team would make a presentation about the draft findings and answer any questions that the public might have about the draft report. Copies of the newsletter and the draft report on CD were sent to the outlying villages served by the Kotzebue Airport to give those local residents an opportunity to review and comment as well. See Appendix F for a copy of Newsletter #2.

Newsletter #3 - February 2008

A final newsletter will be published to announce the availability of this final report.

8.2.3 Public Meetings

Public Meeting #1 - January 18, 2006

The first meeting, attended by 24 Kotzebue residents, was held in the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Chambers on January 18, 2006. Meeting outreach consisted of two meeting notices in the *Arctic Sounder* newspaper in the January 5 and January 12, 2006, weekly editions; display advertising in the *Anchorage Daily News* on January 10, 2006; public service announcements on KOTZ-AM radio; a postcard mailed to all Kotzebue box holders on December 26, 2005; and posters displayed at local businesses. The morning of the meeting, KOTZ-AM aired a live interview with members of the project team; in addition to introducing the project to radio listeners, an invitation was extended for the public meeting that evening. The meeting itself was also broadcast live on KOTZ-AM radio to the community and surrounding villages within the station's listening area.

Graphics used for the meeting included aerial photos of the study area from Kotzebue south to Cape Blossom and land use in the study area. Meeting attendees were able to review the aerial photo and provide comments to the project team.

The project team explained how the project had originated in the City of Kotzebue's Comprehensive Plan and described the project in general terms. The discussion moved on to a general question and answer session. Participants commented on existing airport issues and potential locations for the new airport. Planning methods were also discussed. See Appendix F for complete meeting notes.

Public Meeting #2 - January 9, 2007

This meeting was held in the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Chambers and was attended by 19 Kotzebue residents. Outreach for the meeting included a postcard mailed to every box holder in Kotzebue. Small supplies of this postcard were given to outlying villages for distribution as well. Notices of the meeting were published in the *Arctic Sounder* on December 28, 2006, and January 4, 2007, and public service announcements were broadcast on KOTZ-AM radio.

Graphics for the meeting consisted of a land use map and a PowerPoint presentation. Meeting attendees were able to review the map and have one-on-one discussions with project team members.

In the PowerPoint presentation, the project team provided an overview of the work accomplished to date and the next steps to be completed. A question and answer session followed the presentation. Members of the public voiced their comments and concerns about potential expansion or relocation of the Kotzebue airport. See Appendix F for complete meeting notes.

Public Meeting #3 - November 14, 2007

This meeting was held in the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Chambers and was attended by 23 Kotzebue residents. Outreach for the meeting included a newsletter providing both a project update and announcement of the public meeting mailed to every box holder in Kotzebue. On November 14th, the project team participated in a live radio program on KOTZ-AM radio. A meeting announcement flyer was also distributed and/or posted by Borough staff. Small supplies of the newsletter were sent to outlying villages for distribution as well. In addition, notice of the meeting was published in the *Arctic Sounder* November 8th edition, and a Public Service Announcement was submitted to KOTZ-AM radio and the *Arctic Sounder*.

Graphics for the meeting consisted of a Land Use Map and PowerPoint presentation. Meeting attendees were provided with a copy of the slides from the presentation along with an Alternative Evaluation Matrix. Before the presentation, attendees were able to have one-on-one discussions with the project team.

In the PowerPoint presentation, the project team provided a brief background about the project, how the alternatives were developed and then evaluated, the funding analysis performed, as well as the various funding sources explored. The team then discussed how to move forward. After the presentation concluded, the team opened up the meeting to a question and answer session with the public. See Appendix F for complete meeting notes.

***Presentations to the Joint Planning Commission and the Borough Assembly -
January 16 and 28, 2008***

The presentation given at the public during the November 2007 meeting was also made to the City of Kotzebue and Northwest Arctic Borough Joint Planning Commission meeting on January 16, 2008, and again to the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly on January 28, 2008.

8.2.4 Citizens' Advisory Committee

A seven-member Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) consisting of area stakeholders was convened to assist the Project Team with this study. The CAC received more in-depth information about the project, participated in discussions about the project, and provided their feedback and suggestions to the project team. After the July 2006 meeting, two students were added to the CAC to bring it to nine members. Appendix F contains complete meeting notes for the CAC meetings.

CAC Meeting #1 - January 18, 2006

The project team was introduced to the CAC. After a description of the project and a brief project history, members were shown the project graphics, which consisted of aerial photos of the study area from Kotzebue south to Cape Blossom and land use in the study area. There was a general question and answer dialogue between the CAC and the project team. Feedback provided by the committee members consisted of the benefits and challenges of the current airport location; possible location sites for a new airport; and ideas for future public meetings.

CAC Meeting #2 - July 31, 2006

The second meeting provided the CAC members with an overview of the project scope, as well as the steps taken by the project team to date: 1) the newsletter and questionnaires mailed to the community, airport users, and aircraft operators; 2) a summary of the input received from questionnaire participants; 3) the wind analysis; and 4) a brief overview of the community demographics report completed by Northern Economics.

Next, the project team discussed the work that would be taking place over the next several months: aviation forecasting to determine the number and type of aircraft to use Kotzebue airport in the future; the facility requirements that would be overlaid on the Baldwin Peninsula when identifying possible locations for the airport; and the upcoming agency meeting and field program. The financial analysis that would take place was also brought up, along with an outline of what is included in a feasibility study.

The committee members and the project team went on to have a general discussion about the upcoming project work, how it might impact local residents' subsistence activities, and how to lessen any impact.

The committee also discussed the suggestion to add two students to the CAC. The idea was unanimously supported, and the students will participate in the next CAC meeting in January 2007, bringing the number of committee members to nine.

CAC Meeting #3 - January 9, 2007

The third CAC meeting was held to discuss the office study, field work, and analysis performed to date; to prioritize the evaluation criteria; and to inform the CAC members about the financial analysis to come.

The project team shared the issues identified for expanding the existing airport and for relocating to a new site; the facility requirements to accommodate changes in aircraft and expected growth at the airport; and what they had heard from the community through the questionnaire results and comment sheets received to date.

The committee members and project team then had a general discussion about the various issues, concerns, and alternatives to be considered. The discussion ended with committee members providing their input in prioritizing the evaluation criteria. Subsequently, one of the CAC members was flown to Fairbanks to participate in the alternative evaluation meeting with the project team and DOT&PF in June 2007.

CAC Meeting #4 - November 14, 2007

This fourth and final meeting of the CAC was held to discuss the draft findings of the study as discussed in the Draft Kotzebue Airport Relocation Feasibility Study Report.

In the PowerPoint presentation, the project team provided a brief history and the need for the project, followed by how the alternatives were developed and then evaluated using the evaluation criteria developed with the CAC members' input. The team went over the funding analysis performed, as well as the various funding sources explored, and then discussed how the community can move forward with upgrades to the airport. The committee members and the project team then had a general discussion about the findings of the report. See Appendix F for complete meeting notes.

8.2.5 Other Community Activities

Questionnaires

In late April/early May 2006, three questionnaires were prepared and distributed, one to the residents of Kotzebue and outlying villages, one to airport users and leaseholders, and one to pilots. The questionnaires all addressed what could be done to improve the existing airport, and what the issues, concerns, and impacts would be if the airport was relocated. Below is a general overview of the questionnaires. A copy of each questionnaire is provided in Appendix F, as well as a summary of the responses received to the questionnaires.

Community and Regional Users Questionnaire: Approximately 1,325 questionnaires were mailed in the first project newsletter: one to each post office box holder in Kotzebue, as well as a small supply to the 11 outlying villages. This questionnaire asked about recipients' use of the airport, issues with the current Kotzebue airport location, as well as relocating the airport. Respondents were asked to indicate on the enclosed map areas of subsistence use that have cultural or historical significance, along with areas that should be considered or should be avoided.

In total, 53 residents of Kotzebue and the surrounding villages responded to the questionnaire. Twenty-seven of the respondents were 8th grade students from Kotzebue who completed the survey as a weeklong class project. A full summary of the responses is included in Appendix F. The following narrative provides highlights of the community and regional users' response.

Regarding the existing airport:

- 50% said runway improvements need to be made including a longer runway, a north-south runway
- 13% said the airport should accommodate bigger jets.

Regarding relocation of the existing airport, the most important factors to consider include:

- 28% said location
- 26% said cost of relocation
- 9% said “No” to relocation
- 9% said growth
- The other factors to consider included access, transportation and wildlife

Regarding effects on family and business as a result of relocating the airport:

- 55% said relocation of the airport would impact their transportation to the airport in several ways:
 - The convenience of walking to the airport would be removed
 - Added costs of fuel to drive to the airport
- Some mentioned that relocation of the airport would stimulate economic growth in Kotzebue

Regarding the reasons to relocate the airport:

- 43% said that if the airport was relocated, it would make room for housing and business growth.
- 23% said that a relocated airport would be a longer airport allowing for safer, more comfortable landings.

The survey responses to questions regarding potential relocation sites provided a variety of information on the lands surrounding Kotzebue on the Baldwin Peninsula. Details are contained in the survey summary in Appendix F.

Leaseholders or Other Airport Users Questionnaire: Approximately 61 copies of the questionnaire were mailed to current leaseholders at the airport. The questionnaire asked about the existing airport. If improvements were made, what would they rate as “very important,” “important,” or “not important”? For example, improvement of Runway 8-26 safety area, leaseholder tie-down areas within taxiway safety area, etc.

The questionnaire also discussed relocating the airport. A map was provided for reference. Respondents were asked to indicate what would be a reasonable distance from the community and are there locations that should be considered or avoided. If the airport was relocated, what would they rate as “very important,” “important,” or “not important”? For example, the cost of building a new facility, the need for a floatplane pond, etc.

Nine questionnaires were received reflecting the views of freight companies, guide services, businesses and two federal agencies—the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Park Service.

When addressing the existing airport, five out of seven lease holders and other airport users identified the following items as very important or important:

- Scarcity of gravel resources (for construction and maintenance)
- Funding for overall airport maintenance
- Accommodation of future lease lot demand

The one item that five out of seven leaseholders and other airport users identified as not important was a multi-user passenger terminal building.

When asked about airport relocation, the responders rated the cost of building a new facility as their biggest concern (six out of seven responders) followed by maintenance of an access road to a new airport (four out of six). Half of the responders (three) felt that a float plane pond was not an important consideration when relocating the airport. A copy of each questionnaire is provided in Appendix F, as well as a summary of the responses received to the questionnaires.

Air Taxi Operators and General Aviation (GA) Pilots Questionnaire: Approximately 14 copies of the questionnaire were mailed to current air taxis operating at the airport. This questionnaire asked about how the respondents use the airport throughout the summer and winter months; do they expect their business to expand in the next 20 years; are the runways adequate for their needs; do the facilities need improving (if yes, where); does the respondent have any general concerns or suggestions for improvements. The questionnaire also included a copy of the map and asked about relocation of the airport and areas that should be considered, as well as areas to avoid.

One survey was returned by an air taxi operator. Several of the air taxi operators were contacted individually to substantiate air traffic operation estimates; see Section 3, the Air Traffic Forecast, for summaries of these conversations.

Leaseholder Interviews

In addition to the surveys mailed to Kotzebue Airport leaseholders, project team members visited and interviewed Thomas Gebhardt at Bering Air; Mark Fairbanks, who represents Everts/Lynden/Northern Air Cargo; and Andy Baker of Baker Aviation.

Field Reconnaissance Trip

On August 29-31, 2006, the project team conducted a field reconnaissance trip to investigate potential airport relocation sites and review the available material sources. Team members included staff from DOT&PF, PDC, R&M, ABR, and NLUR. Local representatives of the City of Kotzebue, Native Village of Kotzebue, NANA Regional Corporation, KIC Corporation, and Maniilaq Association joined the project team members in the reconnaissance effort. The local representatives and project team members split into groups and flew out in a chartered helicopter to look at the various potential airport and material source sites.

Evaluation Criteria Survey

During February and March 2007, the CAC members and DOT&PF personnel were invited to prioritize the evaluation criteria in order of importance via an online survey. Seven committee members and five DOT&PF employees responded to the survey. The results (provided in Appendix F) were used in the alternative evaluation.

Local Business and Air Carriers Survey

In March and April 2007, local businesses and air carriers were surveyed in person and via mail to provide data on the financial effects of relocating the Kotzebue Airport. A summary of the survey results is available in Appendix E.

The CAC was informed by e-mail of the business interviews and asked for input on the list of businesses to interview and the survey questions. A PSA informed Kotzebue businesses of the survey and gave them contact information if they wanted to participate. Copies are provided in Appendix F.

Alternative Evaluation Support

The project team desired the community's involvement in applying the evaluation criteria. An invitation to the Northwest Arctic Borough Mayor yielded the participation of CAC Committee Member Linda Joule. Ms. Joule was flown to Fairbanks to participate with the project team and DOT&PF in the alternative evaluation meeting on June 28, 2007.

Radio Interview and Meeting Broadcast

The project team was interviewed on KOTZ-AM radio on the mornings of January 18, 2006, and November 14, 2007, before the public meetings. In the January 2006 interview, the project team introduced the project and invited the community to attend the public meeting that evening. In the November 2007 interview, the project team was able to discuss the findings of the Draft Study Report, as well as answer questions that callers to the station had about the project. KOTZ-AM also broadcast both public meetings.

Public Service Announcement

The project team sent a public service announcement to KOTZ-AM radio and the *Arctic Sounder* to remind Northwest Arctic Borough residents that comments on the draft Feasibility Study were due on December 5, 2007. The full text of the public service announcement is contained in Appendix F.

8.3 Comments on Draft Feasibility Study

The Northwest Arctic Borough responded to the November 2007 draft report with five comments (Appendix F), to the general effect that the project ought to be feasible given the "life and safety issues" arising from the existing airport not meeting current standards, the dependence of the area on the airport for transportation, the anticipated economic and population growth, and the State's growing oil revenues.

Based on these comments and subsequent discussions with the City and NWAB Joint Planning Commission, the conclusions and recommendations sections have been changed to indicate that the project is not feasible *unless funding can be secured*.

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