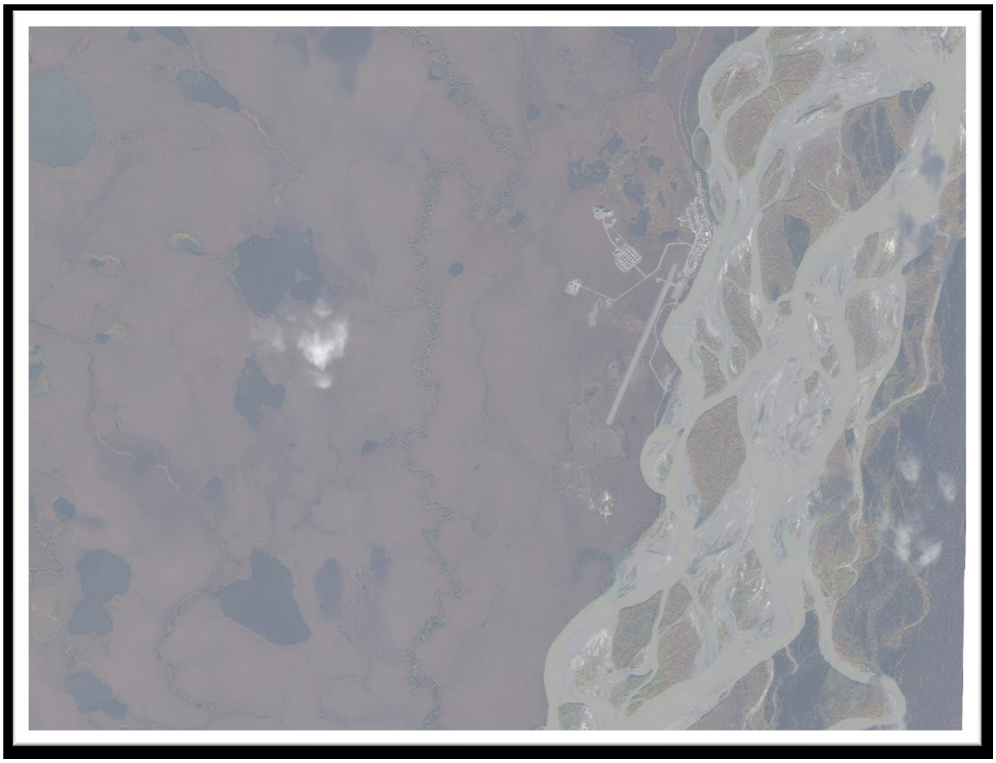
FAA
Alaskan Region
Office of Airports

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/ RECORD OF DECISION

Noatak Airport Relocation
Project No. Z614780000



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WHAT IS IN THIS DOCUMENT? This document is the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)/Record of Decision (ROD) (FONSI/ROD) for the proposed Noatak Airport relocation project, located in Noatak, Alaska. This document includes the agency determinations and approvals for the proposed Federal actions described in the Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA) dated August 7, 2024. This document discusses alternatives considered by FAA in reaching its decision, summarizes the analysis used to evaluate the alternatives, and briefly summarizes the potential environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives. This document also identifies applicable and required mitigation.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO? Read the FONSI/ROD to understand the actions that FAA intends to take relative to the proposed rehabilitation at the Homer Airport.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) may begin to implement the Proposed Action.

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1. Introduction

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 United States Code §4321 et seq.) requires federal agencies to consider the potential environmental impacts prior to undertaking a course of action. NEPA is implemented through regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ; 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §§1500–1508). The FAA provides supplemental requirements under FAA Order 1050.1F and FAA Order 5050.4B, with additional guidance via the FAA Order 1050.1F Desk Reference.

The State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) prepared an environmental assessment (EA) on behalf of the FAA to assess the potential environmental impacts from the proposed Noatak Airport relocation project, located in Noatak, Alaska.

This document is the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)/Record of Decision (ROD) (FONSI/ROD) for the proposed project. This document includes the agency determinations and approvals for the proposed Federal actions described in the Final Environmental Assessment dated August 7, 2024. This document discusses alternatives considered by FAA in reaching its decision, summarizes the analysis used to evaluate the alternatives, and briefly summarizes the potential environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and No Action alternative. This document also identifies applicable and required mitigations.

2. Purpose and Need of the Proposed Action

In 2016 DOT&PF assessed the needs of the Noatak Airport and its ability to safely serve the community of Noatak and identified deficiencies, which are fully described below. To address the deficiencies and ensure safe operation of the airport, the DOT&PF pursued FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding. The airport is located near the Noatak River, which has seen ongoing riverbank erosion towards the airport property in recent decades. Studies and analysis assessing Noatak Riverbank Erosion were conducted in 2003, 2013 and 2015 (Appendix B of the Final EA) and concluded that Noatak Riverbank erosion will continue for the foreseeable future. While exact erosion timelines are difficult to predict with accuracy, continued erosion is a virtual certainty. The continued erosion jeopardizes the existing airport and therefore also jeopardizes the Noatak community which relies on safe and reliable air transportation service.

Because of the likelihood of future erosion, potential future investment to maintain and repair existing airport infrastructure could be compromised. Countering erosion with a revetment structure was not seen to the practicable due to the difficulty in sourcing material for such a structure (large aggregate or concrete in large quantities), concerns over long-term stability of such structure, and the continued maintenance it would require. By contrast, an airport relocation would ensure continued safe and reliable air transportation for Noatak.

The purpose of the proposed airport relocation project is to mitigate the threat of loss of runway infrastructure due to river erosion. In addition, the community would be provided with adequate access, to the community, supporting the community's long-term development goals while at the same time also providing an airport that is capable currently, and in the future, of meeting current FAA design standards (FAA AC 150-5300-13). The project purpose would also provide an airport that supports the community's transportation needs in a safe manner to and from the airport. Additionally, the runway length needs to be sufficient to maintain the current level of regional cargo aircraft service currently available to the community (Appendix A of the Final EA).

Noatak River Erosion **-** More than 1,000 ft. of land has eroded between the runway and the river, forcing relocation of the cemetery, sewage lagoon, and access road to a gravel source. Less than 300 ft. of land remain (USKH, 2013; DOT&PF, 2015; Figures 8-9 of the Final EA; Appendix B of the Final EA).

Existing Airport Deficiencies **-** Current airport design is based on use by the Cessna 208B and PA31 Piper Navajo. However, Noatak is an isolated and remote community requiring service by large cargo aircraft such as the Cessna 408, CASA C-212, Douglas DC-6, and Boeing L-100 L-100/L-382, and medevac aircraft such as the Beechcraft 200. The aircraft parking apron is undersized for these larger aircraft. The width of the runway and the runway safety areas are below standard for the design aircraft. The community's proximity to the existing airport creates health and safety concerns regarding dust control. Incompatible adjacent land uses include proximity (less than 5,000 ft.) of the runway to the community landfill, sewage lagoon, and bulk fuel storage. In addition, the airport lighting, segmented circle, wind cone, and SREB are in need of replacement, and the airport surface requires rehabilitation.

3. Description of Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to relocate the Noatak Airport including the following elements (Figures 2-6 of the Final EA):

Airport

- Construct runway, taxiway, apron, lighting, a Snow Removal Equipment Building (SREB).
  - The runway and taxiway would be built to FAA standards for a category B-II airport capable of handling passenger and cargo aircraft and accommodate ground maneuvering larger aircraft such as DC-6 and C-130 that serve the airport unscheduled.
  - The apron area would be constructed for temporary loading of passengers and/or cargo as well as itinerant parking and access to lease lots.
  - Construct a building and pad capable of housing snow removal equipment and lighting/navigational controls.
  - Construct pads and install new and relocated navigational aids, and other airport related equipment and shelter(s).
- Relocate or demolish and reconstruct FAA-owned facilities for navigational aids, communications, and maintenance.
- Deobligate existing airport. Deobligation releases the existing airport from all existing FAA grant assurances identified during the asset recovery process and transfers the assurances' encumbrances to the new, relocated airport.
- Deactivate the existing airport. Deactivation closes the existing airport to all aircraft operations and removes FAA equipment that is not transferred to the new airport.

ROW

- Acquire approximately 323 acres of land for the relocated airport and access road through various temporary and permanent interests from federal, state, and private entities.
- Acquire temporary interest for approximately 160 acres for mobilization and haul roads during construction of the project.
- Dispose existing airport land and non-FAA infrastructure once the land is no longer required for airport use. Disposal of existing airport property will occur in accordance with Federal and State regulations and FAA grant assurance requirements.
  - Three parcels of airport property, totaling 9.60 acres, are perpetual easements from NANA Regional Corporation (NANA) and will revert to NANA per the terms of the easements. It is likely these parcels will continue to see similar undeveloped use due to their location.

- The remaining 116.45 acres will either be transferred back to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), per the terms of the deed, or if the reversionary clause is waived by both FAA and BLM, disposed of through a property sale at fair market value or transferred to a governmental agency for public use. FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use this land will have following disposal because the future landowner will not be known until after a record of decision has been issued.
  - If the reversionary clause is not waived, the land would return to BLM control, with no further involvement by either FAA or DOT&PF once the property transfer is complete. The property transfer process would be in accordance with FAA and BLM requirements.
  - If the reversionary clause is waived, DOT&PF would begin the land disposal process upon the conclusion of the NEPA process with the steps as follows:
    - Obtain approval from the FAA to dispose of Noatak Airport Tracts I-A, I-B, I-C, and I-D.
    - Perform internal DOT&PF disposal review and receive appropriate approvals.
    - Complete land disposal in accordance with applicable Alaska Statues, Alaska Administrative Code, and FAA requirements.
    - After the new airport opens and any other conditions of the land transfer are complete, DOT&PF would record a commissioner's quitclaim deed finalizing the disposal of the old airport property.
    - Proceeds from the land disposal would be used to offset airport development costs.
- FAA approval of the Noatak Airport property (Tract 1, Parcel A) not reverting to federal government land when no longer needed for airport property purposes.
- FAA approval of the Noatak Airport property (Tract 1, Parcel B-D) reverting to NANA when no longer needed for airport property purposes, in accordance with terms of the perpetual easement.
- Upon the ultimate land disposal determination, the need for further environmental impact analysis to consider the potential environmental impacts for which the existing airport property and non-FAA infrastructure will be used will be assessed.

Access Road

- Construct a road from Noatak to the relocated airport, with a bridge crossing Kuchoruk Creek.
  - The road would be approximately 2 miles long and 24-feet (ft.) wide, with side slopes that include other safety features (e.g., signage) where required, and culverts would be installed to maintain drainage patterns.
  - A two-lane bridge would cross Kuchoruk Creek and be designed to accommodate high water and Aufeis. Abutments (i.e. material support berms) would be placed on either side of the creek within the floodplain. Work may be required below ordinary high water of the creek, however no in-water work is anticipated.

Material Sources

- Develop local material sources and access.
  - Local gravels within the Noatak River drainage would be used for construction; excavation would be completed during low flow.
  - A pioneer material access road would accommodate safe summertime access and prevent damage to underlying soil hydrology.

Mobilization

- Transport material and equipment utilizing a combination of air, water, and overland access.
- Construct gravel pads for staging areas.

Utilities

- Extend existing community above-ground utility lines to the relocated airport. The new power poles would be placed in the right-of-way (ROW) of the new airport access road.
- Mitigate loss of existing fuel transfer system due to decommissioning the existing airport by constructing pads for relocated fuel transfer and storage.

Connected Action

- A new community provided fuel transfer system would be required (Figure 7 of the Final EA). Bulk fuel storage is not planned on the new airport property.
- Contaminant remediation on existing airport lease lots would be required by responsible lessees.

Airport Layout Plan

- FAA conditional approval of the Noatak Airport Layout Plan.

4. Decision to be Made

The Federal Action requested of the FAA by the DOT&PF is to fund the proposed improvement to the facility, under FAA's Airport Improvement Program. There are no proposed modifications to FAA Design Standards included in this project.

5. Alternatives

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

The Proposed Action alternative relocates the airport. The relocated airport will provide a safe, reliable, and cost-effective air transportation facility that provides the community with adequate road access, supports the community's long-term development goals and is consistent with current FAA safety regulations.

The Proposed Action includes the following features (see Table 1 below for descriptions of options and routes refenced below):

- Airport Relocation Option 3.
- Material Source Options: River Material Sources (South and East) with overland access roads.
- Equipment and Material Mobilization Route 3.

Section 9.14 of the Final EA includes a list of permits and authorizations that will be obtained for the Proposed Action prior to construction to comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

Alternative 2 – No Action Alternative

No airport improvements would occur under this alternative. All the existing deficiencies would remain present at the airport. This alternative would not bring the Noatak Airport into compliance with FAA safety guidelines, and the airport would remain vulnerable to erosion by the Noatak River. The 2013 Noatak Riverbank Erosion Assessment (USKH [Stantec]; Appendix B of the Final EA) previously estimated erosion would extend into the apron by 2010 and into the runway by 2020. Although the foregoing predicted erosion rate has not progressed as fast as anticipated, erosion continues to cause Noatak Riverbank loss and will over time impact the runway. Once the runway is impacted, airport closure would be required with concomitant loss of commercial, passenger, medevac, and cargo air services.

Alternatives Dismissed from Further Consideration

DOT&PF considered alternative locations, material sources, and equipment and material mobilization routes for the proposed action. The Table 1 Alternatives Considered summarizes both (1) alternatives that were chosen and (2) alternatives that were dismissed from further consideration:

Table 1. Alternative Considered

Alternative	Description	Alternative Evaluation
Airport Relocation		
Option 1	Relocate the airport 4 miles west of Noatak and require an approximate 4-mile access road and a bridge across Kuchoruk Creek.	This alternative is dismissed from further evaluation as it would require a 2-mile longer access road than Option 3, requiring approximately 31 acres more ground disturbance in the forms of embankment fill and material source than the Proposed Action. This option did not meet Screening Criterion 1 due to travel distance on off road vehicles in adverse weather conditions, and Screening Criterion 4 due to greater environmental impacts, compared to other options.
Option 2	Relocate the airport 5 miles northwest of Noatak and require a 5-mile access road.	This alternative is dismissed from further evaluation as it would require a 3-mile longer access road than Option 3, requiring approximately 47 acres more ground disturbance in the form of embankment fill and material source than the Proposed Action. This option did not meet Screening Criterion 1 due to travel distance on off road vehicles in adverse weather conditions, and Screening Criterion 4 due to greater environmental impacts, compared to other options.
Option 3	Relocate the airport 2 miles west of Noatak and require an approximate 2-mile access road and a bridge across Kuchoruk Creek.	This alternative is considered feasible and is incorporated in the Proposed Action. This option meets Screening Criterion 1 since the location is not subject to Noatak River erosion and meets Screening Criterion 4 allows for the shortest access road to the new airport thus minimizing environmental impacts, compared to other options.
Option 4	Relocate the airport to the east side of Kuchoruk Creek.	This site is favorable due to the shorter access road and no bridge required over Kuchoruk Creek, which reduces cost and direct environmental impacts. However, this option does not meet Screening Criterion 2 and this alternative is dismissed from further evaluation because the geotechnical investigation indicates higher degrees of ice rich permafrost than the surrounding areas. The close proximity to Kuchoruk Creek is likely to cause an increased risk of thaw-instability in the embankment. The site is further constrained to the east, which would require the apron and taxiway be built on fill over existing drainage. This site is within 5000 feet of the community land fill, which does not meet separation distances from wildlife attractants per AC 150/5200-33C.

Alternative	Description	Alternative Evaluation
Option 5	Relocate the airport approximately 1 mile west of Site 3 along a ridgeline.	This site overlaps with one the 2006 geotechnical investigation as a potential material source, however option does not meet Screening Criterion 2 and is **dismissed from further evaluation** because the investigation showed thaw unstable permafrost. The topography of this site has more variation, which would require substantially more fill material, or cutting into existing ground (which increases the risk of causing thaw-unstable conditions in the embankment). This site is also farther from the community, requiring a longer access road which does not meet Screening Criterion 3. It also does not meet Screening Criterion 4 as it results in greater direct environmental impacts and greater logistical burden on the community to transport passengers, fuel, and cargo to and from the airport.
Material Sources		
South River Material Source	Located south of Noatak on a Noatak River gravel bar and contains fine-grained and course grade materials. Requires development of an approximately 2-mile-long access route.	This alternative is considered feasible and is incorporated in the Proposed Action. This option meets Screening Criterion 2 since the site provides suitable grade material available with a short haul distance to the new airport location compared to other river bars within the Noatak.
East River Material Source	Located just east of Noatak on a Noatak River gravel bar and contains fine-grained and course grade material. This source has an existing access route, has been used by the community in the past, and could provide supplemental material to construct the project.	This alternative is considered feasible and is incorporated in the Proposed Action. This option meets Screening Criterion 2 since the site is actively used and provides suitable grade material with the least haul distance to the new airport location compared to other river bars within the Noatak.
Inland Material Source	Located just north of the Proposed Action and contains fine-grained materials. Requires development of an approximately 2,000-ft long access route.	This alternative is dismissed from further evaluation since it does not meet Screening Criterion 2 as the available material is not of suitable grade material for project construction.
Distant Material Source	Located further inland, positioned to support airport relocation Options 1 or 2, and contains fine-grained and organic materials. Requires development of an approximately 4 miles long access route.	This alternative is dismissed from further evaluation as it is located 2 miles farther from the Proposed Action than the other material site alternatives, requiring a longer access route, and does not meet Screening Criterion 2 since it is not of suitable grade material for project construction.

Alternative	Description	Alternative Evaluation
Equipment and Material Mobilization		
These alternatives would provide overland access between Delong Mountain Transportation System (DMTS) Port Site and the Project Area via a winter snow road. Numerous routes were considered both inside and outside the Cape Krusenstern National Monument (CKNM) during preliminary analysis. Some routes were consolidated, and all routes were realigned slightly to provide the most feasible alignment. Alternative development and evaluation criteria include: overall route length from the port site, overland distance between DMTS and the project area, grades, channel crossings, vegetation impacts, community input, ROW considerations, and time needed to obtain authorizations. Presence of adequate snow depth would be required for winter route use therefore snow depth was not considered as an evaluation criterion.		
Route 1	This 42.3-mile route would traverse overland for 23.6 miles and follows the Noatak to Kivalina winter trail. The route crosses 9.5 miles of CKNM and 9.5 miles of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. It is most similar to the route permitted by the National Park Service (NPS) in 2015 and is the most preferred by the community. This route would require a SF299-09b Transportation and Utility Systems Access permit from the NPS as well as temporary access easements from BLM. The route has a maximum grade of 10%, crosses 5 channels*, and traverses approximately 9 miles of forested, 6 miles of scrub shrub wetland, and 8 miles of emergent habitat**, some portion of which has been significantly disturbed by past community trail use.	The route is preferred by the community, has the shortest overall distance, and minimizes impacts to vegetation as it follows an existing winter trail for the majority of the route. However, this alternative is dismissed from further evaluation since it does not meet Screening Criterion 3 because there are other feasible alternatives that would be more cost effective for the scale of the project and provide reasonable assurance that the route could be used within the project timeline. Additionally, this route does not meet Screening Criterion 4 because other feasible alternatives would avoid impacting and traversing the CKNM, thereby reducing the time needed to obtain easement authorizations.
Route 2	This 47.7-mile route would traverse overland for 21.6 miles and is located north of the Route 1. The route crosses 4.5 miles of CKNM lands and 9.5 miles of BLM lands and is approved by the community as an alternative to Route 1. This route would require a SF299-09b Transportation and Utility Systems Access permit from the NPS as well as temporary access easements from BLM. The route has several short steep sections, an overall maximum grade of 21%, crosses 6 channels*, and traverses approximately 8 miles of forested, 7 miles of scrub shrub wetland, and 6 miles of emergent habitat**.	The route crosses the shortest distance within CKNM and is preferred by the community as an alternative to Route 1. However, this alternative is dismissed from further evaluation since it does not meet Screening Criterion 3 because there are other feasible alternatives that would be more cost effective for the scale of the project and provide reasonable assurance that the route could be used within the project timeline. Additionally, this route does not meet Screening Criterion 4 because other feasible alternatives would avoid impacting and traversing the CKNM, thereby reducing the time needed to obtain easement authorizations and the route requires traversing very steep grades.
Route 3	This 67.6-mile route would traverse overland for 28.2 miles and is located north of the Route 2 route. The route would use the DMTS road ROW through CKNM lands, and cross NANA, private, and state lands. This route would require temporary access easements from these private landowners. The route has an estimated maximum grade of 7.5%, crosses 5 channels*, and traverses approximately 1 mile of forested, 16 miles of scrub shrub wetland, and 11 miles of emergent habitat**.	This alternative is considered feasible and is incorporated as part of the Proposed Action since it meets Screening Criterion 3 and 4 because the route is cost effective for the scale of the project and provides reasonable assurance that the route could be used within the project timeline and minimizes impacts to forested areas. Additionally, the route remains on an established, active transportation easement and facility across CKNM lands, has the lowest grades of all the alternatives, and would require the shortest estimated timeframe to receive temporary ROW use authorizations.

Alternative	Description	Alternative Evaluation
These remaining alternative mobilization routes from Kotzebue evaluate feasibility of mobilizing material.		
Noatak River Ice Road	This route would follow the Noatak River between Kotzebue and Noatak for approximately 75 miles during the winter months when the Noatak River is frozen. This route may include a combination of a river ice road and winter overland travel.	This alternative is dismissed from further evaluation since it does not meet Screening Criterion 3 or 4 because it does not provide reliable access and does not minimize environmental impacts. The alternative follows the Noatak River, a valuable subsistence and commercial resource for the surrounding communities. This alternative would pose a potential risk of impacting Noatak River fish and other resources if a contaminated spill, or equipment breaking through the ice road, occurred. Hauling equipment may also be unpredictably infeasible due to insufficient weather-related river ice conditions possibly precluding safe or timely mobilization to Noatak via an ice road.
Noatak River Barge	This route would barge equipment and material via the Noatak River to a privately held staging area 21 miles south of Noatak and then transport them overland to the project site. This alternative would require development of a barge landing, staging area, and overland hauling (winter).	This alternative is dismissed from further evaluation since it does not meet Screening Criterion 3 because the Noatak River depths to not reliably support barging. Commercial barging to Noatak was suspending in 1986. Additionally, this route does not meet Screening Criterion 4 because it does not minimize environmental impacts. The alternative would require in water work during community subsistence use periods and activities along the Noatak River and use of the few feasible overland routes between the staging area and project site would also add additional risks associated with water crossings along their routes.
Fly-in	This route would fly all equipment and materials into the existing Noatak airport from supply locations via aircraft. Equipment and material unavailable in Kotzebue would first be barged from other source ports to Kotzebue.	This alternative is dismissed from further evaluation since it does not meet Screening Criterion 3 or 4 because it does not provide a cost-effective route for the scale of the project and does not minimize environmental impacts. The alternative would require air freighting heavy equipment via multiple trips is not feasible. The aircraft required to facilitate such mobilization would not have reliable access to the airstrip due to strict landing condition requirements. In addition, fly-in mobilization would be prohibitively costly, as heavy equipment would need to be disassembled into multiple pieces, with each piece flown separately, and then reassembled in Noatak.

* Channel crossings are locations where a temporary ice bridge would be needed. For purposes of the alternatives analysis, it is assumed the remaining channel crossings would be frozen to the channel bottom and special crossing considerations would not be required.

** Forested includes areas of dense tree cover, scrub shrub includes areas of sparse tree and/or shrub cover, emergent includes areas of little to no shrub cover with visible open water ponds.

6. Summary of Environmental Impacts

Chapter 9 of the Final EA contains an environmental impact analysis, which discloses the project's potential impacts to resource categories defined in FAA Order 1050.1F. The Proposed Action will adhere to all federal, state, and local laws and would result in no significant impacts to any of the FAA-defined resource categories, including those resources that are protected under special purposes laws and requirements such as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

The environmental impact categories considered but found to have no impact from the Proposed Action are discussed in Section 9.2 of the Final EA and include: Air Quality; Coastal Resources; Farmlands; Natural Resources and Energy Supply; and Noise and Noise Compatible Land Use. Table 2 Summarizes non-issue resource categories below:

Table 2. Non-issue Resource Categories

Resource Category	Evaluation
Air Quality	• The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) Air Non-Point Mobile Source website (ADEC, 2019a) indicated the proposed project is not in an air quality maintenance or non-attainment area for National Ambient Air Quality Standards. • No air quality analysis is needed because forecasted operations are less than 1.3 million passengers and less than 180,000 operations annually (FAA Order 5050.4B Desk Reference; FAA, 2007). • Noatak is a community with reported suspended particulate matter problems and has PM_{10} monitoring data (ADEC, 2019b). Relocating the airport would reduce air quality impacts from aviation operations near the community associated with wind-blown dust.
Coastal Resources	• The Alaska Coastal Management Program expired on June 11, 2011, and is no longer in effect. The *NAB Comprehensive Plan* (NAB, 1993) and the *Northwest Area Plan for State Lands* (ADNR, 2008) were evaluated to confirm no adverse coastal impacts would occur within the Study Area and the project is consistent with coastal resource management guidelines in these plans.
Farmlands	• There are no prime or unique farmlands in the Study Area, as defined by the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981, Public Law 97-98.
Natural Resources and Energy Supply	• Material extractions are not expected to impact area mineral mining that is taking place or would take place. • Fill material is required for construction. Adequate supplies are expected to be available through local sources. • The Proposed Action increases residents' fuel needs for ground travel to a new airport farther away from the community. • A new fuel transfer station would be needed at the new airport to replace the existing station at the current airport. The new fuel transfer station would distribute fuel by either a truck or pipeline. Due to funding limitations, it is anticipated a fuel trucking system would be used to distribute fuel. A proposed replacement fuel transfer station is addressed under "Connected Actions" below.

Resource Category	Evaluation
Noise and Noise-Compatible Land Use	• The Proposed Action is anticipated to significantly reduce aircraft noise to residential and other noise sensitive areas within Noatak. The existing airport is immediately adjacent and aligned with the main townsite. There are residential structures approximately 900-feet left of the departure end of Runway 1, as well as approximately 1,600-feet beyond, in-line with the runway. This configuration could place arriving and departing aircraft, if flying low approaches relative to the 20:1 clear surface, less than 100-feet above residential housing. • The relocated airport would place the anticipated Runway 18 end approximately 8,500 feet from the nearest noise-sensitive community infrastructure (School). Conventional air traffic pattern for non-towered airports would default to left-hand turns, and the downwind leg would be flown one-half to one mile parallel to the intended runway for landing at an altitude of 1,000 feet above ground. Traffic in pattern for the anticipated Runway 18 landing could be as close as 2,500 feet offset, and 1,000 feet above the school when navigating a conventional airport traffic pattern. Given the expected attenuation of noise, this could indicate 20 to 30 decibel reduction compared to the noise level expected during a low departure directly overhead from the existing runway. • Additionally, traffic at pattern altitude is expected to generate significantly less levels of noise than aircraft in a full-power takeoff, further reducing anticipated noise levels reaching noise-sensitive areas. • Development of straight-in instrument flight procedures may be evaluated by the FAA to accommodate the new runway. Similarly, the approaches for these would relocate traffic over a mile away from the residential housing and other community infrastructure, replacing traffic that is currently routed directly in-line and overhead these areas. • The airport access road is routed away from the community and there are no sensitive noise receivers or any planned community development around the airport access road. The new airport access road does not reconfigure the community's direction of travel from within Noatak to the proposed relocation site. • The proposed action would not result in an increase in aviation operations or a change in aircraft fleet mix. • Material haul routes, during construction, would be routed to avoid the community, where practicable. • No noise analysis is needed since the new airport would not accommodate Design Group I and II airplanes in Approach Categories A-D and operations would not exceed 90,000 annual propeller operations (FAA, 2020).

The FAA has considered the analysis presented in the Final EA and concurs with the findings.

Biological Resources (Fish, Wildlife, and Plants)

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

Fish: Over one million cubic yards of material, from two Noatak River gravel bar material sources, would be required to construct the Proposed Action. Material site development would result in temporary disturbance of the active floodplain and potential fish habitat of the Noatak River. Some sedimentation and turbidity may take place, which would be minimized through the implementation of a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) for the project. At each material source location, adequate setbacks from the active river channel would be maintained to not impact fish or their habitats, and to avoid release of sediment outflow in the active channel. Excavation would occur during winter months when the ground is frozen, and the river waters are at a low-flow level (Appendix E of the Final EA). Material stockpiles would be moved out of the active floodplain before river breakup in the spring. Fish habitat is expected to be protected by conducting operations during dewatered, winter conditions and away from the mainstem of the Noatak River. A reclamation plan would be prepared for the material site during development.

The airport access road would require bridge construction over Kuchoruk Creek to allow access between Noatak and the new airport. The DMTS and Port would be used but would not be improved or expanded for the Proposed Action. The winter snow road would cross five channels, including Kiyak Creek, that would require ice bridge construction. None of these project impacts are expected to have a temporary or permanent adverse effect on essential fish habitat (EFH). Impacts to fish other than EFH will be mitigated as required by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) Fish Habitat Permit. An EFH Assessment and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) consultation was completed, FAA obtained concurrence from the NMFS on a determination of no adverse EFH effects (Appendix D of the Final EA), and an ADF&G Fish Habitat Permit application was completed for the Proposed Action.

Wildlife: The Proposed Action would result in terrestrial mammal habitat alteration. Vegetation alteration would result in 72 acres of potential wildlife foraging habitat converted to gravel embankment, resulting in wildlife likely moving to neighboring territories containing similar type and quality habitats.

Threatened and Endangered Species: On May 12, 2006, and March 22, 2018, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) concluded the Proposed Action is "not likely to adversely affect" listed species, and preparation of a Biological Assessment or further consultation under Section 7 of the ESA is not necessary (Appendix E of the Final EA).

Marine Mammals: To mitigate polar bear impacts associated with Chukchi Sea barging and use of the DMTS Port, Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) informal consultation and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) formal consultation took place with the USFWS as noted above (Appendix E of the Final EA). Other listed species may be encountered along barge routes, including Western DPS Steller sea lions, North Pacific right whales, Western North Pacific and Mexico DPS humpback whales, fin whales, sperm whales and bowhead whales. To mitigate impacts to these species MMPA and Section 7 ESA consultations took place with the NMFS and life history summaries for these species can be found in the MMPA and Section 7 consultation letters (Appendix E of the Final EA).

Migratory Birds: Migratory bird species may travel through the Proposed Action area and may be disturbed by clearing operations. Construction activities may also result in direct injury or mortality of birds or their nests. Birds, and their nests and eggs, are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). DOT&PF would require the construction contractor to comply with the MBTA and provide the USFWS recommended time-period to avoid vegetation clearing (May 1-July 15) as a method of compliance. Ground disturbance would occur while the ground is still frozen, and geotextile would be placed to deter nesting during the subsequent breeding season.

Plants: The Proposed Action would result in approximately 72 acres of native vegetated, primarily palustrine scrub shrub and palustrine emergent, cover converted to gravel pads for the runway, apron, access road, pioneer road, and staging areas (Figure 14 of the Final EA). This conversion of habitat would be minor; however, as similar vegetation community types are widespread throughout the region and vegetation loss represents only a minor portion of the total habitat available. The Proposed Action is bounded by a landscape of intact habitats, such as the Cape Krusenstern National Monument (CKNM) (nearly 500,000 acres) and the Noatak National Preserve (6,500,000 acres). While there are no known occurrences of invasive species in and around disturbed areas in Noatak (AKEPIC, 2019 of the Final EA), it is likely that some exist. To minimize the introduction of additional invasive species to the area, the contractor would comply with Executive Order 13112 to mitigate invasive species by; 1) ensuring that ground disturbing activities are minimized, and disturbed areas are re-vegetated with seed recommended for the region by Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR)'s A Revegetation Manual for Alaska; 2) construction equipment would be inspected and cleaned prior to enter and exiting the construction site to minimize spread of vegetative materials; and 3) erosion and sediment control materials would be locally produced products to minimize potential importation of new propagules from outside Alaska.

Connected Actions: Construction of a new fuel transfer station (Figure 7 of the Final EA) would result in additional fish and wildlife habitat loss (vegetation clearing and filling) adjacent to the new Noatak airport. This facility would be constructed abutting the new Noatak airport facilities and would be necessary to continue fuel transport to Noatak with the airport relocation. This additional habitat loss is anticipated to be minor compared to the vast undeveloped surrounding habitat; thus, there would be no substantial loss, reduction, degradation, disturbance, or fragmentation of native species' habitat or their populations.

Secondary (Induced) and Cumulative Impacts: Past and future projects listed in Section 9.1 could result in additional fish and wildlife habitat loss proximate to the new Noatak airport through vegetation clearing, filling, and other disturbances. However, these additional impacts are anticipated to be minor and result in the same impact as the connected actions.

As the FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use the existing airport land and non-FAA infrastructure will have following disposal, the need for further environmental impact analysis to consider the potential biological impacts of the existing airport property and non-FAA infrastructure will be assessed upon the ultimate land disposal determination.

Climate

Direct and Indirect Impacts: As the proposed action does not occur within a regulated airshed, nor will it result in a change of operations or relocated facility type (i.e. SREB), the analysis conducted within the Final EA consists of a quantitative disclosure of estimated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with (1) the temporary construction and (2) long-term operation of the relocated airport. To inform the project construction supercritical carbon dioxide (SC-CO2) monetization estimates, DOT&PF made quantifiable estimates of proposed action construction process carbon dioxide (CO2) and carbon dioxide equivalents (CO2e) emissions to reasonable, appropriate levels utilizing recent, efficient and accessible models (Appendix F of the Final EA).

Construction: Proposed Action emissions of CO2 and CO2e were modeled for temporary construction emissions of the Proposed Action using several relevant models freely and readily available to the public on the internet (Mathers et al., 2023; USEPA, 2023c; Feng Ma et al., 2016; Klanfar et al., 2016 of the Final EA).

Based on predicted emissions modeling outputs for its anticipated construction process (Appendix F of the Final EA), the Proposed Action would produce total estimated emissions of approximately 8,881 metric tons of combined CO2 and CO2e over the project construction duration. Across the proposed three-year construction schedule, this total would average an emission loading of approximately 2,960 metric tons of combined CO2 and CO2e per year. There was a lack of information on conversion factors and other inputs that could be applied to the models to estimate output variance due to Proposed Action constructed in an arctic location, and with some processes scheduled to be conducted during winter months.

As per CEQ (2023) and IWG-SCGHG (2021) recommendations, an estimated range of total monetized value of SC-CO2 for the 2-year (2024-2026) proposed action construction schedule was determined to potentially range between $124,334 and $1,500,889 as illustrated below:

Total proposed action construction CO2 and CO2e emissions: 8,881 metric tons (see Appendix F of the Final EA).

- SC-CO2 at 3% 95th percentile discount rate: ..... 8,881 metric tons × $169 = $1,500,889
- SC-CO2 at 2.5% average discount rate:..... 8,881 metric tons × $83 = $737,123
- SC-CO2 at 3% average discount rate:..... 8,881 metric tons × $56 = $487,336
- SC-CO2 at 5% average discount rate:..... 8,881 metric tons × $17 = $150,977

Operation: The emissions associated with operation of the airport consist of airport operations, maintenance equipment, and the SREB heating system. These operations are expected to produce similar levels of emissions at the new airport as at the existing airport.

Accordingly, the Proposed Action would result in less than significant GHG impacts to climate as temporary construction and long-term emissions are quantitatively disclosed above, and the proposed action does not occur within a regulated air shed so further analysis is not determined to be warranted. The proposed action will also not result in the establishment of a permanent new source of emissions.

Connected Actions: It is anticipated the new fuel transfer station would be constructed concurrently with the Proposed Action, which would combine construction material and hauling needs concisely. This would reduce the overall construction duration and combine truck hauling which would therefore reduce GHG emissions.

Secondary (Induced) and Cumulative Impacts: The Proposed Action would neither increase the current facility energy requirements for future airport operations nor change the nature of the aircraft fleet or operations schedule for landings or takeoffs. Resultantly, there would be no net increase in GHG emissions via future operations of the constructed Proposed Action. Additionally, the cumulative impacts of the Proposed Action and other present, past, and/or reasonably foreseeable projects are not anticipated. Consequently, the Proposed Action would generate no significant cumulative impacts on climate.

As the FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use the existing airport land and non-FAA infrastructure will have following disposal, the need for further environmental impact analysis to consider the potential climate change impacts of the existing airport property and non-FAA infrastructure will be assessed upon the ultimate land disposal determination.

Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f)

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act would apply under criteria 23 CFR 774.17(1), since the Proposed Action is within the Cape Krusenstern National Historic Landmark (CKNHL). The Proposed Action would permanently incorporate a minor portion of the CKNHL (approximately 72 acres of the 650,000 acres) into the airport and roads and temporarily incorporate 192 acres for material site use (Figure 12).

Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.5(d)(2), implementing regulations of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, FAA found, and the NPS and State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred (on October 6, 2021, and September 22, 2021, respectively) that the Proposed Action would not adversely affect the CKNHL. Based on the undertaking not adversely affecting the function or historic qualities of the CKNHL and that agreement from the NPS and SHPO has been obtained in writing, the Proposed Action appears to meet a de minimis use (23 CFR 774.17) (Appendix G of the Final EA).

FAA determined no feasible and prudent alternatives meet the purpose and need and avoid CKNHL use. A Section 4(f) De Minimis Finding was completed for the Proposed Action (Appendix G of the Final EA). The NPS and SHPO concurred with the Section 4(f) de minimis determinations and de minimis impact finding that the Proposed Project would not adversely impact the CKNHL on July 21, 2022 and May 17, 2022, respectively.

Connected Actions: Section 4(f) would not apply to the fuel transfer station because it would not be U.S. Department of Transportation-funded.

Secondary (Induced) and Cumulative Impacts: Other past, current and future projects in the region could have a cumulative effect on the CKNHL. However, Section 4(f) would only apply to current or future projects funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

As the FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use the existing airport land and non-FAA infrastructure will have following disposal, the need for further environmental impact analysis to consider the potential Section 4(f) impacts of the existing airport property and non-FAA infrastructure will be assessed upon the ultimate land disposal determination.

Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention

Direct and Indirect Impacts: The Proposed Action would relocate the airport farther than the FAA recommended 5,000-ft. separation distance from the sewage lagoon and landfill. Transfer of existing airport property may require remediation of onsite recognized environmental conditions (REC's) that would be determined through further site investigation. Mitigation would be completed through required remediation actions according to an approved Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) plan, such as a Contaminated Materials Management Plan. There are no known contaminated sites within the new proposed embankment of the airport construction area. The DOT&PF will remove and/or decommission airport facilities and perform other actions to dispose of airport property as required to decommission and dispose of airport property.

Prior to construction, the contractor would develop a Best Management Practice (BMP)-based Solid Waste and Hazardous Material Control Plan to address hazardous materials management, including storage, handing, and cleanup of potential fuel and lubricant spills. Therefore, construction activities would pose a low risk of incidental contaminant spills.

The Delong Mountain Transportation System (DMTS) would be used for a winter haul route to transport construction materials between the Red Dog Port and the winter snow road to Noatak. Teck Alaska Inc. maintains use of the DMTS and would be coordinated with prior to DMTS use for transport of construction materials for the project (ADEC 2021b of the Final EA). If actions are needed to ensure the protection of people, human health and the environment ADEC will be contacted.

Connected Actions: The new fuel transfer station would be constructed to consolidate facilities at the new Noatak airport to distribute fuel to the community of Noatak. It is anticipated the fuel transfer station would be funded and constructed by another entity concurrently with the proposed project. The existing fuel transfer station at the current airport would be removed and remediated as appropriate in accordance with ADEC requirements.

Secondary (Induced) and Cumulative Impacts: The Noatak landfill (Figure 14 of the Final EA) is located between the current airport and the Proposed Action. The community has discussed moving the landfill north of town after the airport is relocated. Personal communication with the Noatak IRA on October 27, 2021, indicated a new landfill location has not been identified, but they will be completing necessary studies to site it in a location away from standing water where there would be more of a bird attractant. Any past, current, or future projects have the potential to generate additional solid waste and may produce or discover contamination near Noatak. Upon the identification of the new landfill location, the need for further environmental impact analysis associated with the relocation of the landfill will be assessed.

As the FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use the existing airport land and non-FAA infrastructure will have following disposal, the known contamination at the existing airport property and non-FAA infrastructure will be addressed as part of the ultimate land disposal determination to prevent a release of hazardous material into the environment.

Historical, Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Resources

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Section 106 consultation was initiated on October 31, 2007, to the SHPO, Native Village of Noatak, Maniilaq Association, NANA Corporation, and NAB (Appendix H of the Final EA), and no comments or concerns regarding historic or cultural resources were raised.

Based on a review of past archaeological investigations, Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) data, consultation efforts, and the prevalence of wetlands, the DOT&PF, on behalf of the FAA, determined that the project would not adversely affect historic properties. On January 31, 2008, the SHPO concurred with a finding of no historic properties affected by the Proposed Action (File No. 3130-IRFAA) (Appendix H of the Final EA). Due to the time since the last consultation efforts took place and the project extension to the DMTS Port Site, an updated finding of no historic properties adversely affected consultation letter was sent to SHPO and other consulting parties on August 26, 2021, and concurrence was received from the SHPO on September 22, 2021 (File No. 3130-IR FAA / 2021-00989) and the NPS on October 6, 2021 (Appendix H of the Final EA).

Connected Actions: The fuel transfer station would be located directly adjacent to the new Noatak airport and is located entirely within the proposed project APE. SHPO concurred with a finding of no historic properties adversely affected for the proposed project APE; therefore, it is anticipated construction of the fuel transfer station would not have an adverse impact on any historic properties.

Secondary (Induced) and Cumulative Impacts: The Proposed Action would not adversely affect any historic properties within the APE, including the CKNHL and the CKNM. The Proposed Action is not expected to impact historical, archaeological, or cultural resources; therefore, secondary and cumulative impacts are unlikely.

As the FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use the existing airport land and non-FAA infrastructure will have following disposal, the need for further environmental impact analysis to consider the potential historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural impacts of the existing airport property and non-FAA infrastructure will be assessed upon the ultimate land disposal determination.

Land Use

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

Consistency with Land Use Plans: The Proposed Action is consistent with local land use and transportation plans and would meet high priority community needs (NAB, 1993; NAB, 2006 of the Final EA).

Impacts to Land Ownership: The Proposed Action would require acquisition of approximately 323 acres of vacant NANA-owned land, with no identified permanent usage other than non-historic winter trails which would remain usable for local transportation.

Most of the existing airport property is granted by patent from the U.S. Government to the State of Alaska. Once the airport is relocated, that portion of the existing airport property would revert to Federal ownership unless the land reversal clause is extinguished. Existing avigation easements will be reverted to NANA. Refer to the description of the proposed action's ROW process in Chapter 2.0 of the Final EA for further detail. Upon completion of the new airport the existing Noatak airport property would represent a potential significant development opportunity for non-aeronautical use for the Noatak community with an advantageous location immediately adjacent to the community (Appendix A of the Final EA).

FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use this land will have following disposal because the future landowner will not be known until after a record of decision has been issued. The need for further environmental impact analysis to consider the potential impacts to land ownership of the existing airport property and non-FAA infrastructure will be assessed upon the ultimate land disposal determination.

Impacts to Zoning and Easements: The Proposed Action would be located within a Northwest Arctic Borough (NAB) Subsistence Conservation and Village Districts, which would require a NAB Title 9 Use Permit.

The airport access road would cross a BLM trail easement. Access roadside slopes are proposed at 4:1 or flatter to provide recoverable roadside slopes and traversable trail crossings.

Airport access and material haul routes would cross Village, and regional corporation lands. The winter snow road would tie into the DMTS to utilize that existing route to the Red Dog Port. Landowner and lessee coordination would be completed to avoid conflict.

Connected Actions: The fuel transfer station would be located directly adjacent to the new Noatak airport apron and access road which is currently located on vacant land within NAB Subsistence Conservation District and would require a NAB Title 9 Use Permit.

Secondary (Induced) and Cumulative Impacts*:* No other past, current, or future projects are known to have Proposed Action area impacts.

Socioeconomic, Environmental Justice, and Children's Health and Safety Risks

Direct and Indirect Impacts:

Socioeconomics: Other than the access road, the Proposed Action would not permanently relocate any residence or business, alter surface transportation patterns, divide or disrupt established communities, produce a substantial change in the community tax base, or disrupt planned development. There may be a temporary increase in local employment during construction, but long-term employment effects are not expected. The pioneer road, between the material source (south) and the airport access road, would be used to haul material to avoid community roads and reduce impacts from hauling through the community.

Hauling equipment through the community may impact water and sewer lines buried under existing community roads. The contractor would be required to protect utilities, repair any damage caused by their activities, and maintain community roads associated with the haul route.

Environmental Justice: The Proposed Action would not specifically cause adverse effects to minority or low-income populations. However, travel time and costs for all residents to access the airport would increase as the distance to the airport would be 2 miles greater than at present. DOT&PF would dispose of the existing airport lands and those funds would immediately be reinvested in the new airport thereby reducing total required reinvestment costs to acquire lands for new airport construction (Appendix A of the Final EA). Fair market value would be provided for approximately 323 acres of NANA land for a fee interest for the new airport lands. Additionally, operation and maintenance costs would increase due to a new fuel transfer system at the relocated airport to service the community. It is anticipated the fuel transfer system would be constructed concurrently with the Proposed Action and a fuel trucking system would be used due to funding limitations.

Children's Health and Safety Risks: Children's health and safety risks from noise and aircraft operations proximity would decrease due to a greater distance from the airport to the community.

Subsistence: The Proposed Action, including material site development, is located in community subsistence areas used for animal harvesting, fishing, and berry picking. Approximately 72 acres of terrestrial habitat and 192 acres of Noatak River gravel bars would be lost for subsistence activities; however, the airport access road and Kuchoruk Creek bridge, and pioneer road to the new material site, would improve access to these areas. Material site gravel bars would be naturally reestablished by river hydraulic processes and again be available for subsistence use some relatively short time in the future.

Connected Actions: The fuel transfer system at the new Noatak airport would provide a method for consumer fuel to be off-loaded from arriving airplanes to the fuel transfer station and distributed via a fuel trucking system to the Noatak community for use. The existing fuel transfer system is located at the current Noatak airport and without a fuel transfer system at the new Noatak airport there would not be the ability to distribute fuel to the community.

Secondary (Induced) and Cumulative Impacts: The Proposed Action, combined with past, current, and future projects is not expected to cause negative cumulative impacts with environmental justice, socioeconomics, or children's health and safety risks.

As the FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use the existing airport land and non-FAA infrastructure will have following disposal, the need for further environmental impact analysis to consider the potential environmental justice, socioeconomics, or children's health and safety risk impacts of the existing airport property and non-FAA infrastructure will be assessed upon the ultimate land disposal determination.

Visual Effects

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Airport relocation would result in light emissions where none previously existed, although they would be located farther away from the community. New light sources would include medium-intensity runway lighting, wind cone lighting, and a rotating beacon, similar to existing airport. The existing airport lighting system would be decommissioned.

The visual character of the area would be permanently modified with the addition of a new airport and access road in a previously vegetated area. Excavation and fill activities would disturb wetlands to the south and west of the community.

Connected Actions: The fuel transfer station would result in a minor visual change to the current landscape and would be constructed directly adjacent to the new Noatak airport, which would minimize fill activities.

Secondary (Induced) and Cumulative Impacts: Other current and future projects referenced in Section 9.1 may result in a cumulative increase in light emissions and visual change. The cumulative impact would still be minor; however, as light emissions would be commensurate with community activities and visual change would represent only minor changes to the current landscape.

As the FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use the existing airport land and non-FAA infrastructure will have following disposal, the need for further environmental impact analysis to consider the potential visual effects impacts of the existing airport property and non-FAA infrastructure will be assessed upon the ultimate land disposal determination.

Water Resources

Direct and Indirect Impacts: The Proposed Action would be located entirely within wetlands; however, the project was designed to avoid and minimize impacts to wetlands and waters of the U.S. to the maximum extent practicable (Appendix I of the Final EA).

Avoidance and Minimization of Wetland Impacts

Equipment Mobilization to Site: This feature of the project avoided and minimized wetland impacts by design. Equipment would use the existing DMTS and Port system to connect an overland access route to the Noatak project area via a winter road. The DMTS and Port would be used for equipment, but not improved or expanded. No additional fill pads and facilities in wetlands or waters for a barge landing or equipment storage are required. The equipment for the construction would be offloaded at the DMTS Port during the summer.

Snow and Ice Road to Noatak: This feature of the project avoided wetland impacts by design. During winter, the equipment would be used to construct a snow road to Noatak. The winter snow road would depart the DMTS haul road and travel 67.6 miles to Noatak. The proposed route minimizes stream crossings and would use ice bridge construction to cross five channels, including Kiyak Creek. No fill material would be placed in stream channels or wetlands for the winter road. The access route to Noatak avoids travel over CKNM lands by utilizing the existing DMTS transportation facility crossing it. The route has an estimated maximum grade of 7.5 percent (other routes had grades up to 21 percent), and crosses only five stream channels. The winter route, constructed of snow and ice only, requires no ground disturbance or permanent cut and fill on slopes and would be safe for proposed equipment travel. No permanent fill would be placed in wetlands or waters.

Permanent Access Roads: This feature of the project minimized wetland impacts by design. The access road alignment overlies ground that is subject to thaw settlement and has a high potential for snow drifting. The road would be engineered to an estimated average height of 6 feet to minimize potential road surface snow drifting, to provide thermal protection for the underlying permafrost, and to provide a drivable surface above the 100-year flood event. The road would have an average width of 24 feet and an average embankment base width of 72 feet.

Excavation along the route would be avoided to minimize thermal degradation of the frozen soils. Temporary work areas would be used during construction for equipment access, culvert installation, and placement of sediment controls.

The power poles for airport utilities are contained in the road ROW and do not require a separate access. The power pole footprint is within the access road calculations.

The East River Material Source is already in use by the community and the existing road would be used for access.

Material Sites: This featured avoided and minimized impacts to wetlands by using mineral material from gravel bars within the Noatak River. Material extraction from gravel bars would ensure no net loss of Waters of the U.S (WOUS), as each material site would be excavated below the water table, and eventually reflood from the river's natural rise and fall during the seasons. The in-river mining of material would reduce the need for terrestrial material sites and wetland disturbance for the project.

At each material source location, adequate setbacks from the active river channel would be maintained to not impact fish and avoid sediment outflow in the active channel. Excavation would occur during winter months when the ground is frozen, and the river waters are at a low-flow level. Material stockpiles would be moved out of the active floodplain before river breakup in the spring. Main channel water levels would be lower than other times of the year, allowing for material extraction in gravel bars without impacting water quality or fish passage.

Project construction would require approximately 72 acres of unavoidable wetlands impacts (see Table 3a and Table 3b below). Impacts associated with the Noatak River material sources would be temporary. Work within wetlands and waters of the U.S. would be covered under a USACE Individual Permit.

The two predominate wetlands filled by this project are Palustrine Scrub Shrub and Palustrine Emergent wetlands. These wetlands were rated for wildlife and fish habitat as well and other functions such as ground water discharge, ground water recharge, sediment retention, nutrient retention, production export, and subsistence use. The wetlands in the area and region are similar. Wetlands associated with streams and riverine systems rate highest for fish habitat and subsistence. The riverine wetlands rate high for wildlife habitat. While not all functions of any wetland are equal, the value for these two wetlands score low to medium for ground water discharge, ground water recharge, sediment retention, nutrient retention, production export, subsistence use, and fish and wildlife habitat. The wetlands are part of large complex of wetlands that provide functions for the region as a whole. The two wetlands filled as a whole were rated to be low value wetlands. This does not mean the wetlands have no function or values. This means subjectively the wetlands provide lower rated functions and values compared to other wetlands in the region. The fill for the airport and access road does not impact wetlands associated with highest subjective value of fish habitat and subsistence use.

Table 3a. Proposed Action Wetland and Riverine Impacts—Project Impacts

Project Component	Fill Type	WOUS Acres Impacted	Overall Wetland Value	Cubic Yards Fill in WOUS
Section 404				
Airport	River Gravels	26.7	Low value	300,000
Access Road	River Gravels	21.3	Low value	160,000
Staging Areas	River Gravels	11.3	Low value	160,000
Pioneer Road	River Gravels	12.7	Low value	105,000
Total Permanent Impacts and Fill	**–**	**72.1**	**–**	**725,000**

Table 3b. Proposed Action Wetland and Riverine Impacts—Project Impacts

Project Component	Fill Type	WOUS Acres Impacted	Overall Wetland Value	Cubic Yards Excavated
Section 10				
Material Site East	Excavation	1.4	In water work	1,000,000 (includes non-suitable materials)
Material Site South	Excavation	190.9	In water work	1,000,000 (includes non-suitable materials)
Total Excavated Material	**–**	**192.3**	**–**	**–**

Floodplains: The River Material Sources (East and South) excavations would occur within the floodplain. Excavation would occur during winter months when the ground is frozen, and water is at a low-flow level. Haul activities would also occur during the winter months using ice or snow roads.

The bridge at the Kuchoruk Creek crossing would be above the 100-year flood plain (HDL, 2008 of the Final EA). Floodplain drainage patterns would not be altered by the Proposed Action.

Surface Waters: Large-scale drainage patterns surrounding the project area would not be altered; however, localized drainage could be affected. Culverts along roads would maintain cross drainage and hydrologic function. No permanent changes to water quality are expected. The Proposed Action would not adversely affect community water supply and would not affect long-term water quality. Water quality impacts during construction would be minimal and temporary.

Groundwater: The Proposed Action does not include subsurface excavation or construction which would affect flow and recharge of groundwater.

Wild and Scenic Rivers: No change is expected for Wild and Scenic Rivers because the nearest river segment with that designation is greater than 30 miles upriver of Noatak.

Connected Actions: The fuel transfer system would result in additional wetland and water quality impacts that would be minimized to the extent practicable through USACE wetland permitting.

Secondary (Induced) and Cumulative Impacts: Past, present, and future actions may result in the loss of additional wetlands or water quality impacts, although wetland permitting would reduce or minimize the extent of these impacts.

As the FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use the existing airport land and non-FAA infrastructure will have following disposal, the need for further environmental impact analysis to consider the potential water resources impacts of the existing airport property and non-FAA infrastructure will be assessed upon the ultimate land disposal determination.

Construction Impacts

Direct and Indirect Impacts: Construction impacts would be local in nature and occur over three full construction seasons. The Proposed Action would cause the following temporary construction impacts:

- **Noise** – Construction machinery and vehicle activity would temporarily increase noise along the haul routes. Although trucks would likely haul fill material around the north end of the existing airport to construct the access road, the closest residence is approximately 1,100 ft away.
- **Air Quality** – The operation of heavy equipment and hauling fill material can create dust during dry conditions, which may cause temporary air quality impacts. This effect would be temporary and would be controlled by BMPs.
- **Water Quality** – Water quality impacts during construction would be minor and short term associated with stormwater runoff on disturbed road embankments before final stabilization is complete. The Proposed Action could result in some sedimentation in streams during construction. Since the project requires more than one acre of ground disturbance, an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be completed prior to construction. Post-construction stabilization would include seeding/stabilizing embankment fill and other disturbed areas. A mining and reclamation plan would be prepared for the two material sites. Water withdrawals may be required for winter haul route construction, dust control, road compaction, and temporary construction camps. Water to support these activities would likely be sourced from surface waterbodies or the Noatak River; an ADF&G permit may be required.
- **Airport Operations** – Airport operations would not be impacted by the Proposed Action. The existing airport would remain in service only until the new airport is commissioned.
- **Material Sites** – Material site development would result in temporary disturbance of the active floodplain and potential fish habitat of the Noatak River. Some sedimentation and turbidity may take place, which would be minimized through the implementation of a SWPPP for the project. At each material source location, adequate setbacks from the active river channel would be maintained to not impact fish and avoid sediment outflow in the active channel. Excavation would occur during winter months when the ground is frozen, and the river waters are at a low-flow level (Appendix E of the Final EA). Material stockpiles would be moved out of the active floodplain before river breakup in the spring. Fish habitat is expected to be protected by conducting operations in dewatered, winter conditions; away from the mainstem of the Noatak River. A reclamation plan would be prepared for the material site during development.
- **Winter Snow Road** – A winter route would be constructed to facilitate overland transportation. This would include construction of snow roads and ice bridges to protect the tundra, lakes, and streams. Water withdrawal would be permitted through the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) (water use permit) and ADF&G (fish habitat permit) for local waterbodies. The route would experience temporary in vehicle traffic, and noise and air emissions typical of heavy machinery during use of the route.

Connected Actions: It is anticipated the fuel transfer system would be constructed concurrently with the Proposed Action which would combine construction material and hauling needs concisely. This would reduce the overall duration of construction noise and reduce dust impacts and air emissions from combined truck hauling.

Secondary (Induced) and Cumulative Impacts: Cumulative impacts may occur if other construction projects overlap with construction of the Proposed Action. Other projects concurrently scheduled with the construction of the Proposed Action include a fuel transfer system and a fuel truck vs. a pipeline would be used due to funding limitations. The cumulative impacts of the Proposed Action and these projects are not anticipated to have a significant adverse effect to noise, air quality, water quality, or airport operations.

7. Permits and Authorizations

The permits and authorizations listed in the following table, unless otherwise noted, will be obtained for the Proposed Action prior to the construction to comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations:

Table 4 Summary of Mitigations

No.	Permit/Authorization; Agency	Why Permit/Authorization is Required
Federal Permits and Authorizations		
1	Section 404 Clean Water Act Wetland Fill Permit; USACE	Project elements were designed to avoid and minimize wetland impacts to the maximum extent practicable. A Section 404 individual permit will be obtained prior to construction for the placement of fill within jurisdictional wetlands and waters of the U.S.
2	Migratory Bird Treaty Act compliance; USFWS	USFWS recommendations will be followed by the construction contractor to avoid migratory bird take during vegetation clearing.
3	Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act EFH consultation and assessment; NMFS	DOT&PF prepared an EFH Assessment to describe potential EFH impacts and propose conservation measures to reduce impacts. Based on EFH consultation with NMFS, the proposed project actions are not likely to adversely affect threatened or endangered species or critical habitat (Appendix D of the Final EA).
4	ESA Section 7; USFWS	Section 7 consultation with USFWS covers potential impacts to Spectacled and Steller's Eiders and Polar Bear Critical Habitat. USFWS has concurred with a finding of not likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat under USFWS jurisdiction (Appendix E of the Final EA).
5	MMPA Consultation; NMFS	Consultation with NMFS covers potential impacts to marine species that may be encountered along project specific barge routes (if required). NMFS has concurred with a finding of not likely to adversely affect marine species or critical habitat under NMFS jurisdiction (Appendix E of the Final EA).
6	Section 4(f) U.S. Department of Transportation Act; NPS and SHPO	There are no feasible and prudent alternatives that meet the project's purpose and need which avoid CKNHL use. A Section 4(f) De Minimis Finding and consultation with the NPS and SHPO was completed to verify the Proposed Action will not have adverse effects to the CKNHL.
7	Government to Government Consultation	Consultation in accordance with Executive Order 13175 was conducted with the Native Village of Noatak to obtain meaningful and timely input regarding proposed FAA actions and address relevant community concerns/issues.
State Permits and Authorizations		
8	Section 106 Consultation; SHPO, Tribes, and Consulting Parties	Section 106 compliance is required as part of NEPA and provides for the identification and protection of cultural and historic resources that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Consultation has been completed with SHPO, Tribes, and other consulting parties, with mitigation measures and agreements amongst stakeholders completed. The SHPO concurred with FAA's finding of no historic properties adversely affected.
9	Section 401 Certification – Certificate of Reasonable Assurance; ADEC, Division of Water Quality	A 401-water quality certification would be issued prior to the USACE 404 permit and will notify compliance with state water quality administrative code. Measures to protect water quality in accordance with permit stipulations will include the use of BMPs to minimize potential for erosion and sedimentation of wetlands and waterbodies.

No.	Permit/Authorization; Agency	Why Permit/Authorization is Required
10	Material Site Designation; ADNR, Division of Mining Land and Water (DMLW)	To develop a new material site within state-owned lands, ADNR DMLW will need to designate those sites as material sites/sources which will require a decision that this is in the best interest of the State of Alaska.
11	Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) Construction General Permit (CGP); ADEC, Division of Water Quality	For projects with disturbance of over 1 acre, compliance with the APDES CGP is required. A SWPPP and notice of intent to seek coverage under the CGP will be required prior to construction. The CGP requires implementation of BMPs to protect water quality during construction.
12	Title 16 Fish Habitat Permit; ADF&G	A Title 16 permit will be required for project activities occurring below ordinary high water of a fish bearing stream. Measures to maintain fish passage, and avoid and minimize impacts to fish and their habitats, within these waters will be implemented in consultation with ADF&G.
13	Temporary ROW interests; NANA, ADNR, and private landowners	All required temporary ROW interests for project activities will be obtained from the landowners.
Local Permits and Authorizations		
14	Title 9 Land Use Permit; NAB, Planning Department	The Proposed Action is within the NAB and will require a Title 9 Permit.

8. Environmental Commitments and Mitigation Measures

The construction of the Proposed Action will include measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential environmental impacts through standard operating procedures and best management practices. The following environmental commitments and mitigations that arose from coordination with regulatory agencies are required for compliance and will be incorporated and formalized in a mitigation monitoring plan. In addition to the environmental mitigations, the Proposed Action will adhere to all permit stipulations that may arise during the permitting process. The DOT&PF is responsible for implementing the mitigations formalized in a mitigation monitoring plan and reporting on the implementation and close-out of each mitigation as it is undertaken within the Proposed Action Alternative's construction process to the FAA.

- Measures to control sedimentation and turbidity will be minimized through the implementation of a SWPPP for the project.
- At each material source location, adequate setbacks from the active river channel will be maintained to not impact fish or their habitats, and to avoid release of sediment outflow in the active channel.
- Material stockpiles will be moved out of the active floodplain before river breakup in the spring.
- Fish habitat will be protected by conducting operations during dewatered, winter conditions and away from the mainstem of the Noatak River.
- A mining and reclamation plan will be prepared for the material sites during development.
- Impacts to fish other than EFH will be mitigated as required by the ADF&G Fish Habitat Permit.
- DOT&PF will require the construction contractor to comply with the MBTA and provide the USFWS recommended time-period to avoid vegetation clearing (May 1-July 15) as a method of compliance. Ground disturbance will occur while the ground is still frozen, and geotextile will be placed to deter nesting during the subsequent breeding season.

- To minimize the introduction of additional invasive species to the area, the contractor will comply with Executive Order 13112 to mitigate invasive species by; 1) ensuring that ground disturbing activities are minimized, and disturbed areas are re-vegetated with seed recommended for the region by Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR)'s A Revegetation Manual for Alaska; 2) construction equipment will be inspected and cleaned prior to enter and exiting the construction site to minimize spread of vegetative materials; and 3) erosion and sediment control materials will be locally produced products to minimize potential importation of new propagules from outside Alaska.
- Prior to construction, the contractor will develop a Best Management Practice (BMP)-based Solid Waste and Hazardous Material Control Plan to address hazardous materials management, including storage, handing, and cleanup of potential fuel and lubricant spills.
- Once the airport is relocated, that portion of the existing airport property will revert to Federal ownership if the land reversal clause is not revoked. Existing avigation easements will be reverted to NANA[1].
- The contractor will be required to protect utilities, repair any damage caused by their activities, and maintain community roads associated with the haul route.
- Excavation will occur during winter months when the ground is frozen, and water is at a low-flow level.
- Haul activities will also occur during the winter months using ice or snow roads.
- Air quality impacts will be controlled by BMPs.
- An Erosion and Sediment Control Plan and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be completed prior to construction.
- Post-construction stabilization will include seeding/stabilizing embankment fill and other disturbed areas.

The following environmental mitigations would be included as part of the proposed action to mitigate environmental impacts:

- As the FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use the existing airport land and non-FAA infrastructure, or anticipate the landfill relocation decision by the community, the FAA will assess the need for further environmental impact analysis upon the ultimate land disposal determination and the Noatak community's landfill relocation decision. If further environmental impact analysis is determined to be required, this EA will be supplemented or re-evaluated as necessary.
- As the FAA cannot reasonably foresee what use the existing airport land and non-FAA infrastructure will have following disposal, the contamination at the existing airport property and non-FAA infrastructure will be addressed as part of the ultimate land disposal determination to prevent a release of hazardous material into the environment.
- Transfer of existing airport property may require remediation of onsite REC's that will be determined through further site investigation. Mitigation will be completed through required remediation actions according to an approved ADEC plan, such as a Contaminated Materials Management Plan.

[1] Aviation easements are a separate function from the question of the fee simple land disposal of the existing property.

9. Public Participation and Interagency Coordination

In accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F and Order 5050.4B, the FAA provides the public opportunities to participate in the NEPA process to promote open communication and to improve the decision-making process. FAA has a community involvement policy that recognizes community involvement as an essential part of FAA programs and decisions. All persons and organizations having potential interest in the Proposed Action were encouraged to participate in the environmental analysis process. The formal opportunities to comment within the NEPA process involved a 30-day scoping period of the Proposed Action (Appendix E of the Final EA), and a 30-day period of public review of the Final EA (Appendix A of this FONSI/ROD). Agency consultation initiated during the scoping period for the Proposed Action Alternative applied to applicable permitting and consultation processes needed for the proposed action. A summary of the public and agency consultation for the proposed action is provided below:

Table 5. Public and Agency Consultation Summary

Date	Activity	Description
November 2, 2004	Tribal Resolution 04-08	The Native Village of Noatak IRA Council (Noatak IRA) formally requested DOT&PF and FAA assistance with planning, design, and construction of a new airport.
November 18, 2004	Public Meeting	DOT&PF held a public meeting in Noatak to discuss airport relocation options.
December 10, 2004	Public Questionnaire	Tribal members of the Noatak IRA were interviewed about the airport relocation.
March 6, 2006	Agency Scoping Letters	DOT&PF issued letters to local governments, Tribal entities, Federal and State agencies, and staff describing the project and soliciting comments. Comments were received from ADNR, USACE, USFWS, and DOT&PF.
March 7, 2006	Government to Government Consultation Initiation	FAA issued a letter to the Noatak IRA describing the project and requesting comments and input on future coordination.
July 24, 2006	Public Meeting	DOT&PF held a public meeting in Noatak to update residents on the airport relocation project.
August 10, 2006	Public Service Announcement	DOT&PF issued a public service announcement concerning the upcoming public meeting.
August 14, 2006	Newsletter	DOT&PF issued a newsletter to Noatak residents concerning the upcoming public meeting.
August 17, 2006	Public Meeting	DOT&PF held a public meeting in Noatak to update residents on the airport relocation project.
October 22, 2007	Meeting	DOT&PF held a meeting with NANA on the airport relocation project.
October 31, 2007	Section 106 Initiation of Consultation Letter	DOT&PF issued a letter to the SHPO requesting concurrence that cultural resources would not be impacted by the project.
November 7, 2007	EFH Letter	DOT&PF issued a letter to NMFS requesting concurrence that EFH would not be impacted by the project.

Date	Activity	Description
September 24,2009	Public Meeting	DOT&PF held a public meeting in Noatak to update residents on the airport relocation project.
March 25, 2015	Public Meeting	DOT&PF held a public meeting in Noatak to update residents on the airport relocation project.
April 28, 2016	Meeting	DOT&PF held a meeting with NAB and Noatak IRA to update them on the airport relocation project.
November 22, 2017	Agency Scoping Letters	DOT&PF, on behalf of FAA, issued letters to local governments, Tribal entities, Federal and State agencies, and staff describing the project and soliciting comments.
November 27 to December 22, 2017	Agency Comments	Agency comments were received from agency scoping letters and DOT&PF responses.
January 23, 2018	Meeting	DOT&PF held a meeting with NANA to provide an update to the organization on the airport relocation project.
February 20, 2018	Section 7 Consultation	DOT&PF, on behalf of FAA, issued letters to NMFS and USFWS requesting determinations on Section 7 Consultation.
March 7, 2018	Meeting	DOT&PF, FAA, and Stantec held a teleconference with NPS and BLM to discuss overland haul route alternatives.
March 22, 2018	USFWS Letter to FAA	Section 7 Consultation
March 26, 2018	FAA Scoping Response	FAA responded to DOT&PF regarding the scoping comments solicitation.
October 10, 2018	Meeting	DOT&PF held a meeting with Noatak IRA officials to gather input on the updated Proposed Action elements including the overland haul route to DMTS.
October 12, 2018	Meeting	DOT&PF held a meeting with USFWS to discuss updated Proposed Action elements and gather USFWS input.
October 12, 2018	Meeting	DOT&PF held a meeting with ADF&G to discuss updated Proposed Action elements and gather ADF&G input.
October 30, 2018	Meeting	DOT&PF held a meeting with NPS to discuss updated Proposed Action elements and gather NPS input.
February 21, 2019	Section 106 Initiation Letters	DOT&PF, on behalf of FAA, issued letters to SHPO and other consulting parties to confirm concurrence that no historic properties would be affected by the Proposed Action.
February 21, 2019	Government-to-Government Consultation Initiation	FAA issued a letter to the Noatak IRA describing the project and requesting comments and input on future coordination.
February 22, 2019	MMPA Letter	FAA issued a letter to NMFS requesting determinations on ESA Section 7 Consultation.

Date	Activity	Description
August 26, 2021	Section 106 Findings Letters	DOT&PF, on behalf of FAA, issued letters to SHPO and other consulting parties to confirm concurrence that no historic properties would be affected by the Proposed Action.
September 22, 2021	Section 106 Finding Concurrence	SHPO concurred with the finding of No Historic Properties Adversely Affected and requested an inadvertent discovery plan distributed to NPS and the AK State Medical Examiner.
October 06, 2021	Section 106 Finding Concurrence	NPS concurred with the finding of No Historic Properties Adversely Affected.
February 08, 2022	Tribal Resolution 20-23	The Noatak IRA signed a resolution supporting the draft environmental document Proposed Action elements.
June 16, 2022	Section 4(f) *De Minimis* Determinations	FAA issued a letter to the NPS with the Section 4(f) *de minimis* determination and requested NPS concurrence.
July 21, 2022	Section 4(f) *De Minimis* Determinations Concurrence	NPS concurred with FAA's Section 4(f) *de minimis* determinations and *de minimis* impact finding that the project will not adversely impact the CKNHL.

A Notice of Availability of the Final EA was published on August 9, 2024 at the following sources (Appendix A of this FONSI/ROD):

1) Online at the DOT&PF project website: Noatak Airport Relocation, Northern Region, Transportation & Public Facilities (alaska.gov)
2) Online at the State of Alaska Online Public Notice website: Notice of Availability for Final Environmental Assessment - Noatak Airport Relocation - Alaska Online Public Notices (state.ak.us)
3) A hard copy of the FEA is being provided for review at each of the following locations:
   a) Northwest Arctic Borough, Office of the Mayor, 163 Lagoon St, Kotzebue, Alaska 99752
   b) Napaaqtugmiut School, No. 2 Airport Road, Noatak, Alaska 99761
   c) Native Village of Noatak, 100 Swamp Street, Noatak, Alaska 99761

Additionally, a Final EA hard copy by mail could be requested by contacting Christopher Johnston, the DOT&PF project manager, at:

- Christopher Johnston, P.E., 2300 Peger Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709; or,
- chris.johnston@alaska.gov

Two comments were provided during the public comment period for the Final EA were submitted on via email to the DOT&PF project manager (Appendix B of this FONSI/ROD). One comment does not pertain to the sufficiency of the impact analysis presented in the Final EA but inquires on the construction process of the proposed action. The comment will be addressed by DOT&PF during the construction phase of the proposed action to by ensuring that the village of Noatak is appropriately notified of the construction process as determined as needed by DOT&PF.

The other comment pertained to the impact analysis within the Final EA. The comment and FAA's response to the comment is located in the Errata Sheet appended to the *August 2, 2024 – Final Environmental Assessment for the Noatak Airport Relocation, Project No. Z614780000.* For the reasons provided in the Errata Sheet, we concur that the potential fuel cost increases associated with the project do not create a significant environmental impact.

10. Reasons for Determination that the Proposed Action will have No Significant Impact

The attached Final EA and appended Errata Sheet examines each of the various environmental resources that were determined to be present at the project location or had the potential to be impacted by the Proposed Action. Analysis provided in the Final EA and appended Errata Sheet determined that the Proposed Action would not cause any environmental impacts which would exceed any thresholds of significance as defined by FAA Orders 1050.1F and 5050.4B. Based on the information contained in the Final EA and the attached Errata Sheet, the FAA has determined that the Proposed Action meets the purpose and need for the Proposed Action, would not cause any environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated below the level of a significant impact, all practical means were used to avoid or minimize environmental harm, and is the most reasonable, feasible, and prudent alternative. While the proposed airport location is not locally zoned, the proposed action is consistent with community planning as the project supports the continued safe operation of the aviation service to the community of Noatak. In addition, the acquisition of approximately 323 acres of vacant NANA land in support of the relocated airport has no identified permanent usage other than non-historic winter trails which would remain useable for local transportation. Accordingly, the FAA has decided to approve the Proposed Action as it is described in Section 3 of this FONSI/ROD.

11. Federal Finding and Approval

Based on the information in this FONSI/ROD and supported by detailed discussion in the Final EA and appended Errata Sheet, the FAA has selected the Proposed Action as the Selected Alternative. The FAA must select one of the following choices:

- Approve agency actions necessary to implement the Proposed Action, or
- Disapprove agency actions to implement the Proposed Action.

Approval signifies that applicable federal requirements relating to the proposed airport relocation and planning have been met. Approval would allow DOT&PF to proceed with implementation of the Proposed Action to replace the airport and confirm the ALP amendments that identify the Proposed Action. Disapproval would prevent DOT&PF from confirming its ALP amendments and implementation of the Proposed Action.

Under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, I find that the project is reasonably supported. I, therefore, direct that action be taken to carry out the Noatak Airport Relocation project and DOT&PF's actions outlined in Section 3 of this FONSI/ROD. As a condition of this FONSI/ROD, DOT&PF shall implement all the environmental commitments and mitigations identified in the Final EA.

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds that the proposed Federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 of NEPA and other applicable environmental requirements and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring the consultation pursuant to Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA.

Approved:

LAURIE J SUTTMEIER Digitally signed by LAURIE J SUTTMEIER
Date: 2024.09.27 13:08:01 -07'00'

Laurie J. Suttmeier **Date**
Division Director
Airports Division, Alaskan Region

RIGHT OF APPEAL

This FONSI/ROD constitutes a final order of the FAA Administrator and is subject to exclusive judicial review under 49 USC 46110 by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia or the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the circuit in which the person contesting the decision resides or has its principal place of business. Any party having substantial interest in this order may apply for review of the decision by filing a petition for review in the appropriate U.S. Court of Appeals no later than 60 days after the order is issued in accordance with the provisions of 49 USC 46110

Appendix A – Notice of Availability of Final EA

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From:	Johnston, Christopher F (DOT)
To:	Janet.L.Post@usace.army.mil; sturges.susan@epa.gov; bob_henszey@fws.gov; jodi.pirtle; aleria.jensen@noaa.gov; blm_ak_afo_general_delivery@blm.gov; scott_sample@nps.gov; Price, Tyson (FAA); Cox, Sally A (CED); Johnson, Brent W (DPS); Leinberger, Dianna L (DNR); Cold, Helen S (DFG); Brase, Audra L (DFG); Rypkema, James (DEC); DNR, Parks OHA Review Compliance (DNR sponsored); calvin.schaeffer@alaska.gov; Werneke, Alvin E (DOT); Martin, Kerri L (DOT); Beck, Albert M L (DOT); Kemp, Joseph (DOT); liz.cravalho@nana.com; Lance.Miller@nana.com; board@avec.org; tim.gilbert@maniilaq.org; will@alaskaaircarriers.org; rd-ca@teck.com; tribeadmin@nautaaq.org; tribeadmin; kivalinacity; NNaylor@nwabor.org; twalker@nwarctic.org.; representative.thomas.baker@akleg.gov; Olson, Donny (LEG)
Cc:	Webb, Lindsey L (DOT); Jensen, Melissa L (DOT); Sample, Laura A (FAA); Hillman, Kacy (kacy.hillman@stantec.com)
Subject:	Noatak Airport Relocation: Final Environmental Assessment for public review and comment
Date:	Friday, August 9, 2024 2:39:41 PM

Dear Agency Stakeholder:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in partnership with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), announces availability of the Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) for the Noatak Airport Relocation Project in Noatak, Alaska for public review and comment. A copy of the FEA for review can be found here: https://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/noatak/documents.shtml

The Noatak Airport Relocation Project (proposed action) is funded by FAA through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP). The proposed action would provide the Village of Noatak with a safe, reliable, and cost-effective facility that would provide the community with adequate access, support the community's long-term development goals, and be consistent with current FAA safety regulations.

The FEA includes a detailed proposed action description in Chapter 2 and the following includes a summarized list of proposed action elements:

- Construct runway, taxiway, apron, lighting, a Snow Removal Equipment Building (SREB).
- Construct a road from Noatak to the relocated airport, with a bridge crossing Kuchoruk Creek.
- Develop local material sources and access.
- Acquire necessary right-of-way for the new airport and access road.
- Existing Noatak Airport to be deactivated after relocated airport is operational.

The FEA considers the resources, ecosystems, and human communities of concern, as well as the geographic area influenced and potential effects by the proposed action, which vary by resource. The environmental review, consultation, and other required actions required for the proposed action by applicable federal laws are being, or have been, carried out by DOT&PF and FAA. The proposed project would comply with FAA National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing policies and procedures including FAA Order 1050.1F, FAA Order 5050.4B and other federal, state, EOs and regulatory measures as noted in Chapter 5 of the FEA.

FEA details can be accessed by the methods listed below:

- Online at the DOT&PF project website: https://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/noatak/
- Online at the State of Alaska Online Public Notice website: http://notice.alaska.gov/216346
- A hard copy of the FEA is being provided for review at each of the following locations:
  - Northwest Arctic Borough, Office of the Mayor, 163 Lagoon St, Kotzebue, AK 99752
  - Napaaqtugmiut School, #2 Airport Road, Noatak, AK 99761
  - Native Village of Noatak, 100 Swamp Street, Noatak, AK 99761

Additionally, a FEA hard copy by mail can be requested by contacting myself, the DOT&PF project

manager, at:

- Christopher Johnston, P.E., 2300 Peger Road, Fairbanks, AK 99709; or,
- chris.johnston@alaska.gov

Formal written comments on the FEA may be provided directly to myself by mail or email using the comment form provided at the project website or hard-copy locations. Written comments can be made until September 9, 2024.

For more information, please contact me.

Chris Johnston, P.E.
Engineering Manager | Northern Region Design | Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
2301 Peger Road, Fairbanks, AK 99709 | (907)451-2322 | chris.johnston@alaska.gov

Appendix B – Final EA Public Comments

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COMMENT SHEET

Noatak Airport Relocation
PROJECT NO. Z614780000
Noatak, AK

We welcome written input and ideas from the public. Thank you for taking the time to be involved.
(If you need more space please use back side of sheet.)

COMMENTS:

My name is Stella, I work for our tribe, Native Village of Noatak as Education.
I see the anticipated construction starts Year 2026, I would like our people to be Construction ready for the project.
What do you think you will hire or need once you start hiring?
Also what equipment(s) are you needing?
Is it possible under this project to get a group to go training funded through State (DOL) and other entites?
When is the updates for this project for in-person meeting?

*Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment –including your personal identifying information –may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

E-MAIL ADDRESS: educationcoordinator@nautaaq.org

NAME: StellaShy

Forms may be mailed to DOT&PF Attn: Christopher Johnston, 2301 Peger Rd., Fairbanks, AK 99709 or scanned and submitted to the email below. Please return comments by September 9, 2024.

For further information, please contact Christopher Johnston, P.E., Engineering Manager, at (907) 451-2322 or email: *chris.johnston@alaska.gov.* To correspond by text telephone (TDD), please call (907) 451-2363.

COMMENT SHEET

Noatak Airport Relocation
PROJECT NO. Z614780000
Noatak, AK

We welcome written input and ideas from the public. Thank you for taking the time to be involved.
(If you need more space please use back side of sheet.)

COMMENTS:

Section 9.9 Socioeconomic, Environmental Justice, and Children's Health and Safety Risks does not address the impacts of the new airport on the economic hardship this project will impose on the community in the long run. Section 9.9.2.1 talks about impacts being a haul road, increased employment during construction, and states that no business will need to move. What is not addressed is the high cost of fuel to heat homes and provide transportation increasing due to the relocation of the airport. All fuel is flow into Noatak. There is no road connecting the village to transport routes and no barges can make it up the river. At this point fuel costs in Noatak are among the highest in the nation with heating fuel hitting a high of over $17.00 per gallon in recent years. There is no mitigation discussed for increase to the cost of fuel. The project does not provide new fuel storage at the relocated airport or anyway to transport fuel from the new airport to the community. It does not discuss the increased cost of fuel for the community and the impact on the community over time due to increased fuel costs.
The increase in fuel cost impacts every person. Fuel is used for heating, transportation for boats, four wheelers, snowmachines, cars and trucks, and heavy equipment. The cost of power will go up. Subsistence lifestyle will be impacted.
The EA for this project does not discuss any of these impacts as required under E.O. 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations."
AVEC published "Noatak Bulk Fuel Upgrades – Conceptual Design Report in October 2021 which addresses the cost providing fuel storage and transportation due to the airport move which is in the millions of dollars which the community does not have.
All of the issues stated above must be addressed in the EA so a true impact of the proposed action can be accessed.

*Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment –including your personal identifying information –may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

E-MAIL ADDRESS: fbutton@avec.org

NAME: Forest Button

Forms may be mailed to DOT&PF Attn: Christopher Johnston, 2301 Peger Rd., Fairbanks, AK 99709 or scanned and submitted to the email below. Please return comments by September 9, 2024.

For further information, please contact Christopher Johnston, P.E., Engineering Manager, at (907) 451-2322 or email: *chris.johnston@alaska.gov.* To correspond by text telephone (TDD), please call (907) 451-2363.

FAA
Alaskan Region
Office of Airports

ERRATA SHEET

Final Environmental Assessment for the Noatak Airport Relocation, August 2, 2024
Project No. Z614780000

The following comment was submitted on the subject Final Environmental Assessment on September 9, 2024, to the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Northern Region Project Manager.

Table 1. Written Comment Submitted to DOT&PF on September 9, 2024:

Section 9.9 Socioeconomic, Environmental Justice, and Children's Health and Safety Risks does not address the impacts of the new airport on the economic hardship this project will impose on the community in the long run.
Section 9.9.2.1 talks about impacts being a haul road, increased employment during construction, and states that no businesses will need to move. What is not addressed is the high cost of fuel to head homes and provide transportation increasing due to the relocation of the airport. All fuel is flow[n] into Noatak. There is no road connecting the village to transport routes and no barges can make it up the river. At this point fuel costs in Noatak are among the highest in the nation with heating fuel hitting a high of over $17.00 per gallon in recent years. There is no mitigation discussed for [the] increase to the cost of fuel. The project does not provide new fuel storage at the relocated airport or any way to transport fuel from the new airport to the community. It does not discuss the increased cost of fuel for the community and the impact on the community over time due to increased fuel costs.
The increase in fuel costs impacts every person. Fuel is used for heating, transportation for boats, four wheelers, snowmachines, cars and trucks, and heavy equipment. The cost of power will go up. Subsistence lifestyle will be impacted.
The EA for this project does not discuss any of these impacts as required under E.O. 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations."
AVEC published "Noatak Bulk Fuel Upgrades – Conceptual Design Report in October 2021"[1] which addresses the cost providing fuel storage and transportation due to the airport move which is in the millions of dollars which the community does not have.
All of the issues stated above must be addressed in the EA so a true impact of the proposed action can be [assessed].

[1] This comment does not raise the issue of the potential fuel bulk storage being potentially located at the proposed relocated airport. The FAA does not have information to suggest that there has been recent discussion related to long term bulk fuel storage options between AVEC and DOT&PF, and multiple options are possible. Per the Final EA, a bulk fuel storage option is not a part of the proposed action. For these reasons, the FAA is responding to the comment as presented, namely, that the FAA allegedly did not appropriately consider the potential fuel cost increase impact of the project as described in the Final EA. Although these immediate comments contained via errata are directed to fuel cost increase impacts, the Final EA notes that the FAA will assess the need for further environmental impact analysis upon the ultimate land disposal determination as that land disposal process may inform the status of the fuel bulk upgrade effort.

The FAA responds as follows.

Summary of Issue Raised

The four entities that own and operate fuel facilities in Noatak are the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (AVEC), Northwest Arctic Borough School District (NWABSD), the Native Store, and the Noatak IRA Native Council. AVEC uses fuel for electric power generation; the NWABSD uses fuel for heating the school building; the Native Council uses fuel to operate the water treatment plant; and the Native Store provides diesel and gasoline sales for residential use. Currently AVEC, the NWABSD, and the Native Store receive diesel fuel to their various fuel tank farms via a fuel header located on the existing airport apron (AVEC, 2021). The Native Council utilizes a mobile 500-gallon tank to move diesel fuel from a transfer tank on a fuel trailer to transfer gasoline from a transfer tank on the existing airport to the Native Store's dispensing tanks (AVEC, 2021).

The analysis provided in the Final EA in Section 9.9 (Socioeconomics, Environmental Justice, and Children's Health and Safety Risks) referenced a fuel distribution system alternative as a connected action to the Final EA's proposed action of relocating the Noatak Airport. The comment submitted in response to the Final EA provided a *2021 Noatak Bulk Fuel Upgrades – Conceptual Design Report* (AVEC, 2021). The FAA has reviewed that report including but not limited to the locations of existing fuel facilities and the analyses of various long-term bulk fuel upgrade options for the community.

According to the AVEC report, the additional price for fuel delivery due to the proposed action of relocating the Noatak Airport—as described in the Final EA—is estimated to be $0.33 per gallon (AVEC 2021). The increase is alleged to be an impact that individuals in the community will feel in various ways.

FAA Response to Comment

The *2021 Noatak Bulk Fuel Upgrades – Conceptual Design Report* provided a 5-year average annual fuel consumption, broken out by primary user for the years 2016-2020. Using these fuel consumption estimates (the "5-year annual fuel demand column below is taken from Table 4 of the *2021 Noatak Bulk Fuel Upgrades*), the FAA performed a cost increase per household calculation by aggregating the estimated cost increases to electric utilities, water utilities, home heating, and household transportation.

In support of the analysis provided in Table 2 below, the FAA made the following assumptions:

- Additional cost of fuel needed for electric and water utilities will be passed on entirely to the consumer.
- The Native Store sales of diesel fuel is used entirely for household heating.
- The Native Store sales of gasoline are used for household transportation.
- Noatak has 106 households, based on the number of water and wastewater connections (DCRA, 2024).
- The newly installed solar electric in Noatak will ease likely future estimated increases in fuel demand.

Table 2. Noatak Community Fuel Consumption Estimates

Primary Fuel User/Distributer	5-Year Annual Fuel Demand (gallons per year)	Gallons per Household	Total Cost Increase	Cost Increase per Household
AVEC (Electricity)	130,102	N/A	$42,933.66	$405.03
Noatak IRA (Water Plant)	1,500	N/A	$495.00	$4.67
Native Store (Gasoline)	49,263	465	N/A	$153.37
Native Store (Diesel)	52,470	495	N/A	$163.35
Total	**–**	**–**	**–**	**$726.42**

This $726.42 per household cost increase represents a 1.1% anticipated increase to the 2024 median household income in Noatak of $67,500.00 (DCRA, 2024)[2]. A 1.2% cost increase would occur if the assumed cost increase to price per gallon is greater than $0.35, and the increase is not due to an inflation of fuel prices that is unrelated to the airport relocation." This 1.1% - 1.2% potential increase to the median household income due to an anticipated increase to the cost of fuel is compared to the potential cost increase to that of statewide trends such as reported by the State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's (DLWD) *July 2023 Alaska Economic Trends* (DLWD, 2023). The DLWD report identified the 2023 annual rate of urban housing inflation in Alaska to be 6.3% overall; with an individual rate of 3.1% for housing fuels and utilities, and 5.4% for housing electricity (other housing related rates that impacted the overall housing inflation percentage included those for shelter, home furnishings/operations, and utility gas service). Rates of inflation for rural Alaskan communities were not quantified due to the scarcity of statewide economic survey data for Alaska (DLWD, 2023). However, it is noted within the DLWD's July 2023 report that "everything costs more in rural Alaska, …". It is therefore reasonably inferred that rural inflation rates in Alaska *may be*—and probably are—higher than those in urban areas, and that the cost of living reflected by the inflation rates are higher due to the primary role that shipping to remote areas in Alaska plays in those higher costs.

While the proposed action may increase the cost of living in Noatak, the increase is well below the currently known rate of housing-rated inflation of 6.3%. Therefore, the anticipated increase to the cost of living in Noatak associated with the airport relocation is not significant from an environmental impact analysis standpoint.

We also place and consider the comment about fuel cost increases occasioned by the relocated airport into a broader context. If the proposed action does not occur, continued Noatak River erosion would result in the eventual closure of the existing Noatak Airport. The Noatak Airport is the residents' only transportation method in and out of the community including for fuel. The socioeconomic and environmental justice impacts to Noatak under the no action alternative would result in adverse socioeconomic, environmental justice, and safety impacts, as documented in the Final EA. There are simply no easy or perfect solutions for transportation in rural Alaska where population, time, distance, weather, socioeconomics, fuel costs, and other variables make for difficult transportation decisions. The community as a whole has been very supportive of this project because of the obvious long-term benefits to the community by securing a long and reliable transportation facility that, in turn, will better enable

[2] Some of the fuel consumption in this calculation will be for local governmental or commercial use, however given the small and interconnected nature of the community, it is reasonable to assume these governmental and commercial uses will ultimately be transferred to the individual households as well.

reliable transportation for delivery of medical supplies, food, fuel, and so on. To suggest that inadequate consideration has been given to environmental justice arguably views the overall situation through too narrow of a lens. Nor does the airport relocation project discussed in the Final EA preclude the community from engaging in any of the long-term discussions about bulk fuel storage upgrades identified and discussed in the AVEC 2021 report or from implementing or continuing to pursue the consultant recommendations identified at page 67 of that report.

References

Alaska Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA). 2024. *Noatak, Alaska, Information Portal StoryMap*. Accessed September 2024, at Noatak, Alaska (arcgis.com).

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