

## **Aviation Advisory Board**

**Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> 2025**

### **Ted Stevens International Airport**

**Board Members Present: Chairman Steve Strait, Marilyn Romano, Dave Wilson, Adam White, Bob Hajdukovich, Gideon Garcia, Frank Neitz, Mike Reeve, Dennis Parish.**

### **Roll Call and Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Strait conducted a roll call to establish attendance and confirmed a quorum for the meeting. He mentioned two vacancies on the Board and outlined the different processes for filling those positions. The minutes from the July 21st meeting were reviewed and approved with no amendments.

\* Open Board Seats: Discussion on the process for filling two vacancies on the Board.

### **Public Comment: Discussion on Airport Layout Plan (ALP) Challenges**

Mr. Starr highlighted issues with the FAA's new policy requiring updates to the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) before building permits can be issued. He expressed that this requirement is problematic for developers, as it can significantly delay projects and create uncertainty. Starr called for a discussion on the ALP to be added to future agendas to address these challenges.

\* Airport Layout Plan (ALP): Concerns raised about the need for updates and the impact on development.

### **Updates on Aviation System and Regulatory Reforms**

Ryan provided updates on the International Airport's RFI and the regulatory reform initiatives to address the heavy regulations in Alaska's aviation sector. He emphasized the challenges encountered during Typhoon Halong, particularly the inadequacy of airport runway lengths for emergency responses and the ongoing efforts to restore AWOS systems. Ryan also mentioned the collaboration with FAA to address equipment repair challenges.

\* Regulatory Reform: Ongoing efforts to reduce regulations and seek public input.

\* AWOS Systems: Updates and improvements being made to Automated Weather Observing Systems in rural areas.

#### Winter Operations Preparedness and Airport Challenges

Ryan Anderson discussed the significant costs associated with airport de-icing during recent winter weather, while Marilyn Romano praised the collaborative efforts of airport staff and airlines in managing winter operations. Staff provided updates on various airport projects and expressed appreciation for the proactive engagement of airport managers in rural communities.

\* Winter Operations: Review of preparedness and response to winter weather events at airports.

#### Budget Updates and Organizational Structure

DC Keith provided insights on the budget situation, highlighting a \$70 million shortfall that impacts both highways and aviation programs. She mentioned that while the aviation program faced a \$13 million reduction, carryover match funds would help maintain the program for the upcoming fiscal year. DC Keith also addressed the organizational structure, confirming no projected changes and emphasizing a team-based approach among division directors.

#### Regulatory Review and Stakeholder Engagement

Andy J. Mills outlined the governor's call for a 25% reduction in regulations by 2027, focusing on the need for stakeholder engagement and public input. He stressed that the review process will quantify regulatory requirements to facilitate easier implementation and enforcement. People raised concerns about public participation in upcoming meetings, while Mills assured that there will be multiple opportunities for input.

#### Update on Storm Response and Technology Integration

Chairman Strait commended the DOT for their impressive storm response, emphasizing the use of advanced technology like drones and GIS to enhance situational awareness. He acknowledged the quick actions taken following the disaster declaration, which allowed for

immediate resource deployment. Strait also mentioned the importance of local knowledge in managing the response effectively.

#### Updates on Airport Operations and Management

Angela M. Spear provided an update on the airport's performance, noting continued growth in cargo and passenger traffic without a mid-year rate increase. She emphasized the benefits of a recent reorganization and the airport's successful support of Seattle Tacoma Airport during a fuel crisis. Additionally, Spear mentioned the implementation of a feedback survey to improve communication during winter weather events.

- \* Implementation of new communication strategies during winter weather events.

- \* Current staffing levels and challenges at Anchorage and Fairbanks airports.

#### Development Activities at Alaska International Airport

Dylan Blankenship discussed the Alaska International Airport system's development activities, including a new land marketing program aimed at maximizing revenue and attracting airlines. He mentioned the hiring of a concessions consultant to assess and improve the concessions program at Anchorage International Airport, as well as ongoing RFPs for advertising and rental car agreements. Additionally, he noted an increase in seat capacity for airlines and welcomed Southwest Airlines to the airport.

#### Considerations for Family-Friendly Airport Services

Terri Lindesth highlighted the challenges families face when traveling, particularly the lack of essential items like baby formula and diapers in airports. Angela Spear mentioned that although a baby vending machine was not successful, vendors at Fairbanks Airport have been proactive in providing these items during emergencies. Terri expressed the importance of making airports family-friendly and user-friendly to enhance travelers' experiences.

#### Break and Technical Issues

Dylan Blankenship called for a 10-minute break and asked about the pizza delivery. He mentioned that the commissioner's office was experiencing difficulties with a connection

related to the state of Alaska feed. Blankenship also noted that while the system usually works, there are occasional reliability issues.

### Badging and Winter Operations Update

Aaron Danielson addressed the challenges faced in the badging process at Anchorage, explaining that a shift to automation has significantly improved efficiency and reduced wait times for badge appointments. He also reported on winter operations, emphasizing that the airport effectively managed recent snow and ice events, thanks to increased staffing and proactive measures, including a standby system for equipment operators.

### Parking and Badging Updates

Daneilson addressed parking challenges at the airport, highlighting customer feedback regarding availability. He confirmed that 260 new parking spots will be added next summer and discussed the use of social media to inform customers about parking options. Additionally, he mentioned plans for a dashboard to provide real-time parking updates.

- \* Parking Expansion: Discussion on the addition of 260 parking spots at the park ride and fly lot.
- \* Lease Lot Inquiries: Discussion on interest in lease lots at Bethel Airport and the need for development.
- \* Development of RFPs for various airport services and agreements.
- \* Updates on the automated badging system and its expected efficiency improvements.

### Staffing and Operations Update at FAI

Jason highlighted the current staffing situation at FAI, mentioning that recruitment efforts have led to an influx of quality applicants, especially in maintenance and operations. He discussed the successful filling of long-vacant positions and the implementation of training programs to help new hires obtain necessary certifications. Additionally, he reported on winter operations, indicating that snow management has been effective despite a light snowfall year.

- \* Staffing Updates: Overview of staffing levels and recruitment efforts at Fairbanks Airport.

\* Retention Bonus Initiative: Status and development of the retention bonus for winter snow teams.

\* Asphalt Damage Prevention: Measures being taken to prevent future damage to airport asphalt from aircraft operations.

### Project Updates and Community Engagement

Discussed ongoing and upcoming construction projects, including the rehabilitation of terminal access roads and the expansion of the auxiliary parking lot. He highlighted the need for public involvement regarding the removal of the east boundary fence and outlined plans for thoughtful development of land east of the strip, ensuring proper access and utility management.

### Upcoming Meeting Schedule and Feedback Discussion

Jodi Lynn Gould provided details on four scheduled meetings for the following week, focusing on various aspects of general aviation. Adam White expressed concerns regarding the timing of the meetings, suggesting that the 2 to 4 p.m. timeframe might hinder participation from those with work commitments. Gould reassured that there would be multiple opportunities for public input, emphasizing the importance of specific feedback.

### Federal Airport Funding Update and APEB Process Overview

Rebecca Douglas reported on the federal airport funding for fiscal year 2025, noting a total of \$321 million, with \$260 million for the rural system and \$61 million for the international system. Dylan Blankenship highlighted the role of discretionary funding and Lori's team's advocacy in securing additional resources. Douglas also discussed the APEB process for project prioritization, emphasizing safety and community support as key criteria.

### Bethel Airport Development and Future Projects

Troy LaRue addressed the limitations of Bethel Airport, noting that the developed side is fully leased and there is a need to explore the undeveloped east side for potential growth. He mentioned three upcoming projects that could drive demand for airport services. LaRue also pointed out the complexities involved in developing the east side, including necessary infrastructure investments.

## Electric Aviation and Infrastructure Challenges in Rural Alaska

Lee outlined the current issues with electric infrastructure in rural Alaska, noting the reliance on outdated power sources and the potential for electric aviation to enhance service. He proposed utilizing used aircraft batteries to stabilize power in communities like Antioch, where electricity costs are high. Lee also mentioned the upcoming application deadline for a test bed program, suggesting that Alaska could be a strong candidate despite competition from other states.

- \* Electric aviation infrastructure and its potential impact on rural communities in Alaska.
- \* Collaboration opportunities with other states, particularly Texas and Hawaii, for electric aviation initiatives.
- \* The application process for Alaska to become a test bed for electric aviation.
- \* The repurposing of used aircraft batteries for stabilizing power in rural areas.

## Collaboration on Aviation Initiatives and Nighttime Approaches

Marilyn Romano discussed the synergy between Alaska and Hawaii in serving small communities and highlighted a federal feasibility study for sustainable aviation fuel that was awarded to Alaska. The board agreed with the collaboration idea and noted the need for staff support to move forward. Greg Dyer provided updates on nighttime approaches and the expansion of airports being assessed for nighttime access, emphasizing the importance of methodical planning for future aviation needs.

- \* The challenges and strategies related to nighttime approaches and airport accessibility in Alaska.

## Funding and Safety Initiatives in Aviation

Chairman Strait addressed the impact of administrative changes on funding timelines, noting that the program only gained momentum in June or July. He mentioned that in fiscal year 25, a significant portion of funds was allocated to airfield rehabilitation, while fiscal year 26 would see a shift in funding priorities towards approach safety. Strait emphasized the importance of addressing safety issues related to airport approaches.