

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

DESIGN & ENGINEERING SERVICES DIVISION, NORTHERN REGION

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI,
GOVERNOR

2301 PEGER ROAD
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99709-5316
TELEPHONE: (907) 451-5289
FAX 451-5103
TDD: 451-2363

June 20, 2005

Re: Alakanuk Airport Relocation
Stage II
Agency Scoping
ADOT&PF Project No. 60337

To Whom It May Concern:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), is proposing to complete the Airport Relocation Project at Alakanuk. Stage II of the Alakanuk Airport Relocation project consists of completing the runway, taxiway, apron, and access road constructed under Stage I in 2001-2002, as well as installation of lighting, a segmented circle, and a new snow removal equipment building. Construction is planned for Summer 2006. FAA and ADOT&PF completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the project in 2001 and acquired a Section 404 permit for wetlands fill and a Title 41 fish habitat permit (previously referred to as a Title 16 permit) for construction of the improvements. The EA and permits documented the phased nature of the construction process to allow for filled areas to settle prior to completion of construction. The FAA Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the 2001 EA expired in October 2004; therefore ADOT&PF is in the process of preparing a Re-evaluation of the EA.

Alakanuk is located at the east entrance of Alakanuk Pass, the major southern channel of the Yukon River. It is located approximately 162 air miles northwest of Bethel and approximately 8 miles south of Emmonak. The village lies within the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. The community is located at approximately 62.688890° North Latitude and -164.61528° West Longitude (Sec. 14, T030N, R082W, Seward Meridian) (USGS Quadrangle Kwiguk C-6) (refer to Figure 1).

Existing Condition

Access to Alakanuk is primarily by air, although there is barge and riverboat service during summer months. There is no dock in the village; however, there is an established barge landing area. There are no roads linking the community to other population centers, but ice roads are used by snowmobiles in the winter. Summer transportation is by skiff or all-terrain vehicle in the summer. Alakanuk is serviced by a number of air taxi operations that transport freight and passengers from other airports in the region, such as Bethel and Emmonak.

The existing airport at Alakanuk has serious deficiencies that limit the size and load capacity of aircraft using the airport. Existing airport facilities consist of one 2,200' by 60' gravel runway, a

2,680' by 120' runway safety area, a 50' by 65' taxiway, and an aircraft apron. Deficiencies include an aircraft apron that is located too close to the runway, an insufficient runway safety area, soft spots in the existing runway and aircraft parking apron, periodic flooding of the runway and aircraft parking apron which reduces the available runway length and parking areas, and less than the 95% wind coverage by the existing runway.

The proposed airport relocation addresses these deficiencies by providing a wider and longer runway, a larger runway safety area, a wider taxiway, a larger aircraft parking apron located farther from the runway, additional airport support facilities, and an access road from the village to the airport. Under Stage I of the project, ADOT&PF placed the initial silt embankment for a road from the village to the new airport, and a taxiway, runway, and aviation support area at the new airport.

Proposed Action

Stage II of the project consists of placing additional fill, regrading and flattening the runway, taxiway, aviation support area, and the access road constructed under Stage I (Figure 2). This phase also includes installation of lighting and a segmented circle and construction of a new snow removal equipment building. These facilities are all to be constructed in areas that were filled during Stage I. An electric line will also be constructed from the village to the airport along the access road constructed in 2001. The power poles would likely be placed outside the road fill.

Some fill materials may be obtained from the Emmonak material site that was described under the original permit. A permit extension or new permit will be required for continued use of this site. Coarse materials will be supplied by the contractor from off-site sources. Materials would be transported to the project area by barge, offloaded at the existing barge landing, and transported to the new airport via the existing road. Staging is expected to occur at the barge landing site and on previously filled areas at the new airport. It is possible that the barge landing site may need to be expanded or improved to accommodate this project.

Wetland delineations at the project site were completed by ADOT&PF in 2000. DOWL Engineers will be conducting additional wetland delineations and a Phase I Site Assessment in the summer of 2005, if it is determined that the barge landing site needs to be expanded.

Preliminary Research Results

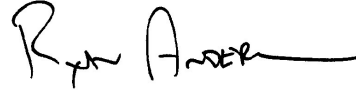
For preliminary research results of environmental resources in the project area, see Appendix A. A project website has been set up at www.dowl.com/projects/adotpfairport/index.htm.

In addition to identifying any concerns and/or issues your agency might have with the proposed project, the links on the project website identify agency specific information that is requested. Please go to the website and click on the organization that you represent. This will take you to a list of questions specific to your purview and a link that allows you to provide comments directly to our environmental consultant, via e-mail.

To ensure that all factors are considered in the Environmental documents, your comments are requested by July 21, 2005. If you have any questions regarding the project feel free to call our

Environmental Consultant, Kristen Hansen, at DOWL Engineers, 562-2000, or by e-mail at khansen@dowl.com. Comment letters can be sent to Ms. Hansen at 4040 B Street, Anchorage, AK 99503. Should you have any questions on the design of the proposed project, please contact me at 451-5129 or by e-mail at ryan_anderson @dot.state.ak.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ryan" and last name "Anderson" clearly distinguishable.

Ryan Anderson, P.E., Project Manager
Northern Region ADOT&PF Design

Attachments: Appendix A
Figure 1- Vicinity and Location Map
Figure 2 – Site Map

cc (via e-mail): Cindie Little, P.E., ADOT&PF Engineering Manager
Chuck Howe, Northern Region Environmental Coordinator
Bruce Campbell, ADOT&PF Environmental Analyst
Katrina Moss, FAA, Northern Region Planner
Mathew Freeman, FAA, Northern Region Engineer
Kristen Hansen, DOWL Engineers