

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

DESIGN & ENGINEERING SERVICES DIVISION, NORTHERN REGION

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April 8, 2005

RE: Chalkyitsik Airport Improvements
Environmental Scoping
ADOT&PF Project No. 62597

To Whom It May Concern:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is soliciting comments and information on a proposal for improvements at the Chalkyitsik Airport. ABR, Inc.—Environmental Research & Services is assisting ADOT&PF with the preparation of the environmental document.

Existing Facility Description

Chalkyitsik is located in the eastern interior of Alaska on the Black River about 50 miles east of Fort Yukon (Figure 1). The village is approximately 170 air miles northeast of Fairbanks and 75 miles west of the US-Canada border (Section 12, Township 21N, Range 18E, Fairbanks Meridian).

The Chalkyitsik Airport consists of a lighted 4000-ft long by 75-ft wide gravel runway, a lighted 137-ft long by 35-ft wide taxiway, and a 225-ft long by 100-ft wide apron. The airport is located about 0.25 miles southwest of the village and is owned and operated by the State of Alaska. The airport is used as the major transportation and goods distribution center for the village.

Purpose and Need

The airport serves as the sole transportation link for the community. All mail, fuel, freight, and medical evacuations are via aircraft. Student athletes participating in interscholastic sports travel via air. Therefore, it is vital that this airport continues to safely serve the public.

The airport has several deficiencies:

- The airport gravel surfaces are thin and raveled.
- The school and housing are adjacent to the airport.
- A subdivision access road crosses just beyond the runway safety area causing the threshold on the northwest end of the runway to be displaced. This effectively limits the runway landing length from the northwest to 3,525-ft.
- The parking apron is small and congested and too close to the runway.
- The location of structures and the parking apron limit the approaches to visual flight rules.

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- When large cargo aircraft are parked on the small apron they obstruct the airspace.
- The lighting system has outlived its useful life, and is becoming prone to outages that can severely limit operations during the winter when daylight is limited.
- Airport land interest is inadequate to support an aviation support area where hangars and airport businesses would operate. It is also inadequate to support low visibility approaches.

Proposed Action

The proposed action entails shifting the existing airport runway approximately 2,500-ft to the southwest along the same alignment and developing a new apron area, with alternative locations for the apron on either side of the runway. The gravel surface course will be replaced at the same time. This shift in location will accommodate runway protection zones designed for low visibility approaches and permit full use of a minimum of 4,000-ft of runway from either direction. This shift will also increase the separation distance from the school and housing, making for a safer airport environment. The parking apron will be a minimum of 250-ft by 400-ft and it will be offset from the runway centerline at least 700-ft. This location would allow the large cargo aircraft currently serving the airport to park and not penetrate the airspace. A 50-ft wide taxiway within a 120-ft safety area will connect the new apron to the runway. The wider dimensions would serve the larger aircraft more safely especially during icy, windy conditions. The airport lighting system would be replaced. Additional land would be acquired to protect the airport from incompatible land uses, allow low visibility approaches, and provide a functional area for airport businesses to develop.

Materials sites for the proposed project have not been finalized. Several materials sites along the Black River and one adjacent to the airport runway will be evaluated by ADOT&PF in spring 2005 (Figure 3).

The project will be developed pursuant to the 2003 *Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Impacts to Wetlands and Other Aquatic Resources, Mitigation and Airport Improvement Projects in Alaska*.

Preliminary Research Results

In 2004, ABR, Inc. conducted a study that included classification and mapping of wetlands using aerial photography, a field survey to verify wetland and upland boundaries, functional assessments of each wetland type, mapping of vegetation and habitats, and an evaluation of habitat values for selected wildlife species. These data will be used to assess impacts to wetlands and other wildlife habitat. The wetlands report will be available in April 2005. Wetlands were delineated in the project area (Figure 4).

Results of a preliminary research on natural resources in the project area are provided in Appendix A. To ensure that all factors are considered in the environmental document (an environmental assessment), your comments are requested no later than May 7, 2005. Below is a list federal, state, and local entities from which we are requesting input. Please click on the organization that you represent. This link will take you to a summary of pertinent findings and a list of questions specific to your agencies purview.

ADEC	ADF&G	ADNR-OHMP	ADNR
Native Corporations	Tribal Organizations	BLM	SHPO
FAA	USACE	NMFS	USEPA
USFWS	Coastal District	City and Village Governments	Historic Foundation
Local and Regional Organizations			

Project Schedule

The project is scheduled for construction funding in the Federal fiscal year 2007.

Written comments may be submitted to Betty Anderson, ABR, Inc., P.O. Box 80410, Fairbanks, AK 99708-0410 or via e-mail to banderson@abrinc.com. All comments are requested by **May 8, 2005**.

If you have any questions regarding the project feel free to contact our Environmental Consultant, Betty Anderson, at ABR, Inc., at 455-6777, or by e-mail at banderson@abrinc.com. Should you have any questions on the design of the proposed project, contact Cindie Little, Project Manager, at 451-2284 or by e-mail at Cindie_Little@dot.state.ak.us.

Sincerely,



Cynthia M. Little, P.E.
Engineering Manager
Northern Region ADOT&PF Design

- Links: Agency Links
Figure 1 – Location and Vicinity Map
Figure 2 – Project Layout
Figure 3 – Possible Materials Sites Map
Figure 4 – Wetlands Map
Appendix A

cc: Cindie Little, P.E, ADOT&PF Engineering Manager
Bruce Campbell, ADOT&PF Environmental Analyst
Betty Anderson, ABR, Inc., Project Manager
Katrina Moss, FAA Planner, Airports Division, 222 W 7th Ave., Box 14, Anchorage, AK 99513
Matt Freeman, FAA Engineer, Airports Division, Box 14, 222 W 7th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99513