

Kodiak Airport Runway Safety Area EIS Meeting Notes

Name of Meeting: Airport EIS Public Meeting

Date of Meeting: September 19, 2007; 10:00 a.m.

Location of Meeting: Sun'aq Tribal Center, Kodiak

Notes Compiled By: Sheri Murray Ellis, EIS Consultant Team

Disclaimer: These notes represent the interpretation of statements made and questions raised by participants in the public meeting. They are not presented as verbatim transcriptions of the statements and questions, but as summaries of the point of the statement or question as understood by the note taker.

GENERAL NOTES:

Wanda Katelnikoff of the Sun'aq Tribe started the meeting and offered a welcome to the people present. Brad Rolf and Katrina Moss then introduced themselves and Gary Lincoln (ADOT&PF project manager) and noted the presence of other consultant team members in attendance. Mr. Rolf then began the PowerPoint presentation explaining the EIS process, the proposed action, possible alternatives to the proposed action, the types of studies that are being conducted, the basic content of the EIS, and the next steps. Questions and comments were offered throughout the presentation by audience members. These questions and comments are summarized below.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

Comment (provided directly to note taker and not in the open forum): I am concerned that this project (the runway safety area enhancement) is related to the rocket launch complex and is being done to serve them and that is why this is being pushed forward now.

Response: The runway safety area (RSA) project is in no way related to the rocket launch complex. The mandate to bring RSAs up to FAA standards is a nationwide mandate that applies to all commercial airports in the United States. There is a big push across the nation now to look at all such airports and bring any deficient safety areas up to standards if possible. The timing for why we are looking at Kodiak now has to do with the fact that the airport sponsor, the ADOT&PF, completed their master plan and has requested the FAA consider if their proposed project to bring the airport into compliance with FAA RSA standards is eligible for federal funding.

Question: Does the figure (in the PowerPoint presentation and handout) show only the top of the RSA? Because there would have to be a fill slope of some kind and that would mean the footprint would be bigger on the ocean floor.

Response: That is correct. The figure only shows the top of the RSA. We don't know yet what the slope of the fill would look like, what its angle would be, or if vertical sheet pile would be used, so that is not shown on the figure.

Question (Stacy Studebaker): Have you considered other safety alternatives instead of fill? I have talked to pilots who say lights on the end of the runway would be more useful.

Response: That is something we can look at, but that would not change the need for runway safety areas. The safety areas do not give pilots any better visibility and they would not change the conditions under which aircraft could land on the runways. It would not improve those conditions, but it should not make it worse either.

Question (Stacy Studebake): Could you move the runway to the south toward the Coast Guard base and away from the Buskin?

Response: That is an alternative that we will consider.

Comment (Iver Malutin): I've talked to about 30 people since our Elders's meeting yesterday and everyone is adamantly opposed to extending the runway 18/36 toward the Buskin (River). We used to fish by the Salvation Army area and then the government came in and moved us out of there, so we went to St. Paul Harbor, and then we got moved out of there. So, now we go to the Buskin. If we get moved out of there we will have to go even further away, maybe to Pasagchak and that will be hard on people. Also, thank you for meeting with us. This is the best project I have seen as far as bringing the information to the people and asking for our comments.

Response: N/A

Comment (Patrick Holmes): Most Kodiak people do their seining right off the end of the main east-west runway (07/25), right under where your extension would go.

Response: N/A

Comment: We do not know which direction the fish would move after you build this. Where would we have to go?

Response: N/A

Question: Could you bring in bigger aircraft after this project?

Response: No. This project would not change the type or number of aircraft that can use the airport. Planes that can operate there today would still be able to operate in the future.

Question: Would this change the minimums for landings...could planes come in during worse weather?

Response: No. This project would not change the minimums or make it possible for aircraft to land during worse conditions.

Question: On the figure in the presentation and handout, what is a "localizer," and what does "displaced threshold" mean?

Response: The localizer is the piece of equipment at the base of Barometer Mountain on the opposite side of the road from the airport. It is used for horizontal alignment for planes approaching the runway.

A displaced threshold is where the FAA puts a mark on the runway pavement somewhere other than the exact runway end (end of pavement) and identifies to pilots that they cannot land before that mark.

Question: On the buffer zones, will there be larger areas or larger safety zones where people can not go?

Response: Right now the only place you can not go is on the RSA surface. That would probably be the same case in the future. We will have to look at safety and security as part of this project, but we do not know exactly where the fence might go yet.

Question: When you are on the Buskin beach fishing, how high would the RSA be? What would it look like?

Response: We are working on visual simulations as part of the EIS. This week we are gathering information from what are called key observation points, places where people would be likely to see the airport safety areas, and we will be doing some simulations to see what the view would look like from those points if the project is built.

Question: In the EIS do you look at secondary impacts such as where you are going to get the armor stone? We will not have to go through a separate process for that, will we?

Response: Yes, we will be looking at secondary impacts. We are required to look at potential fill sources to the extent we can. However, the FAA can not direct a contractor to get the stone from those sources.

Question: Are you looking at fish migration along the coast line and what the impacts might be on the Russian River, American River, and Salomie Creek?

Response: We are doing fish studies and looking at how they use the waters in the study area, but we did not know specifically which rivers we should be looking at for migrating fish. Thank you for the information.

Comment: I would like to reiterate the comment about lights on the runway. They would be a big help to a lot of people.

Response: N/A

Question (Ed ?): Are you aware how much that river (the Buskin River) and the beach have changed in the last 20 years? It used to be to the south and has moved to the north.

Response: We have gathered a lot of information from air photos, photographs, and maps showing how that the river mouth has changed. We are also gathering information from eye witnesses such as yourself, so any information you can provide would be appreciated.

Comment: If we got to the point of fill being recommended for the extension, regardless of how much that would be, it would have to be barged in from somewhere else. I do not think most people know that we do not have any sources on the island.

Response: That is correct. There are no local sources for the armor stone. There are three types of materials needed for the fill, and only some of it may be available locally.

Question: What would it take, how much of an extension, to bring the small runway (11/29) up to par to match the main runway and use it for the main runway?

Response: An estimated 2,000 to 3,500 feet

Comment (provided directly to the note taker and not offered in open forum): I suggest you look at what they are doing in Europe with using sloped runways that slope upward to slow down planes.

Response: That may be an alternative that gets considered in the EIS.

Comment/Question (Patrick Holmes): An old-timer asked me to ask if you could put an underpass for cars at the west end of the main runway (07/25) and have the RSA go over the top of it. That way you could move everything to the west and not have fill in the water.

Response: That could be an alternative we consider in the EIS. We would have to take into consideration whether moving everything to the west would change the decision point at which pilots have to decide whether or not to actually try to land on that runway, because the runway would be closer to Barometer Mountain. It could make the decision point further away, which could mean fewer flights could get in during adverse weather. But we can look at that alternative.

Follow-up Comment: If the approach was bad and they had to decide further out that they could not come in on the main runway, they could use the alternate runway (18/36).

Question: I understand the “why” behind this—the federal mandate—but could you put accidents at our airport into perspective? How many accidents have happened?

Response: To our knowledge there have not been any accidents at Kodiak Airport involving runway safety areas. However, the national standards requiring RSAs are based on the average of accidents across all commercial airports in the national system. They are not intended to respond to a specific accident that happened at a specific airport in the past.

Question: Are you looking at this type of thing (RSAs) at other airports in the Gulf of Alaska and is anyone saying to (the political powers) that we really need to look at the No Action Alternative if there are severe impacts to the environment and subsistence?

Response: Yes. RSA projects are being studied at several other airports in Alaska. The FAA is not only looking at Kodiak.

Comment (Iver Malutin): In making your final analysis of impacts on resources in the area, you have to ask the question, “who does this benefit?” Just because this is a federal mandate does not mean we should not question that mandate. Also, you will have to get all of the analysis from ADF&G and from NMFS for the halibut.

Response: N/A

Comment (Iver Malutin): When I worked on the Exxon oil spill project up north I had a friend who had a lot of clams in the water outside his cabin. The oil spill impacted the sea otters elsewhere, and they moved over to where my friend lived and took all of the clams. If you take away their habitat and food, the marine mammals will move elsewhere and would impact things there at the new location.

Response: N/A

Comment (Patrick Holmes): Peter (Murray?) did some studies of Dolly Varden and saw that the ones from the Russian River, Salonie Creek, and other areas were migrating up the Buskin to the lake. You might want to try to track down that study. I do not know if you can find it, it was done about 30 years ago.

Response: N/A

Question: If you extend the safety area out there, will it scare away spawning fish? They are pretty easily spooked now.

Response: That is definitely something we will have to consider in our analysis.

Comment/Question: This is the only EIS I have seen for the Airport. I have a copy of a defense agency EA for mobile sensors that says there would be some at the airport—one on the ground and one in the air. This is connected with the missile defense project, and it seems like the ends of the RSAs would be ideal places for them to put those sensors. Is that project going to be included in this EIS? Would there be another EIS done for those sensors? You should look up that EA.

Response: That project is unrelated to the EIS the FAA is currently preparing, and this is the first we have heard of it. The FAA does not allow anything more than three inches tall and frangible in the RSAs, so those sensors could not be put on the ends of the RSAs. We'll try to track down a copy of that EA because we will need to include that information as part of our cumulative impacts analysis in the EIS. Thank you for bringing it to our attention.

Question: You have spoken about surface and above surface studies. What about below the surface if you have to dredge?

Response: We are doing some geotechnical studies as part of the EIS.

Question: When will you be back in town next to give an update to the public? Would you be willing to do a presentation to the State Parks Commission?

Response: We expect to be back in town early next year for an update. Yes, we would be happy to meet with the Commission. If anyone feels like there is a group with whom we should meet, please, let us know and we will try to arrange for that.

Follow-up Comment (Patrick Holmes): If you go to the Commission you should talk more about Section 4(f) since that applies to public recreation areas and requires that impacts to them be avoided.

Comment: You should get in touch with Oliver Holmes(?) at ADF&G. He is on the Subsistence Advisory Council.

Comment: You should contact Bob Foy (Kathy Foy's husband). He did studies for Tanner crab nurseries in Chiniak Bay and it could be of use to you. You should get the information from him. His phone number is (907) 481-1711.