

# King Salmon Airport Master Plan Update

Project No. SFAPT00545



## Open House No. 1 Summary

### Meeting Information

Thursday, May 22, 2025, from 12:00 – 2:00 PM

Presentation at 12:15 PM

Bear Trail Lodge

Mile 1 Bear Trail, King Salmon, Alaska 99613

A link to view the presentation online was shared to the project website.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in coordination with DOWL, hosted a hybrid open house to introduce the master plan update and gather input for the issues and needs development at the King Salmon Airport (AKN). Participants who attended the open house in person were welcomed at the sign-in table, where they were invited to sign in and receive a project fact sheet. Meeting materials included an aerial roll plot of the airport and project boards detailing key issues, project schedule, the 2001 AKN Master Plan recommendations and implementation, and project team contact information. Online attendees were directed to the project website to access project information.

Twenty-nine (29) individuals attended the open house in-person, including members of the project team, and four (4) people joined the presentation online.

### Project Team Attendees

**Courtney Kreis**, DOT&PF Project Manager

**Floyd Wilson**, DOT&PF Airport Manager

**Jill Melcher**, DOT&PF Planning Chief

**Sharon Clark**, DOT&PF Superintendent

**Spencer Gates**, DOT&PF Maintenance & Operations

**Melanie Bray**, DOT&PF Environmental

**Sharyn Augustine**, DOT&PF Leasing

**Olivia Orsborn**, DOT&PF Leasing

**Melissa Osborn**, DOWL Project Manager

**Tom Middendorf**, DOWL Aviation Planner

**Sarah Guedea**, DOWL Aviation Planner

### Advertising

#### Alaska Online Public Notice/ Facebook Page

DOT&PF published a meeting notice on the State of Alaska's Online Public Notice platform on April 22, 2025. The notice remained publicly available until it was archived on May 23, 2025. In addition, DOT&PF promoted the open house via their Facebook page on May 12, 2025.

#### Email Notification

Email announcements were distributed via Constant Contact to the contact register on April 28 and May 19, 2025. These emails included details about the open house, participation instructions, and a short introductory video created by the project team.

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| <b>Flyer</b>              | Meeting flyers were posted in high-traffic community locations throughout King Salmon, including the library, post office, grocery store, and airport. Flyers were also provided to airport managers at nearby airports for distribution and display. |
| <b>Newspaper</b>          | Meeting notices were printed in the <i>Anchorage Daily News</i> on May 11 and May 18, 2025, and in the <i>Bristol Bay Times</i> on May 22, 2025.                                                                                                      |
| <b>Radio</b>              | A radio advertisement aired on KDLG from May 14 to May 22, 2025, informing listeners about the upcoming open house and how to participate.                                                                                                            |
| <b>Introduction Video</b> | A short video introducing the project and explaining how to engage and provide feedback was created for the open house. The video was shared in the May 19 reminder email and posted on the project website.                                          |
| <b>Project Website</b>    | The project website was regularly updated with open house details, meeting materials, and links to engagement tools, including the introduction video.                                                                                                |

## Presentation

### Introduction

The presentation began promptly at 12:15 p.m. with a welcome from Courtney Kreis, DOT&PF Project Manager, who acknowledged that this was the first of three planned public meetings to be held on-site. She thanked the community for the strong turnout, noting it exceeded expectations and reflected how much people care about the future of the airport.

She then offered a land acknowledgment, recognizing that the meeting was held on the traditional homelands of the Yup'ik and Alutiiq peoples. She highlighted the name King Salmon as a reminder of the resources that have sustained Indigenous communities for generations and emphasized the importance of honoring the cultural heritage and continued contributions of Native people in the region.

Courtney shared virtual meeting details, noting that future meetings would also include an online option. Participants were reminded that microphones and cameras were off by default, and that the meeting was being recorded with a summary to follow. She encouraged public input, with comment sheets available in the room and a QR code linking to an online comment form. Community feedback was emphasized as essential to the planning process.

She then shared a safety minute. Courtney reminded participants to report wildlife sightings near the airport, especially moose and bears, as this data supports safety and planning decisions. She also noted the regional concern of volcanic ash, which can impact visibility and aircraft operations, as well as the

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challenges posed by rapidly changing weather conditions such as fog, wind, and sudden ice. Finally, she acknowledged the airport's vital role in supporting access, medical travel, and community connection, reiterating the team's commitment to honoring local cultural values throughout the planning process.

Courtney explained that the project logo was created through a student design contest with the Bristol Bay Borough School District. Three finalists were chosen, and one design was selected to represent the master plan. She emphasized how meaningful it was to involve students and noted that the logo reflects the community-centered focus of the project. The student who created the winning design was present at the meeting.

### Airport Master Plans

Melissa Osborn, DOWL Project Manager, explained that airport master plans are required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and guide long-term airport development. The plan documents current conditions, identifies needs, and outlines infrastructure improvements based on the types of aircraft using the airport. A key part of the plan is the Airport Layout Plan (ALP), which shows existing facilities and long-term goals. This helps prioritize future projects as conditions and usage change.

Melissa noted that the Airport Layout Plan is supported by a narrative report, which the team is updating. This report identifies what's working, what isn't, and what changes are needed to meet FAA standards. The master plan provides a 20-year outlook, helping prioritize projects and maintain eligibility for federal funding. It also guides land use by mapping out areas for aeronautical and non-aeronautical activities to avoid conflicts and improve efficiency.

### Funding

Melissa explained how airport funding works, noting the difference between typical airport systems and Alaska's approach. In most states, airports create a master plan and work directly with the FAA to fund projects using a mix of entitlement and discretionary funds. Entitlement funding is based on passenger and cargo activity, while discretionary funding depends on FAA priorities. The FAA usually covers 90 to 95 percent of project costs, with local agencies paying the rest.

In Alaska, the funding process is different because the state manages over 200 airports. DOT&PF pools FAA entitlement funds and distributes them based on overall system needs. After the King Salmon Airport Master Plan is completed, its projects will be submitted to the Airport Project Evaluation Board (APEB), which meets throughout the year to score and prioritize projects statewide. This means even high-priority local projects may be delayed if other airports have more urgent needs.

Melissa also explained that the FAA retains authority to direct funding toward safety-related projects over other types, such as terminal improvements. FAA funding is tied to grant assurances, which are federal conditions that the state agrees to when accepting money. This includes maintaining certain

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operational standards and ensuring that all land use, leasing, and tenant activities are aligned with FAA-approved plans.

### Schedule

Melissa explained that the master planning process takes about 18 to 24 months and is still in its early stages. The team is on site to host the meeting, tour the airport, and gather input from tenants and the community. They are also developing an aviation forecast to evaluate current and future aircraft operations. This helps identify the airport's critical aircraft, which influences FAA design standards like runway length and spacing. Melissa noted that Alaska has some unique exceptions to those standards and welcomed further discussion with interested attendees.

The forecast will be completed later this summer, after which the team will identify facility needs, develop project priorities, and invite the community to review and comment. The team plans to return by the end of the year to share findings and gather more input. That feedback will help shape a draft ALP and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), broken into short-, mid-, and long-term phases. A final visit will follow to present the draft plan and collect final comments before submitting it to the FAA for approval.

### Plan Overview

Sarah Guedea, DOWL Aviation Planner, added that as the planning process continues, the project team is eager to hear from anyone who uses or interacts with the airport. She emphasized that community perspectives are essential, especially from those who may not have attended previous planning efforts. Sarah acknowledged that much of the airport infrastructure and layout was shaped by decisions made decades ago, and this is an opportunity to rethink and plan intentionally for the future. She invited attendees to speak with the team directly following the formal presentation, whether to share feedback, ask questions, or discuss specific issues.

### Key Issues

Tom Middendorf, DOWL Aviation Planner, explained that a key first step in the master plan is identifying problems at the airport. The team has been gathering input through interviews and welcome more feedback. While the plan will include many needed projects, not all will be funded, so documenting priorities is important for future opportunities.

Tom shared several key issues identified so far. A potential project is a new snow removal equipment building (SREB) and relocated airport fence, which is mostly funded and expected in the next three to four years. Other potential projects include expanding the terminal and apron to ease summer congestion, as well as improving parking and drop-off areas.

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He also discussed the potential for a parallel taxiway and noted summer congestion on aprons, where passengers may not have clear paths to the terminal. The team is considering whether aircraft that park overnight should be moved away from the terminal apron.

Additional issues include maintaining runways and navigational aids, high demand for lease lots with road and apron access, and coordination with the U.S. Air Force to ensure their needs are reflected in the plan.

### 2001 AKN Master Plan Recommendations

Tom reviewed the 2001 airport master plan and shared what has been accomplished since then. Completed projects include resurfacing the main runway and terminal apron, expanding the runway safety area, adding taxiway connectors, land acquisition, GPS approach installation, and improvements like windsocks and a blast pad on Runway 12.

He noted that many recommended projects were never completed due to funding limits, and several will be re-evaluated in the current plan. These include potential parallel taxiways, improved radar coverage, expanded aprons and lease lots, parking upgrades, and road realignment near the terminal and general aviation (GA) aprons. Although the road shift would be complex, a draft concept already exists.

Tom also mentioned ongoing infrastructure needs, such as better water and sewer service, a possible helipad, and more space for GA. Floatplane and boat traffic conflicts were a past concern, and while recent feedback suggests the situation has improved, the team still wants to hear from the community.

### Active DOT&PF Projects

Tom shared an overview of the active DOT&PF projects at King Salmon Airport. A major project is the construction of a new four-bay SREB, along with a relocated security fence. The new fence may open up secured space for future lease lot development. Upgrades to the entire airport security fence and gates are also being designed.

Other upcoming work includes rehabilitating aprons and taxiways, with early plans targeting the GA and Terminal aprons, and Taxiways D, G, and C. Tom noted that while details are still being finalized, maintenance is needed, especially given that the Terminal Apron was last resurfaced about 15 years ago.

Planned upgrades also include replacing lighting at the aprons and on both runways. Runway 18/36 will be resurfaced. Runway 18/36 has known surface issues due to high water tables and subgrade problems.

Tom highlighted the need to identify the airport's critical aircraft, as FAA design standards for runway size and safety depend on the type and frequency of aircraft using the airport. The upcoming Runway 18-36 rehabilitation will be guided by those standards to allow the runway to be safe and functional for long-term use.

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### Next Steps

Melissa concluded the presentation by outlining next steps in the master planning process. The team is currently focused on identifying issues, collecting data, and evaluating what's working at the airport. After their site visit and community input, they'll return to assess existing facilities, determine eligibility under FAA standards, and begin shaping improvement options.

Once the aviation forecast is complete, they'll define facility needs and develop design alternatives. An aeronautical survey is scheduled for this summer to help identify obstructions and guide future improvements. A draft CIP will be created, organizing proposed projects into short-, mid-, and long-term priorities.

Melissa emphasized that public input is welcome at any time, not just during scheduled meetings. She encouraged attendees to reach out with questions, concerns, or suggestions as the plan evolves. To stay informed, attendees were directed to the project website, where updates, maps, and presentation materials are posted.

To wrap up, Sarah opened the floor for questions and offered flexibility for attendees to either stay in the main room or move into smaller breakout conversations if they preferred one-on-one discussion.

### Summary of Question-and-Answer Segment

**Q:** One participant asked what the acronym ARFF stood for.

**A:** Melissa responded that it stands for Aircraft Rescue Firefighting.

**Q:** A participant noted that the slide on 2001 recommendations incorrectly shows that work was completed to connect taxiway D to runway 36. In reality, taxiway D parallels runway 36 and connects to taxiway C.

**A:** Melissa responded by thanking the participant for the clarification.

**Q:** A participant asked for more discussion on how the airport might better integrate operations between floatplanes, boats, and skiffs, given that they all operate on the Naknek River. They referenced past incidents and near-misses involving these users and asked whether any additional planning or coordination is being considered.

**A:** Tom shared that recent conversations with floatplane operators suggest conditions have improved, though safety concerns remain. Some floatplane pilots mentioned that when winds dictate, they take off and land at the bend in the river in the direction of a popular fishing area used by boats. Many pilots taxi to visually confirm this area of the river is clear before starting the takeoff. Pilots have better visibility when landing in this area.

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A past accident about 20 years ago increased community awareness, and conflicts appear to have lessened. Pilots, most who have operated in the area for many years, are familiar with operating on the river and what to do to avoid boat conflicts. Some new boaters operate each year, and if they are not familiar with floatplane operations, this can become a problem. When asked about adding annual meetings or maps showing operating areas and guidelines for pilots and boaters, pilots commented that those weren't necessary, citing the flexible nature of floatplane landing and takeoff areas due to wind and tides.

Tom noted that other airports like Fairbanks have structured floatplane channels, and less wind issues. The Naknek River's winds, tides, and shallow areas make rigid procedures less practical. Still, he invited attendees to share any ideas for improving floatplane/boat coordination as part of the master plan.

**Q:** A participant suggested that many floatplane conflicts likely stem from uninformed boaters rather than pilots. While pilots are generally familiar with shared-use dynamics, boaters often aren't. They suggested prioritizing boater education over pilot-focused measures.

Signage at docks and ramps and near the popular fishing area could help. Simple signage paired with public education could improve safety.

Several participants noted that boating, fishing, and floatplanes are an integral part of the local economy and lifestyle, and we should not discourage their operations on the Naknek River.

**A:** Melissa thanked participants for their input and confirmed that floatplane and boating activity are included in the master plan. These operations are part of the overall analysis of airport use, safety, and future planning.

**Q:** An air traffic control (ATC) representative explained that the river used by floatplanes is considered a non-movement area, so it isn't formally managed like a runway. Still, they try to assist when floatplanes are active, especially when boat traffic is present. They acknowledged that conditions in the area can become complex quickly.

**A:** Melissa acknowledged that although the team hadn't formally interviewed them yet, they suspected ATC plays a major role in why there have been fewer accidents in recent years.

**Q:** A participant asked if the team had considered how boat stacking on the river impacts safety. Boats often line up 10 to 12 deep near the bulkhead before and after heading out on the river. They noted this creates safety concerns for floatplanes if boats are stacked far into the river.

**A:** Melissa thanked the participant for bringing up the concern and suggested they connect after the meeting to discuss the issue further.

**Q:** A participant voiced support for adding boater signage and asked whether the planning team or the community would be responsible for implementation. They stressed the value of getting signs posted

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sooner rather than waiting for the full master plan to be finalized. Someone commented that their used to be some sort of sign or display at the river.

**A:** Courtney acknowledged the suggestion and noted that if the community wanted to move forward with posting signs this summer, that would likely be the fastest and most effective approach, since the formal planning and approval process can take time.

**Q:** A participant highlighted ongoing safety concerns from boat and jet ski activity in the river. Large vessels create wakes that can remain dangerous even after they've moved downstream, especially on calm days when swells are hard to see. Some boats also perform rapid maneuvers during sea trials, adding to the unpredictability. Jet skis were flagged as a risk due to their high speed and erratic movements—often launched near the main boat ramp by teenagers. While floatplane pilots try to avoid these areas and taxi in carefully, the participants stressed this is a safety issue.

**A:** Sharyn Augustine from DOT&PF Leasing asked whether the airport might consider taking jurisdiction over the river used by floatplanes. She noted this could lead to restrictions, like limiting recreational boat use in that area. One idea she raised was designating one side of the river for boats and the other for planes.

**Q:** Participants cautioned that removing boats from the river would likely face strong community opposition. Instead, they recommended better separation and management of floatplane and boat activity. They explained that boats often use the middle of the river because it's the deepest part, especially at low tide, while the far side is too rocky for use.

**A:** Melissa agreed that both boats and planes are vital to the community, which is why shared river use is a complex issue still being worked through in the master plan. She also thanked the group for suggesting signs and local outreach, noting a thoughtful, practical step toward improving safety.

**Q:** A participant voiced support for establishing a no-wake or low-wake zone in the river. They agreed with earlier concerns about large boats creating hazardous wake and emphasized that the area near the floatplane operations is especially vulnerable.

**A:** Melissa agreed with the suggestion and noted that she has seen signs used in other floatplane areas that establish no-wake zones or caution other users about aircraft activity on the water. She acknowledged that signage like this could be a helpful way to alert boaters and promote safer shared use of the river.

**Q:** A participant noted that boat congestion often occurs on state land and suggested mailing reminders to boaters who use the area. They felt direct outreach could help raise awareness about safe operations around floatplanes, beyond relying just on signage.

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**Q:** A participant appreciated the ideas shared but raised concerns about enforcement. They asked how rules like no-wake zones or floatplane safety signs would be enforced, who would be responsible, and what systems would ensure compliance.

**A:** Melissa acknowledged that enforcement is an important and complex question that deserves further research. She noted that responsibility likely falls across multiple agencies or entities, making it a shared issue rather than something owned by a single organization. She committed to looking into it further and following up with more information as the planning process continues.

## Summary of Comments

- **General Aviation Needs:** At the roll plot station, local pilots identified potential areas on the airfield that could serve as a gravel landing strip for GA aircraft. Many GA pilots expressed support for a dedicated strip and shared frustration that runway shoulders, classified as non-movement areas, cannot be used for landings while the ATC tower is in operation.
- **Floatplane Safety and Signage:** Floatplane operators pointed out specific areas on the roll plot where additional signage could improve safety, including suggestions for posted instructions to boaters to slow down or the establishment of no-wake zones.
- **Utilities for River Tenants:** Tenants operating along the river raised concerns about the lack of water and sewer services. Current lease restrictions prohibit septic and well systems, and tenants expressed confusion about the reasoning behind the constraint. They emphasized that it limits operations and hinders opportunities for business expansion.
- **Request for Small Aircraft Hangars:** There was strong community interest in developing small, personal aircraft hangars (e.g., T-hangars). Several local business owners indicated they would lease such space for protection from the elements and to support light aircraft maintenance.