

# Yakutat Airport Master Plan

Project No. SFAPT00709/3-02-0327-26-2025



## Open House No. 1 Summary

### Meeting Information

**Wednesday, February 18, 2025, from 12:00 – 2:00 PM**

**Presentation at 12:30 PM**

**Yakutat High School, Auditorium**

**429 Forest Hwy, Yakutat, AK 99689**

**A link to join the meeting virtually was shared to the 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 Yakutat Airport (YAK). 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 fact sheet. A presentation was given by the project team and was followed by questions and answers. Attendees were then welcome to view materials and talk with the team one-one-one. Meeting materials included an aerial roll plot of the airport and project boards detailing key issues, schedule, the relevant DOT&PF family of plans, 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 and sixteen (16) people joined the presentation online, including members of the project team.

### Project Team Attendees

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

**Melanie Bray**, DOT&PF Environmental

**Sharyn Augustine**, DOT&PF Leasing

**Olivia Orsborn**, DOT&PF Leasing

**Joshua Stuckey**, DOT&PF Airport SSO

**Bobby Lekanof**, DOT&PF Airport Manager

**Samantha Spencer**, DOT&PF Statewide

Aviation

**Melissa Osborn**, DOWL Project Manager

**Emily Creely**, DOWL Environmental

**Jessica Della Croce**, DOWL Aviation  
Planner

**Tammi Schrier**, DOWL Aviation Planner

**Talli Vittetoe**, DOWL Public Involvement

**Steve Schell**, AAI Architect

**Bethany Murray**, AAI Architect

**Robin Reich**, Solstice Environmental &  
Public Involvement

**Rebecca Marks**, Solstice Environmental &  
Public Involvement

### Advertising

**Alaska Online  
Public Notice/  
Facebook Page**

DOT&PF published a meeting notice on the State of Alaska's Online Public Notice platform on January 30, 2026. The notice remained publicly available until it was archived on February 19, 2026. In addition, DOT&PF promoted the open house on their Facebook page on February 10, 2026.

**Email Notification**

Email announcements were distributed via Constant Contact to the contact register on January 23 and February 11, 2026. These emails included details about the open house, participation instructions, and a link to the website.

**Flyer**

Meeting flyers were posted in high-traffic community locations throughout Yakutat.

# Yakutat Airport Master Plan

Project No. SFAPT00709/3-02-0327-26-2025



## Open House No. 1 Summary

- Newspaper** Meeting notices were printed in the *Juneau Empire* on February 7 and 14, 2026.
- Project Website** The website was updated with open house details, meeting materials, and links to engagement tools.

## Presentation

### Introduction

The presentation began promptly at 12:30 PM with a welcome from Robin Reich, SolsticeAK. She informed online participants that microphones and cameras were off by default, noted that the meeting was being recorded, and that a summary would be provided afterward. She then offered a land acknowledgment, recognizing that the meeting was held on the traditional homelands of the Yakutat Tlingit people.

Bobby Lekanof, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Airport Manager, provided a safety minute. He encouraged participants to report wildlife sightings near the airport, reminded residents to be mindful of aircraft noise and apron activity, and asked pilots to call Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) prior to landing. He concluded by noting the airport's vital role in supporting access, medical travel, and community connectivity.

Courtney Kreis, DOT&PF Project Manager, explained that the project logo was developed through a student design contest with the Yakutat School District, with one student's design selected to represent the master plan. She noted that the logo reflects the community-centered focus of the project and invited participants to congratulate the winning student. The winner was presented with a t-shirt featuring her logo design and a letter from the project team during an event with students held earlier in the day.

Courtney then facilitated introductions of the project team and invited participants to ask questions and speak with subject matter experts during the meeting.

### Airport Master Planning Overview

Courtney explained that airport master planning supports Alaska's broader transportation vision. She described resilience, redundancy, efficiency, modernization, and agility as key principles guiding the planning process. She also reviewed the DOT&PF family of plans and how they relate to the Yakutat Airport (YAK) Master Plan, describing the relationship between statewide plans, regional plans, and funding distribution plans.

Melissa Osborn, DOWL Project Manager, explained how airport funding functions. DOT&PF pools Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) entitlement funds and distributes them based on overall system needs. After the YAK 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. As a result, even high-priority local projects may be delayed if other

# Yakutat Airport Master Plan

Project No. SFAPT00709/3-02-0327-26-2025



## Open House No. 1 Summary

airports have more urgent needs. She explained that an airport master plan serves as a 20-year blueprint for airport development, identifying needed improvements and outlining potential implementation and funding pathways.

Melissa described the planning process, which includes ongoing public involvement. The team is currently documenting existing conditions and updating forecasts to identify current and future airport traffic levels and aircraft types. Next steps include determining facility requirements and developing and evaluating alternatives. Once alternatives are developed, the planning team will solicit public feedback on potential projects for inclusion in the final plan. The team will then prepare a draft plan for review at a third and final public meeting before finalizing the document. Melissa noted that this process typically takes 18 to 24 months.

Melissa explained that a master plan outlines a 20-year vision for the airport, guides capital improvements, supports funding requests, and engages airport users. However, a master plan does not guarantee project funding or construction, replace required environmental reviews, dictate agency or air carrier decisions, or serve as a fixed blueprint.

Jessica Della Croce, DOWL Aviation Planner, reviewed the planning area, noting that the master plan considers all airport facilities, not only the runways. She also provided an overview of the planning schedule, explaining that the project is currently in the existing conditions and forecast phase, initiated by the first open house.

### Key Issues

Jessica explained that the team has begun the planning process by reviewing issues identified in the previous master plan update completed in 2006. A standard component of master planning is evaluating the use and potential of existing infrastructure, including Runways 2/20 and 11/29 and associated taxiways. She also discussed opportunities to improve vehicle parking, access, and circulation at the airport. Jessica also described several issues relating to the entire airport, including:

- Aging infrastructure
- Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS) reliability
- Current and future planning and design continuity
- Fish-bearing streams and wetlands
- Historic resources
- Obstructions
- Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) and water contamination
- Power reliability
- Water, sewer, and utilities

# Yakutat Airport Master Plan

Project No. SFAPT00709/3-02-0327-26-2025



## Open House No. 1 Summary

### 2006 YAK Master Plan Recommendations

Jessica reviewed the 2006 Yakutat Airport Master Plan and summarized actions completed since that time. Implemented recommendations include development of a Wildlife Hazard Management Plan, vegetation removal, and construction of a full perimeter fence, which is currently in progress. She noted that several recommendations from the 2006 plan were not implemented and will likely be revisited as part of this update.

### Active Airport Projects

Emily Creely, DOWL Environmental Lead, provided an overview of active projects at YAK. The perimeter fence extension, gates, upgraded locking system, trench drain rehabilitation, and apron pavement are currently in early design. She noted that several members of the YAK Master Plan team are also involved in these efforts, which helps streamline coordination and allows consistency among projects, preventing design from getting ahead of planning.

### Next Steps

Melissa concluded the presentation by outlining next steps in the master planning process. In the summer, the project team will conduct a Cultural Resources Inventory and an Aeronautical Survey. Once the aviation forecast is complete, the team will define facility requirements and develop design alternatives. To conclude, Melissa shared contact information and opened the floor for comments and questions.

### Summary of Question-and-Answer Segment

**Q:** A participant mentioned the importance of preserving historical sites in the area. They also described airport facilities in need of replacement, such as electrical infrastructure. This participant described concerns with emergency response at the airport, including fire hydrants and emergency vehicle access. They expressed frustration with difficulty contacting supporting agencies and staff.

**A:** These concerns and the importance of preserving historical resources while addressing airport infrastructure and emergency response needs are acknowledged. The team is continuing to coordinate with relevant agencies and will consider these issues as part of the master planning process.

**Q:** A participant expressed pride in Yakutat's history of supporting military operations and noted the airport's potential strategic value. The participant suggested that the master plan consider and discuss potential future benefits to the military.

**A:** The Department of Defense is included on the contact list and will be coordinated as part of the planning process.

**Q:** A participant asked if broadband service to Yakutat might be included in the master plan.

**A:** The team would be happy to consider broadband utilities in the plan.

# Yakutat Airport Master Plan

Project No. SFAPT00709/3-02-0327-26-2025



## Open House No. 1 Summary

**Q:** A participant asked where the boundary of the extended perimeter fence will be.

**A:** The perimeter fence is currently being designed. The project team is evaluating location alternatives in coordination with the FAA. Community involvement was also noted as essential to ensure the planning team is aware of cultural considerations and community priorities.

**Q:** A participant asked if YAK usage has increased, noting more crowding in the terminal during summer months. Another participant added that parking is not regulated and access should be evaluated and improved.

**A:** This is good input, and master planning involves planning based on past and current conditions. It is not yet clear whether airport usage has increased but that the forecasts will provide a clearer understanding of future demand.

**Q:** A participant asked how the APEB operates, who is on the board, and how projects are chosen for advancement.

**A:** Projects are typically coordinated locally through the airport manager or through DOT&PF, which works with the FAA, engineers, and designers. The APEB consists of the three Alaska regional aviation planners, the DOT&PF Design Chief, FAA representatives, Statewide Aviation staff, and other DOT&PF representatives.

**Q:** A participant asked how project alternatives and land use are identified and informed by local input.

**A:** Community input gathered during public meetings may inform updates to the Airport Layout Plan (ALP), with coordination occurring with appropriate agencies before recommendations are finalized. The team explained that the ALP outlines future land use for both aeronautical and non-aeronautical purposes, with the goal of ensuring future airport needs are accommodated. If land is designated for aeronautical use, proposed leases or development must be evaluated for consistency with the planned use. The team also noted that public meetings provide an opportunity to understand current community needs, gather feedback on potential solutions, and present draft plans for review before finalization. Once projects are identified, they are evaluated and prioritized for funding by the relevant agencies. Inclusion in the master plan does not guarantee that a project will receive funding.

**Q:** A participant asked whether local tribes and communities are being consulted about cultural resources.

**A:** A meeting will be held with local representatives prior to and during the Cultural Resource Survey scheduled for the summer. The FAA added that government-to-government consultation letters will be sent in advance of the survey.

**Q:** A participant described the lack of trained maintenance staff in Yakutat to meet the needs of the airport, including electrical issues and ASOS coverage.

# Yakutat Airport Master Plan

Project No. SFAPT00709/3-02-0327-26-2025



## Open House No. 1 Summary

**A:** A previous plan recommended increased staffing and that similar considerations may be included in this update if future needs indicate.

**Q:** A participant asked how projects are reprioritized to avoid getting lost in the system over time.

**A:** The APEB process for prioritizing projects, which occurs approximately every four years. New project requests are evaluated in the context of the existing prioritized list. As projects are funded, constructed, or reprioritized, the board continually reassesses the remaining projects.

**Q:** A participant asked how funding at YAK compares to other larger airports.

**A:** Projects are scored based in part on the per capita population of the communities they serve, as well as alignment with statewide goals and programs. Funding is distributed through several categories based on criteria such as airport and community size, which helps ensure smaller projects and airports are considered alongside larger projects.

**Q:** A participant asked about the distribution of state and federal funding sources in Alaska.

**A:** Federal funding typically matches state funding at an approximate ratio of 95 percent federal to 5 percent state.

**Q:** A participant asked how funding levels are determined, and whether airline passenger traffic is a determining factor.

**A:** The planning process works to reconcile existing and forecasted conditions identified through local input with FAA requirements and guidance. There are several types of airport funding, including entitlement funds, which are allocated to airports based on existing and forecasted activity levels; discretionary funds, which the FAA allocates based on national priorities; and Alaska Supplemental Discretionary funds, which are designated specifically for projects in Alaska. Discretionary funding can help support projects that fall outside the scope of entitlement funding but are necessary for maintaining and improving airport infrastructure. While the FAA funds eligible projects and the State allocates its own funding, there is not a set budget for each individual airport. The State generally prioritizes projects based on safety, and the FAA works to fund as many eligible projects as possible.

**Q:** A participant asked for clarification about the Key Issues slide and whether certain items reflected current conditions or potential future needs.

**A:** The items referenced represent potential future issues identified for consideration during the planning process.

**Q:** A participant asked when the gate replacements are planned to be constructed and asked whether people will have access to land around the airport once the replacements occur.

**A:** Construction is currently anticipated around 2030, and a maintenance access road is being considered as part of the project. The team will also evaluate whether the road could accommodate other access needs.

# Yakutat Airport Master Plan

Project No. SFAPT00709/3-02-0327-26-2025



## Open House No. 1 Summary

**Q:** A participant requested the roads around the airport be left with existing access and not changed by further development.

**A:** This is good input and participants should share surface transportation concerns with other relevant planning efforts, such as the Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan.

## Summary of Comments and Questions

- **Airport Infrastructure and Maintenance:** Participants raised concerns about aging airport infrastructure, including electrical systems, fire hydrants, and emergency vehicle access. Commenters also noted the need for adequate maintenance staffing and technical expertise to support airport systems and operations.
- **Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation:** Participants emphasized the importance of preserving historic, military, and cultural sites in the Yakutat area. Community members asked how local tribes and communities would be consulted, and the planning team confirmed that coordination and consultation will occur during the Cultural Resource Survey process.
- **Airport Access, Parking, and Perimeter Fence:** Participants discussed airport access and circulation, noting crowding during peak seasons and concerns about parking management. Questions were also raised about the design and alignment of the proposed perimeter fence and the importance of maintaining community access around the airport and not increasing travel times to the Situk River.
- **Project Planning, Funding, and Prioritization:** Several participants asked how airport projects are identified, prioritized, and funded. Topics included the role of the APEB, funding sources, and how forecasts, FAA requirements, and community input inform long-term airport planning and development.