

Birchwood Airport Master Plan Update

Project No. CFAPT00354/AIP 3-02-0034-008-2018

Stakeholder Advisory Group Meeting #1

Prepared for Alaska Department of Transportation &
Public Facilities

*Presented and facilitated by HDL Engineering Consultants &
Agnew::Beck Consulting*

February 9, 2021; 1:30 – 4:30 PM



1:30-1:50 pm

Welcome & Introductions

Who's in the Room?



Land Acknowledgement

*Dena'inaq ełnen'aq'
gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu.* (Dena'ina)

Translation by J. Isaak and S. Shaginoff-Stuart

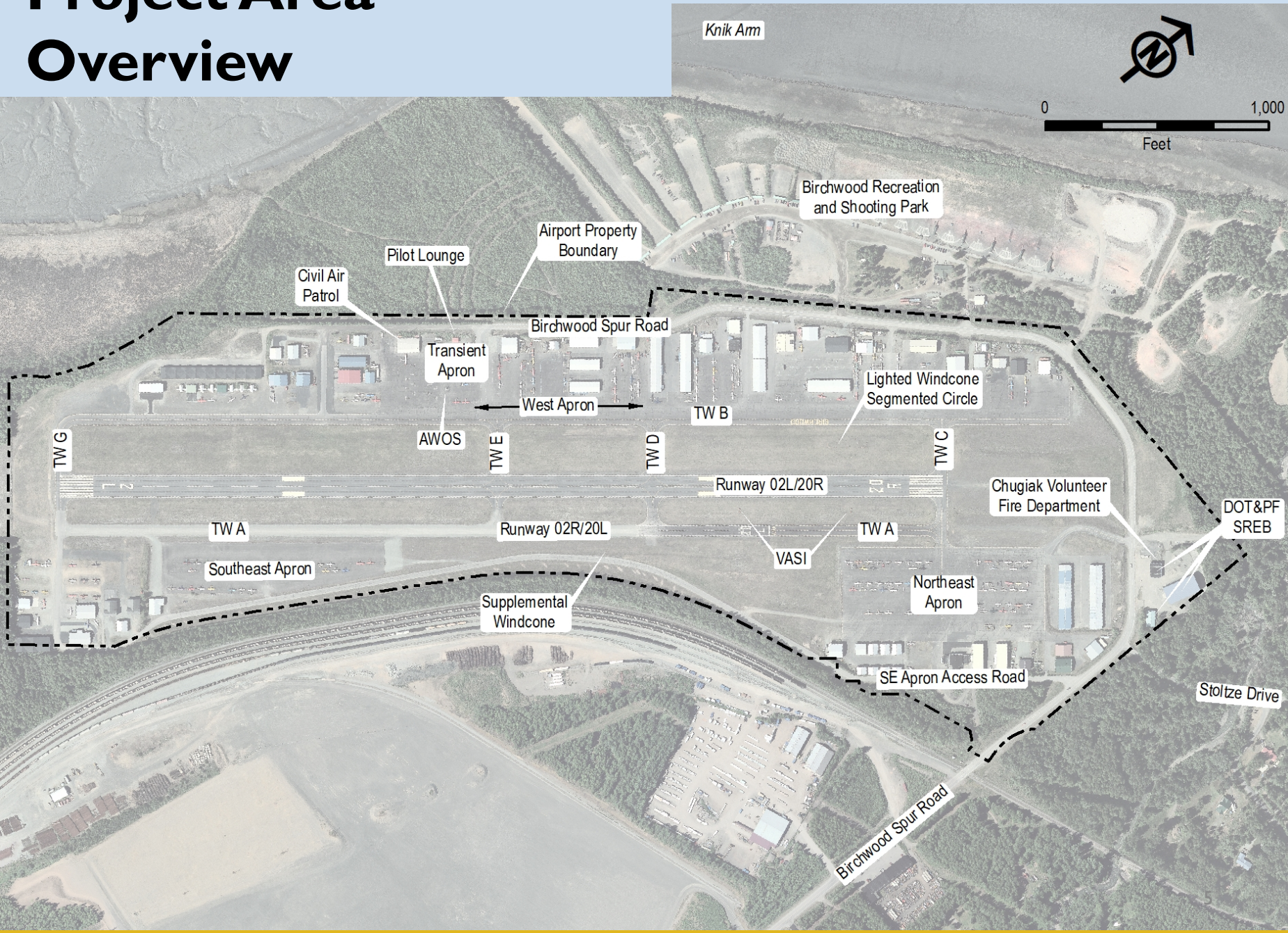
*I live and work on the
land of the Dena'ina.* (English)

A Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

<http://convention.myacpa.org/nashville2020/inclusion/land-acknowledgement/>

For more information:
<https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>

Project Area Overview



Project Purpose

To determine how the airport can best serve the future interests and needs of the flying public, aviation community, Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), and other stakeholders.



Project Schedule

Summer 2020

Reconnaissance

Current Conditions, Uses, Issues and Needs

Fall 2020-2021

Assessment

Airport Facilities, Airspace, Finances, Partnerships, Projected Use

Early 2022

Draft Plan Development, Release + Review

Preliminary Airport Master Plan Update, Layout, Aeronautical Survey

Summer 2022

Plan Refinement + Finalization

FINAL Airport Master Plan Update, Layout, Aeronautical Survey

Community involvement occurs throughout, including interviews, stakeholder working group meetings, and three public meetings:

- **winter 2021**
- **summer 2021**
- **fall 2021**

Meeting Purpose

- Review the project and purpose.
- Share what we've learned so far.
- Collect input from the SAG on emerging themes and findings.
- Prepare for Public Meeting #1.

General Meeting Guidelines

- Be respectful.
- Be positive and solutions oriented.
- Be clear and concise.
- Be specific.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms.
- Think creatively and strategically.

Online & Telephonic Meeting Guidelines

Please:

1. Follow Shelly's lead as the designated facilitator.
 - Throughout the meeting, SAG Members will have several opportunities to comment or ask questions.
2. Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
3. If you have joined by video, don't forget – everyone can see you 😊.
4. We will do introductions, but please repeat your name when it is your turn to comment or ask a question.
5. Please limit use of the Zoom chat space, unless prompted by a guiding question, or you're having a technical issue.

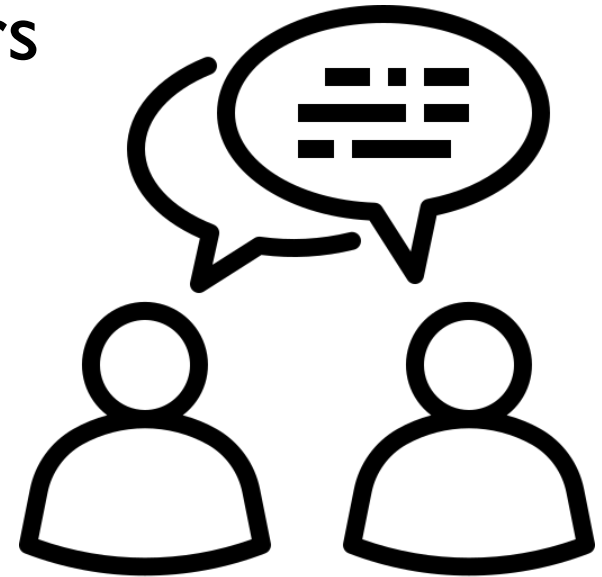
1:50 – 3:00 pm

What have we learned so far?

Interview Highlights: What we Heard

Conducted 35 interviews with:

- Pilots and other airport users
- Hangar owners
- Nearby business owners
- Business trade groups
- Flight associations
- Adjacent landowners



Interviews: Vision for the Airport

Stakeholders generally like the way the airport is today.

- Most stakeholders believe the **conditions will not change much** in the next 20 years to warrant significant changes to the airport.
- **Stakeholders**, especially pilots, **desire minimal change** to the existing airport.
- The **biggest concerns** are the airport moving to controlled airspace and any **changes that would negatively impact the current culture and familiarity of the existing airport**.

Interviews: What Stakeholders Value

Stakeholders want to preserve most aspects of the airport.

- Stakeholders have a **strong connection** to the airport.
- Airport users most appreciate the **easy access** to the airport and **uncontrolled airspace**.
- Users enjoy the **community feel**, and **accessibility to new, younger pilots**.
- Users appreciate the **low fees** and fear raising fees could price pilots out.

Interviews: What Stakeholders Value

*“We are **extremely lucky to have a public use airport in our community**, with a good runway. The **airport adds a lot to the community**, and many of the flight schools in Anchorage use Birchwood for training.”*

*“I live close by – easy choice for me. There are a couple mechanics there that I like working with. It’s a **non-towered airport with very few snow days that close me out**. (They) do a good job of keeping surfaces clear.”*

*“I like that it is **uncontrolled** and there are **enough services on the field that I can get my needs taken care of**.”*

Interviews: Areas of Improvement

Little to No On-Site Management

- When there is an operations/management issue, there is no **DOT&PF presence onsite**. It is unclear who the manager is and how to reach them.

Locked Gate

- The idea of **adding a locked gate has mixed support**. Some believe there needs to be more security to stop fuel theft, others think it would be an annoyance.

Keeping up with Growth

- Many pilots asked for more **tie-downs, electric outlets near the tie-downs** and **hangar space**.
- Some pilots want **more designated parking** while others said they can park at their tie-down.
- Pilots asked for a **new taxiway** between E and G.

*Also mentioned, but not within DOT&PF purview – **improve restroom facility***

Interviews: Areas of Improvement



“We have talked about the need to put in another taxiway between runway and taxiway halfway between E and G. There is a lot more traffic at the south end now that it is more built out. That would help not only us but all tenants to the south.”

Areas for Improvement

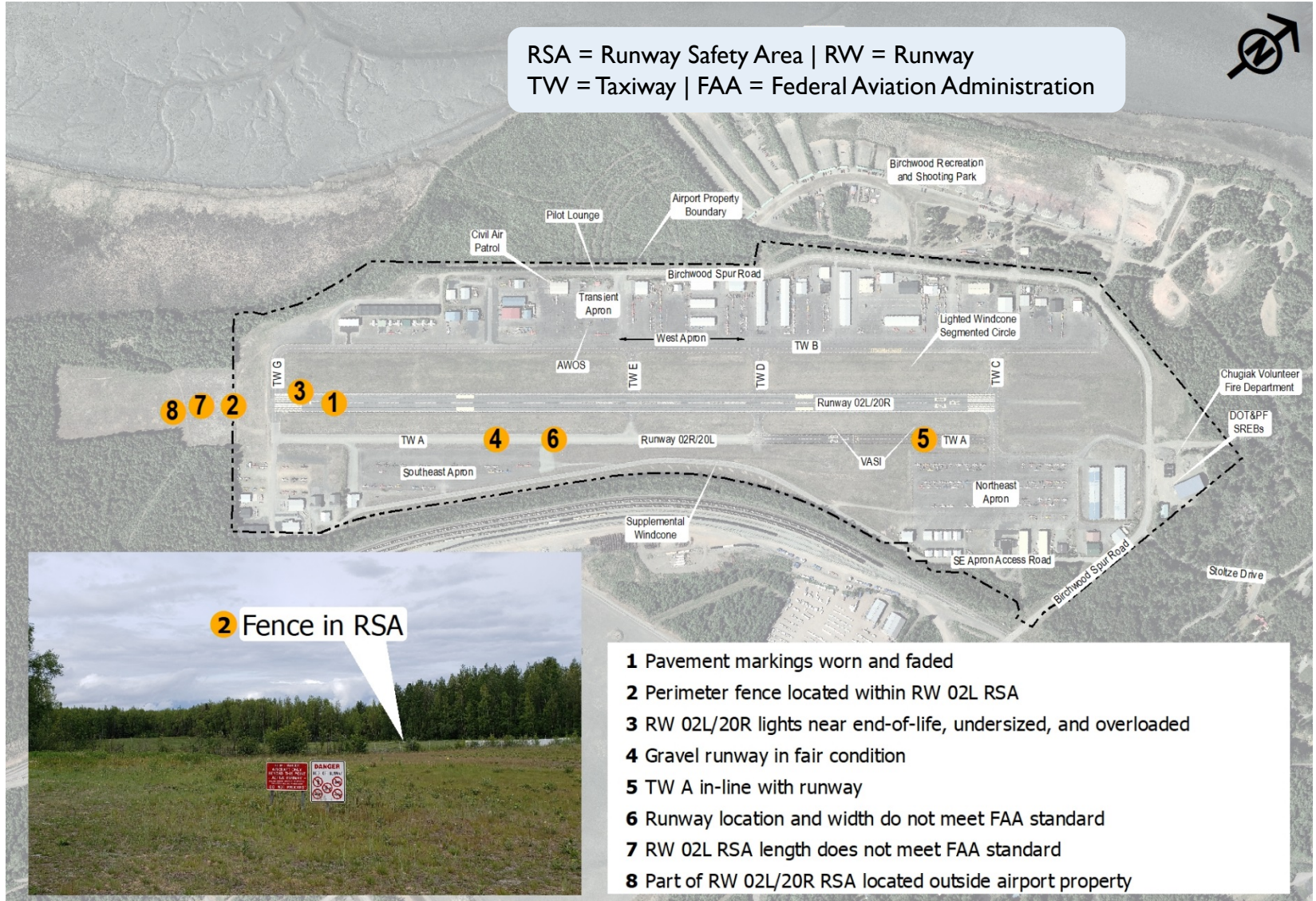
Airspace & Approaches

- Approach airspace is limited by JBER Special Use Restricted Area
- RW 02L/20R published instrument approach desired

JBER = Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson
RW = Runway

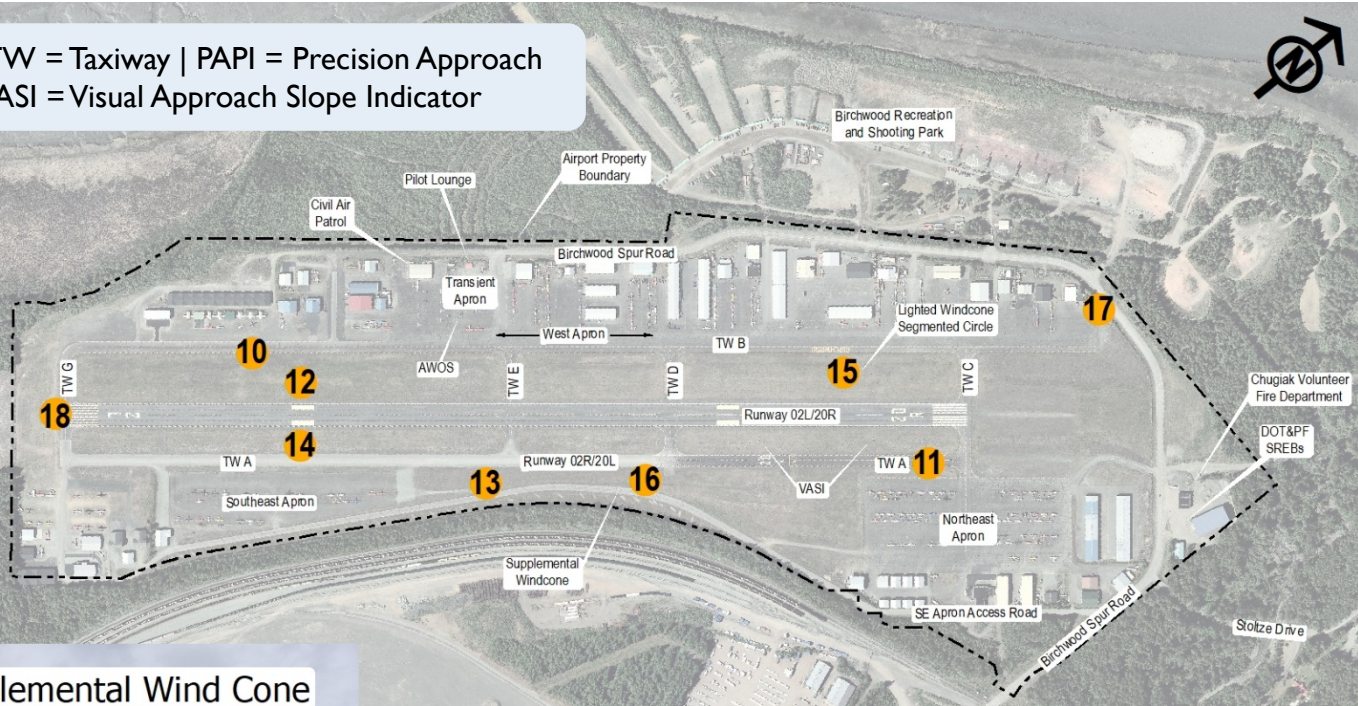
Areas for Improvement

Runways, RSAs, & RPZs



Areas for Improvement Taxiways & Visual Aids

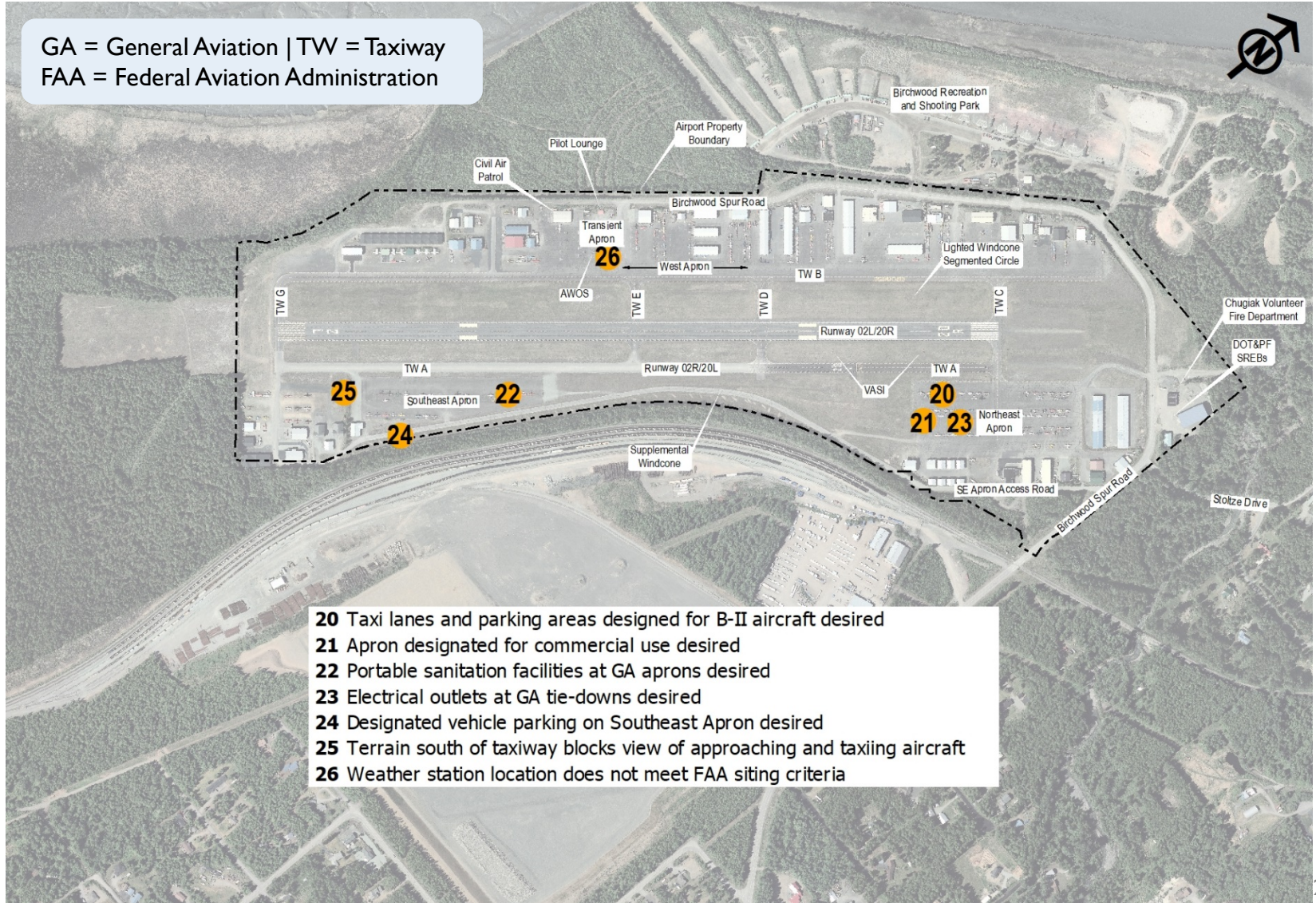
RW = Runway | TW = Taxiway | PAPI = Precision Approach Path Indicator | VASI = Visual Approach Slope Indicator



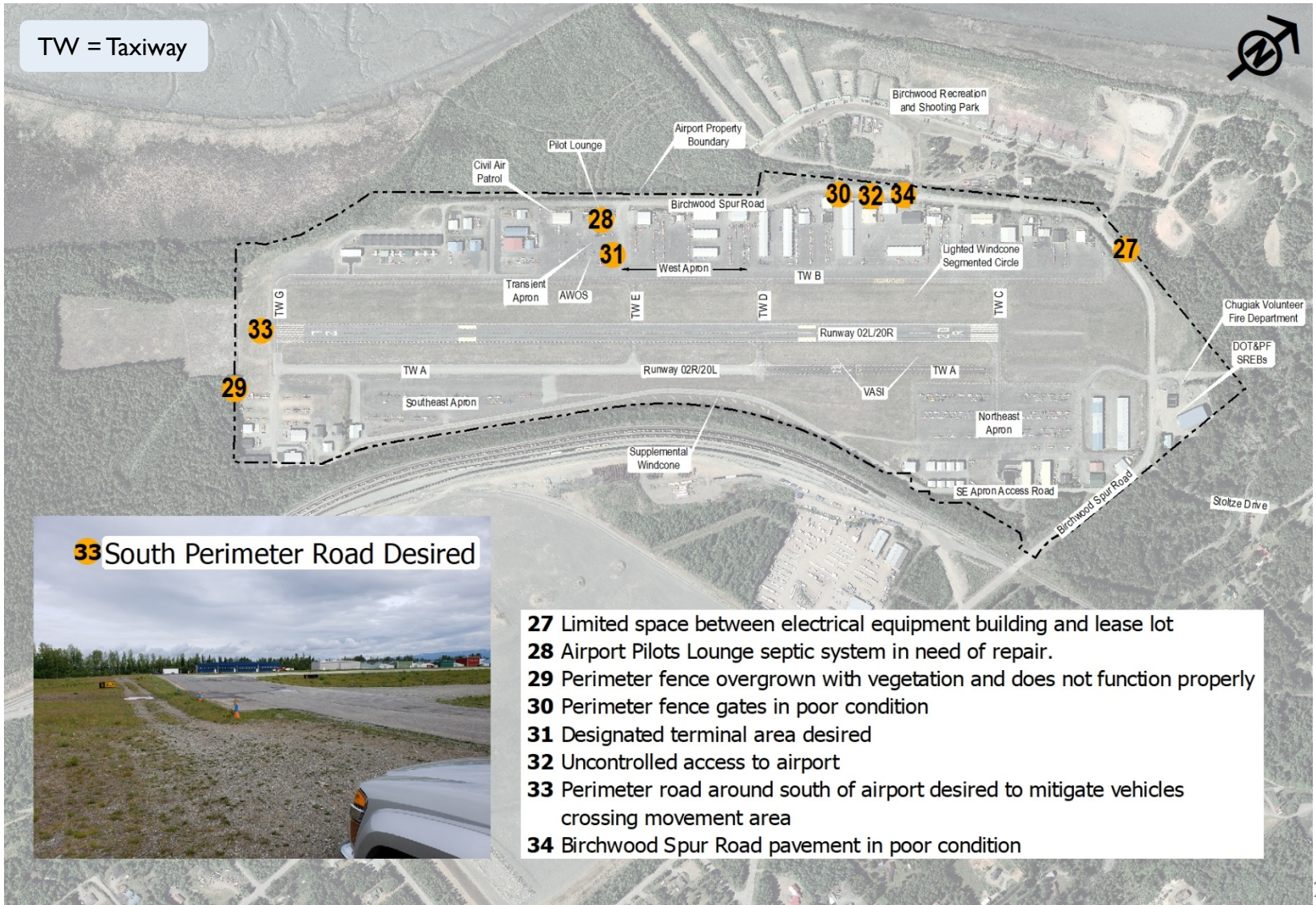
- 10** Lighting system near end-of-life, undersized, and overloaded
- 11** TW A pavement in poor condition
- 12** Connecting taxiway needed between TW A/B and RW 02L/20R
- 13** Parallel taxiway needed east of RW 02R/20L
- 14** Connecting taxiway needed north of Southeast Apron
- 15** Primary wind cone at end-of-life
- 16** Supplemental wind cone in poor condition and not properly sited
- 17** L-282 constant current regulators are single phase
- 18** RW 2L approach lights (PAPI/VASI) desired

Areas for Improvement

Aprons & Weather Equipment



Areas for Improvement Facilities & Access



Areas for Improvement

Safety, Airport Maintenance, & Airport Management

RW = Runway

- Pilots operating without broadcasting intentions
- **Simultaneous operations occur occasionally on runways**
- Trees obstruct clear approach to RW 02R
- More frequent and prompt snow removal on RW 02L/20R desired
- **Snow removal operations create snow piles and berms on lease lots and tie-downs**
- Airport users using Transient Apron without paying fee
- **On-site airport manager desired**
- Off-leash dog walking occurring on airport property
- **Increased non-airport traffic and theft reported in recent years**

Areas for Improvement

Land Use & Planning

GA = General Aviation

- Main runway extension desired
- **Separation of GA and commercial operations** with designated aprons desired
- **Better enforcement of vehicle and aircraft moving violations desired**
- **Concerns about management and maintenance with possible public-private partnership**
- Designated helicopter landing area separate from runways desired
- Civil Air Patrol glider activity ties up runway for long periods
- Concerns about access changes at the shooting range and Birchwood Spur Road
- **Additional lease and tie-down space desired**

Recap of Big Themes: Areas for Improvement

- No lease lots or hangar space available and nowhere on airport property to expand
- Anxiety about the public-private partnership
- Need for an onsite airport manager
- Gravel ski strip important
 - Recognize that configuration needs to be improved for additional safety and eligibility for FAA funding
- RSA issues prior to 02L and beyond 20R
- Unauthorized vehicle and pedestrian access presents safety hazards

Results from Initial Forecasts

- The Aviation Activity Forecast for operations is **based on observed and recorded aviation activity.**
- Aviation activity data was **recorded using a General Audio Recording Device (G.A.R.D.)*** between July 21 and August 16, 2020, and September 2 and October 2, 2020.
- **No changes to current use have been identified or forecasted.**

*The G.A.R.D. records radio transmissions and operations through radar surveillance based on active aircraft transponders and cross-references transponders with the FAA's Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) registry to identify the make and model of the aircraft.

3:00 – 3:30 pm

How will the Airport Master Plan address the financial sustainability of the airport?

Financial Plan

- The financial plan will address projected growth, funding needs and sources, and any proposed changes to lease rates or user fees.
- Birchwood's operating costs will be benchmarked against two other airports in the region to compare costs for similar levels of service.
- The plan will provide a cash flow forecast and a sensitivity analysis to evaluate sustainability.

Potential Public/Private Partnership



Today the airport is operated and managed by the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF).



Third party private management is being considered as part of this Master Plan Update.

Our Scope of Work

Potential Public/Private Partnership Exploration

1. Build from the **Financial Plan** component of the AMP which will:
 - Address projected growth, funding needs and sources, and any proposed changes to lease rates or user fees.
 - Identify gaps in revenue and provide a foundation for how to fill those gaps (a financial model or proforma).
2. Determine **possible management options** for a **possible public-private partnership** (“3P”) between DOT&PF any other 3rd party interest.
3. Compare management options and prepare a detailed **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats** and **feasibility analysis of a privately managed airport**. This analysis will:
 - Consider financial and other information about each management option as it relates to the AMP Vision and Goals.

Interviews: Potential Public/Private Ownership

- Airport users are frustrated with a **lack of communication from DOT&PF.**
- Users are interested in more attentive management but **concerned third party or private sector manager may increase fees.**

*“Currently, we do not have anyone we can go to if we want to see change at this airport. If something goes wrong, **we feel like we get the run around** from DOT&PF. There is no process or allowance.”*

“Cost is a huge issue – **don’t price us out of flying.** We want this to be a place where young people can come in and fly. If you make it cost a fortune, they won’t come in. Almost every place where DOT&PF handed over management to other entity, it results in higher/expensive fees – Palmer, Wasilla. Prices doubled in a year or two. People can’t afford that.”



3:30 – 3:40 pm

Break

3:40 – 4:10 pm

**Identify Frequently Asked Questions for
the Public Meeting #1**

Questions

- What questions do SAG members have that we have not yet addressed?
- What sort of questions should we anticipate at the public meeting?

4:10 – 4:30 pm

Next Steps and Wrap Up

Birchwood AMP: Our Timeline

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Immediate Next Step

Thursday, March 4th Public Meeting

- SAG feedback on proposed structure, agenda and participation
- How can we have a successful first public meeting?

Learn More & Contact Us

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/birchwoodamp/>

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