

**Turnagain Community Council
Board of Directors
c/o Breck Tostevin, President
3340 Knik Ave., Anchorage, AK 99517**

February 4, 2010

Mr. Brian Elliott
DOT&PF Environmental Manager
Preliminary Design and Environmental
P.O. Box 196900 - MS-2525
Anchorage, AK 99519-6900

**RE: Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport Runway 7R Extension Project
Draft Environmental Assessment, Project No. 53201**

Dear Mr. Elliott:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Turnagain Community Council (TCC), please accept the following comments with regard to the Environmental Assessment (EA) on the East/West Runway Extension proposal.

TCC recognizes the economic benefits to the community accredited to airport development and operations and the specific value attributed to the extension of the E/W runway. TCC generally supports the extension project.

First, we want to thank the State, airport and consultants for working with the Nordic Ski Association on the necessary rerouting of the Sisson Loop Trail that will have to be done as part of this project. We do want to reiterate our past comments stressing that every effort should be made to minimize tree and vegetation removal for the construction of the trail.

We also feel it is necessary to minimize tree and vegetation removal with regard to the construction of the runway extension and the associated navigational equipment that will be placed to the west on Heritage Land Bank (HLB) land. This section of HLB land not only will contain a portion of the rerouted Sisson Loop Trail, but a section of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail is located within this area and this trail is one of the premiere recreational assets in Anchorage. Trees provide essential viewsheds and buffering from nearby aviation operations and need to be maintained to the maximum extent possible. This land is not park land, as stated on page 99 of the Draft EA, but it is being used for recreational/park/natural open space purposes by both residents and visitors to the city. This area is also designated as Preservation and Conservation in the Anchorage Coastal Zone Management Plan. Because the placement of the towers in this area will not preclude recreational use, as much natural vegetation as possible should remain intact.

A related comment/question deals specifically with fencing: 1) TCC does not support fencing installed around the entire perimeter of the easement for the navigational equipment on HLB land and is glad to be assured that this is not part of the project. Page 94, Figure 6.11 shows the before and after visual for Key View 4. Why will the trees in this area be removed and where will the fencing shown on the after visual be placed? The associated text did not discuss View 4 specifically; the final EA should include the purpose for clearing this area and installing fencing. TCC's position is that, if at all possible, the tree clearing and fencing be removed from the project plan in this area.

One more comment regarding the use of HLB for park purposes: Figure 5.3 "Land Use & Recreation Areas" shows the Municipally-owned HLB land northwest and west of the E/W runways as "Transportation." Considering this runway extension project is acknowledging the existence of an extensive ski trail system and the necessary rerouting of the trail, as well as discussions regarding impacts on the Coastal Trail located within this HLB land, the figure should accurately reflect the actual land uses. TCC recommends another category be added to the legend: "Municipally-owned land being used as parkland." The aviation easement can still be shown in gray, but the rest of the HLB land shown as gray and white should be given this new category designation (a lighter shade of green would be appropriate).

As expressed previously by TCC, the final EA should include an analysis to determine if vibrations from heavy cargo landings taking place lower and closer to the coastal bluff as a result of the proposed runway extension will accelerate erosion of the area, which contains marginal soils. Erosion is currently taking place at Pt. Woronzof, where it has increased dramatically since the north/south runway extension was built and cargo traffic operation numbers rose significantly as a result. In addition to the environmental consequences, the Coastal Trail could be impacted to the point where it may have to be relocated to the east — which is what had to be done to a portion of the trail at Pt. Woronzof. The final EA would be incomplete if these potentially significant social and environmental issues are not addressed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this important document.

Sincerely,

Breck Tostevin
Turnagain Community Council President