

2.0 AIRPORT INVENTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter summarizes the existing infrastructure and operating conditions at Wasilla Airport, including facilities, visual and navigational aids, and airspace. The chapter also addresses relevant aspects of the surrounding community and presents findings from supporting analyses related to socioeconomic trends and land use, which provide additional context for future planning considerations.

HDL conducted an on-site inspection of the airport on October 21, 2022, and carried out follow-up site visits and coordination with maintenance personnel on November 9 and 10, 2022. During the inspection, HDL interviewed the City Roads and Airports Maintenance Supervisor, Keith Jones, to gain a better understanding of the operations and maintenance of the airfield. Additional interviews took place with tie-down holders, hangar associations, existing airport users, and based and non-based commercial operators.

2.1 AIRSPACE

The FAA classifies the airspace at Wasilla Airport as Class G uncontrolled from ground level to 700 feet above ground level (AGL) and Class E controlled starting at 700 feet AGL. Class A controlled airspace is present above 18,000 feet mean sea level. The Wasilla airspace abuts Class E controlled airspace for the Palmer, Big Lake, and Willow Airports, which also start at 700 feet AGL. The airspace outside of these airports is Class E controlled airspace, starting at 1,200 feet AGL.

Figure 2-1 depicts the airspace surrounding the Wasilla Airport (FAA, 2025a). Class E controlled airspace requires aircraft operating under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) to have air traffic control clearance. Aircraft operating under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) do not need to be in contact with air traffic control.

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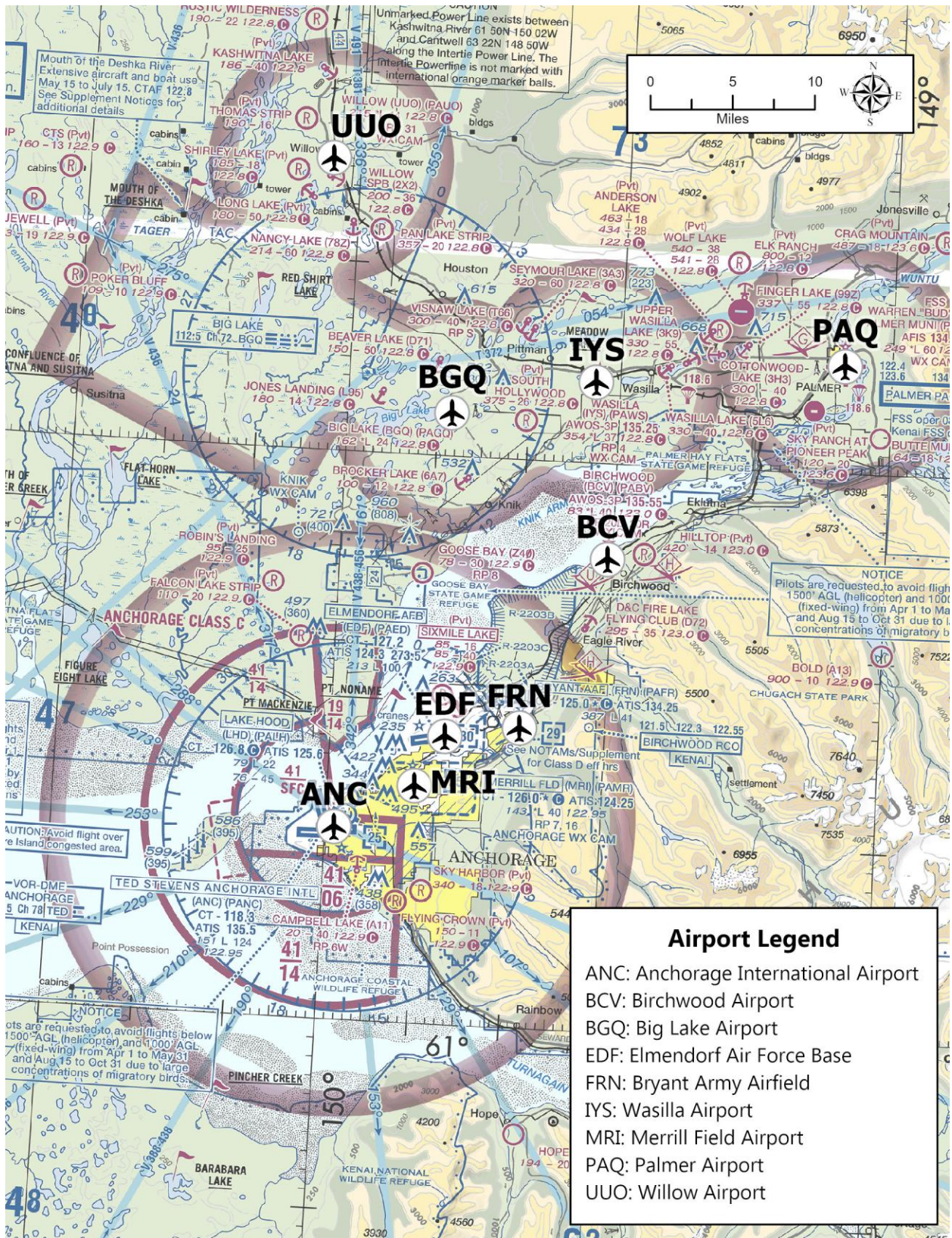


Figure 2-1: Airspace Sectional Chart

2.1.1 AIRSPACE SURFACES

The FAA regulates airport airspace under Title 14 CFR Part 77 (14 CFR 77, 2010), threshold siting under Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5300-13B (FAA, 2022b), and terminal instrument procedures under FAA Order 8260.3F, *United States Standard for Terminal Instrument Procedures* (TERPS) (FAA, 2023a). These rules and regulations establish imaginary airspace surfaces and standards for determining obstructions to air navigation. The geometry and slopes of imaginary surfaces are governed by the airport category (Utility or Other than Utility), the type of instrument approach procedures planned, and visibility minimums. Table 2-1 summarizes existing airspace surfaces in place at the Wasilla Airport based on the Aviation Activity Forecast included in Section 3.0 of this Master Plan and shown on the ALP in Appendix A.

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Table 2-1: Existing Airspace Surfaces

	RUNWAY 04 (NPI ¹ , 3/4-mile minimum, Small/Utility ²)	RUNWAY 22 (NPI ¹ , 3/4-mile minimum, Small/Utility ²)	RUNWAY 04S (Visual, Small/Utility ²)	RUNWAY 22S (Visual, Small/Utility ²)
Primary Surface (Part 77)	500 wide centered on runway to 200' off runway end		250' wide centered on runway to 200' off runway end	
Approach Surface (Part 77)	5,000' outward and upward at 34:1 from Primary Surface width: 500' – 2,000'		5,000' outward and upward at 20:1 from Primary Surface width: 250' – 1,250'	
Approach Surface (AC 150/5300-13B) Surface 2	N/A		2,250' outward and upward at 20:1 from inner width of 250' at runway threshold to width of 700'; 2,750' outward and upward at 20:1 maintaining 700' width width: 250' – 700'	
Approach Surface (AC 150/5300-13B) Surface 5	10,000' outward and upward at 20:1 from inner width of 400' at Primary Surface to outer width of 3,400' width: 400' – 3,400'		N/A	
Approach Surface (AC 150/5300-13B) Surface 6	10,200' outward and upward at 30:1 from inner width of 275' at threshold to outer width of 1,520' width: 275' – 1,520'		N/A	
Transitional Surface (Part 77)	7:1 from Primary and Approach Surfaces		7:1 from Primary and Approach Surfaces	
Horizontal Surface (Part 77)	10,000' arc, 150' above airport elevation		5,000' arc, 150' above airport elevation	
Conical Surface (Part 77)	4,000' at 20:1 outward and upward from horizontal surface		4,000' at 20:1 outward and upward from horizontal surface	
Departure Surface (AC 150/5300-13B)	Section 1: 12,152' outward and upward at 40:1 from inner width of 75' to outer width of 6,587' Section 2: Extends from each runway edge, laterally to a point 500' from runway centerline and 150' above threshold elevation. Surface follows Section 1 at a 40:1 slope until leveling out at an elevation of 304'. Outer width is 7,512'		N/A ³	

¹ Non-precision instrument (NPI) runway applies to runways with an approved instrument approach procedure

² Small/Utility runways are intended for use by aircraft less than 12,500 pounds gross weight

³ Runway departure threshold siting applies to runways used for instrument operations. Runway 04S/22S has no published procedures.

2.1.2 OBSTRUCTIONS

Title 14 CFR Part 77 provides guidance for identifying obstructions to air navigation consisting of the primary, approach, transitional, horizontal, and conical surfaces. The TERPS provides standardized methods for designing and evaluating instrument flight procedures (IFPs) by specifying the minimum measure of obstacle clearance to provide a satisfactory level of vertical protection from obstructions to IFR procedures and establishes the standard takeoff and landing minimums for instrument runways. FAA's AC 150/5300-13B outlines the criteria for evaluating runway approach and departure surfaces for runways serving only visual operations and provides basic planning surfaces for instrument runways to protect select TERPS surfaces.

HDL's 2025 field surveys identified the following airspace obstructions, as reflected in the updated ALP (Appendix A). The location of the existing penetrations to the Runway 04 and Runway 22 approaches are shown in Figure 2-2 and Figure 2-3, respectively.

Runway 04/22: The ALP denotes six groups of trees penetrating the existing Part 77 surface.

- Runway 04 Approach: Approximately 1,100 feet prior to the threshold and 350 feet northwest of the extended runway centerline, a group of trees penetrates the 20:1 approach surface to Runway 04 by up to 3 feet.
- Runway 22 Approach: There are four groups of trees beyond the Runway 22 threshold that penetrate the 20:1 approach surface by as much as 33 feet. The first group is located approximately 200 feet beyond the threshold and 400 feet northwest of the runway centerline. The second group is located approximately 870 feet beyond the threshold and 240 feet southeast of the extended centerline. The third group extends from approximately 680 to 1,890 feet beyond the threshold and spans the entire width of the approach surface. The final group extends approximately 1,340 to 1,800 feet beyond the threshold and is located on the extended centerline.
- Other Part 77: There are two groups of trees on the northeast side of Runway 22 that penetrate the 7:1 transitional surface by as much as 24 feet. The first group is located approximately 200 feet beyond the threshold and 415 feet northwest of the extended centerline. The second group is a continuation of the trees penetrating the 20:1 approach surface, extending from approximately 290 to 790 feet beyond the threshold and from the edge of the approach surface to 575 feet northwest of the extended centerline. The transitional surface prior to the Runway 04 threshold has no penetrations.

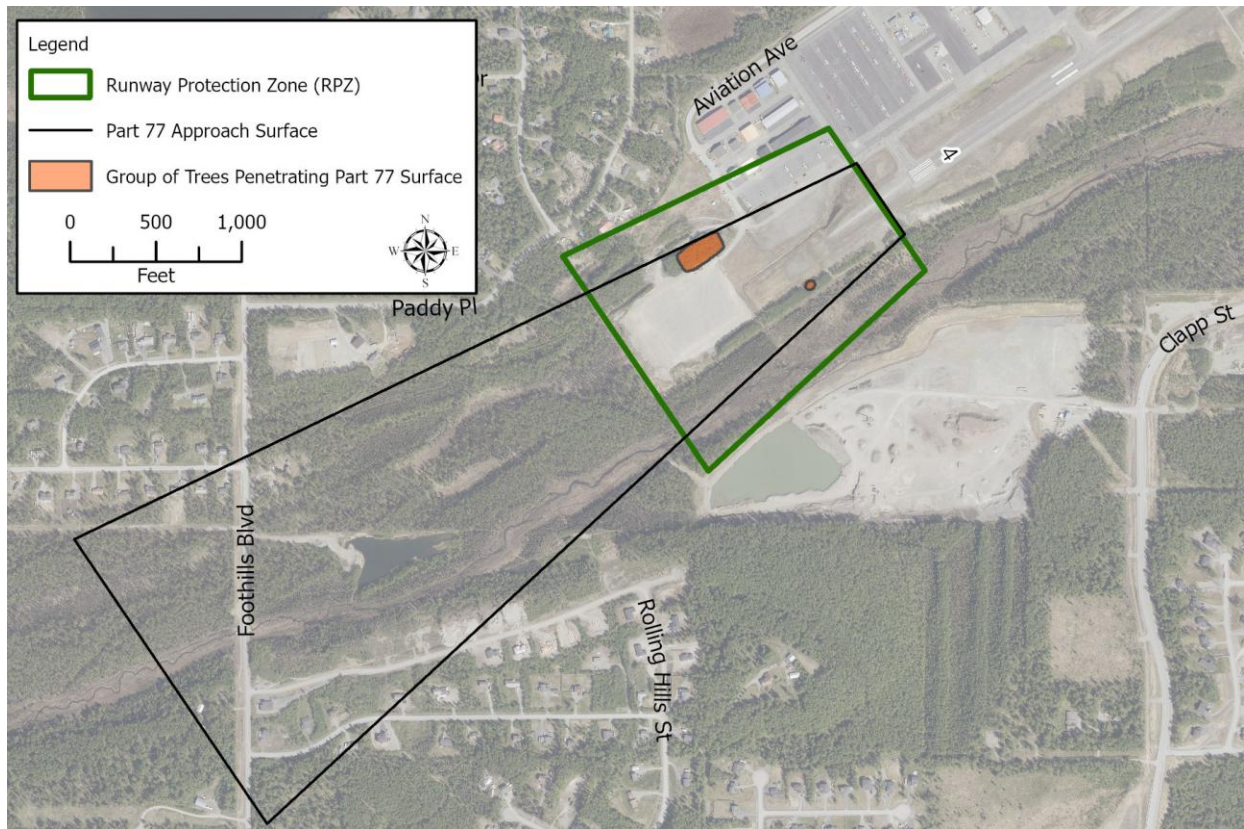


Figure 2-2: Runway 04 Part 77 Surface Penetrations

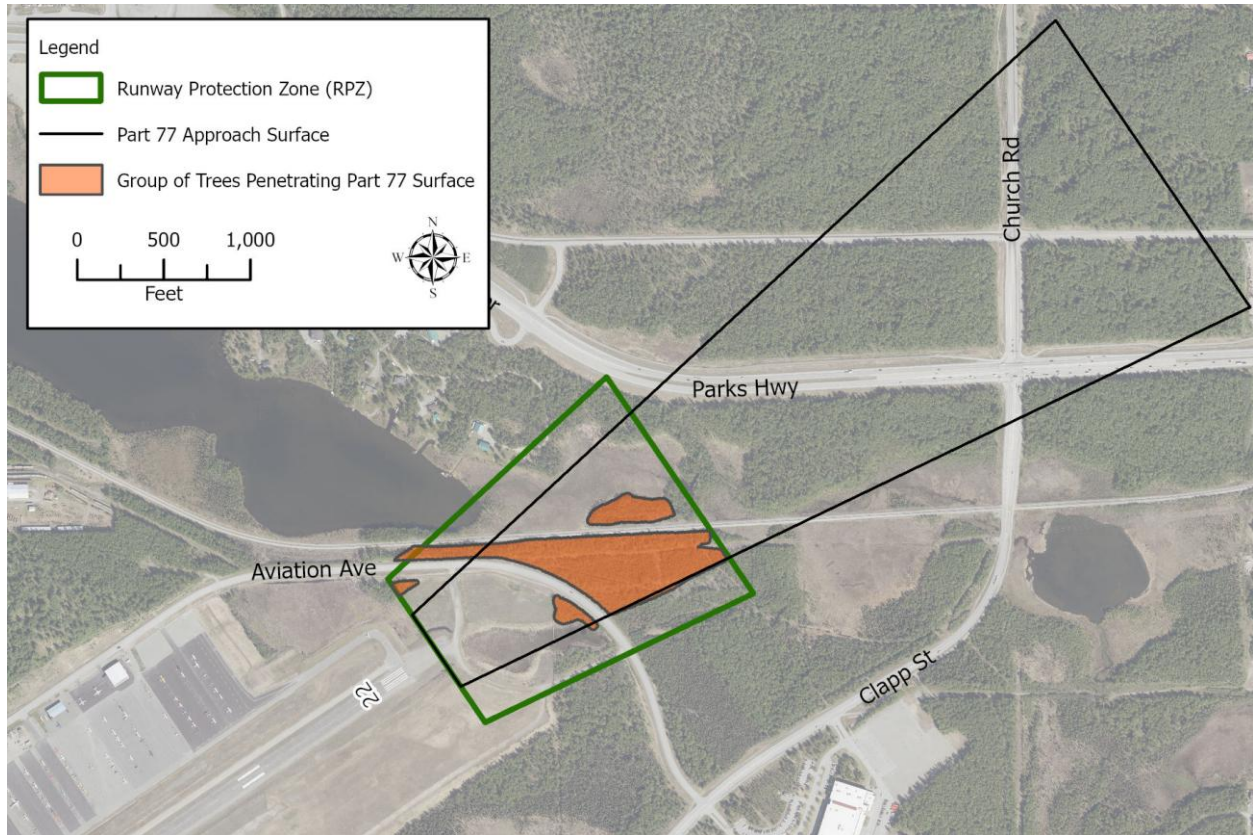


Figure 2-3: Runway 22 Part 77 Surface Penetrations

2.1.3 TRAFFIC PATTERNS

The airport does not have an Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT). Pilots voluntarily report their position on a common traffic advisory frequency (CTAF) of 122.8 megahertz (AirNav, 2023). Fixed-wing aircraft use a rectangular pattern to the south of the airport. Runway 22 has a standard left-hand traffic (aircraft turns to the left) pattern, and Runway 04 has a non-standard right-hand traffic (aircraft turns to the right) pattern.

At uncontrolled airports, FAA regulations recommend that helicopters avoid the flow of fixed-wing aircraft because of the helicopter's slower speed. Helicopters may use a direct path to or from the airport or a mirror image of the fixed-wing pattern on the opposite side of the runway, with turns opposite of fixed-wing aircraft to avoid the flow of fixed-wing traffic. The normal helicopter pattern altitude is 500 feet AGL.

During interviews and public comment, users reported the following safety issues related to the existing use and traffic patterns:

- Pilots occasionally operate at the airport without broadcasting their intentions on the radio.
- Simultaneous operations have been witnessed on both runways.
- Pilots occasionally land short of the threshold on Runway 04.

2.1.4 INSTRUMENT APPROACH AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

FAA's Air Traffic Division developed two non-precision area navigation global positioning system approaches for the airport.

The NPI approach with vertical guidance (APV) consists of a holding pattern followed by a straight-in approach and published missed approach procedure to Runway 04. Runway 22 has an NPI APV consisting of a straight-in approach with a circling missed approach.

Figure 2-4 and Figure 2-5 show the published approach for Runway 02 and Runway 22 (AirNav, 2023).

The NPI for Runway 22 is an RNAV (GPS) procedure with a straight-in approach for Category A and B aircraft. The Runway 22 approach has visibility minimums published at $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, with varying decision altitudes and visibility minimums depending on aircraft category and equipment. A circling option is available to Runway 04; however, circling is not applicable to Runway 04S and 22S. This approach does not allow for helicopters to use standard visibility reduction criteria below $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. The missed approach includes a climbing right turn to Big Lake (BGQ) VORTAC.

The NPI for Runway 04 is an RNAV (GPS) procedure and includes a holding pattern followed by a straight-in approach for Category A and B aircraft. The Runway 04 approach has visibility minimums published at $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, with varying decision altitudes and visibility minimums depending on aircraft category and equipment. Circling options are available to Runway 22 but not allowed to Runways 04S and 22S. The missed approach for this procedure is a climbing left turn to the BGQ VORTAC.

Both approaches are restricted further if the local altimeter is not available. Barometric vertical navigation and visual descent points cannot be used if no local altimeter is available. Aircraft are instructed to use Palmer altimeter settings. When using Palmer altimeter settings, aircraft must increase decision altitude by 46 feet, minimum decision altitude by 60 feet, and all visibilities by $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile for Runway 04 and $\frac{1}{8}$ of a mile for Runway 22.

Runway 04 and Runway 22 also have published Obstacle Departure Procedures (ODPs) with trees identified as penetrating up to 60 feet into the departure surface of both runway ends.

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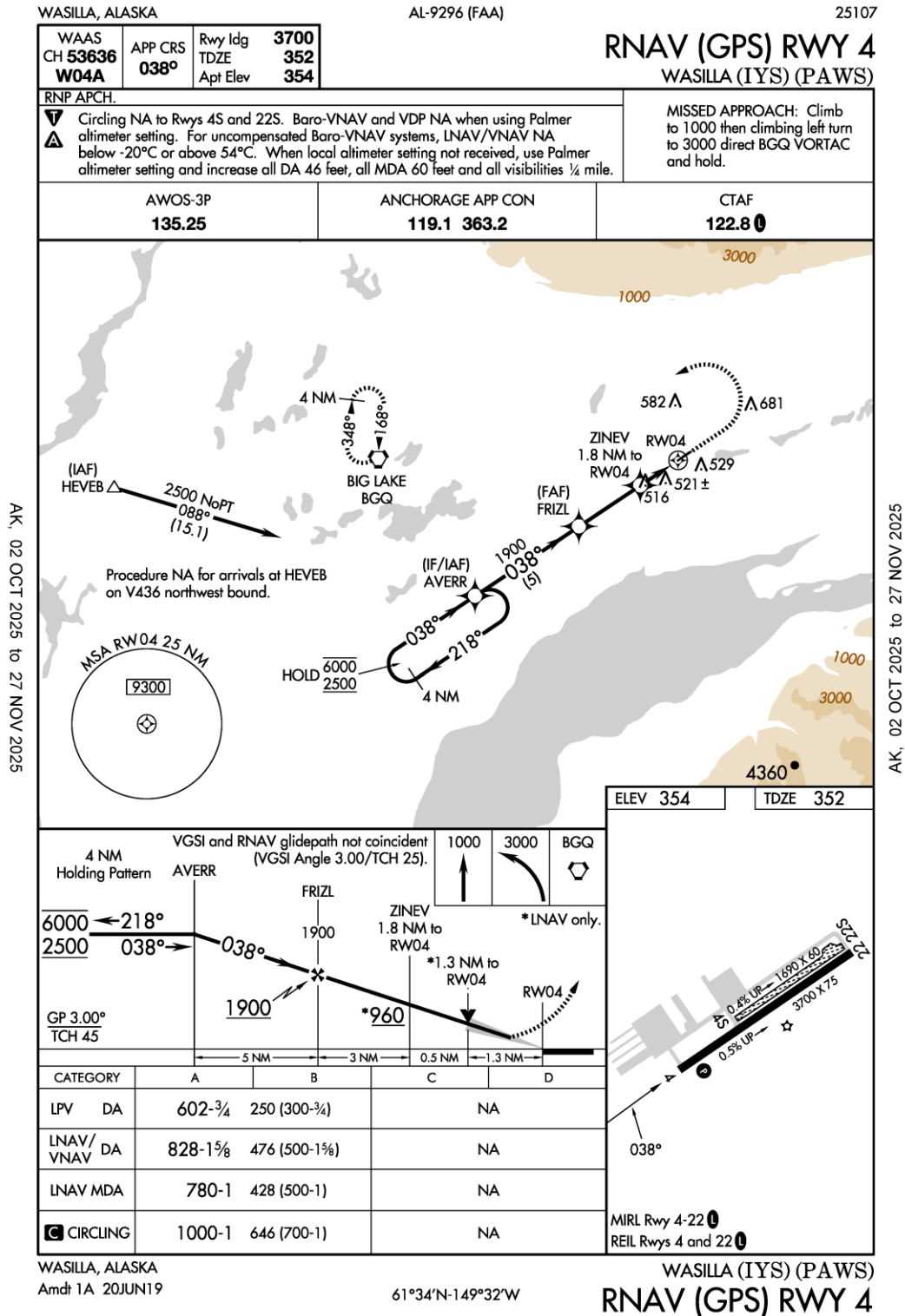


Figure 2-4: Runway 04 Approach

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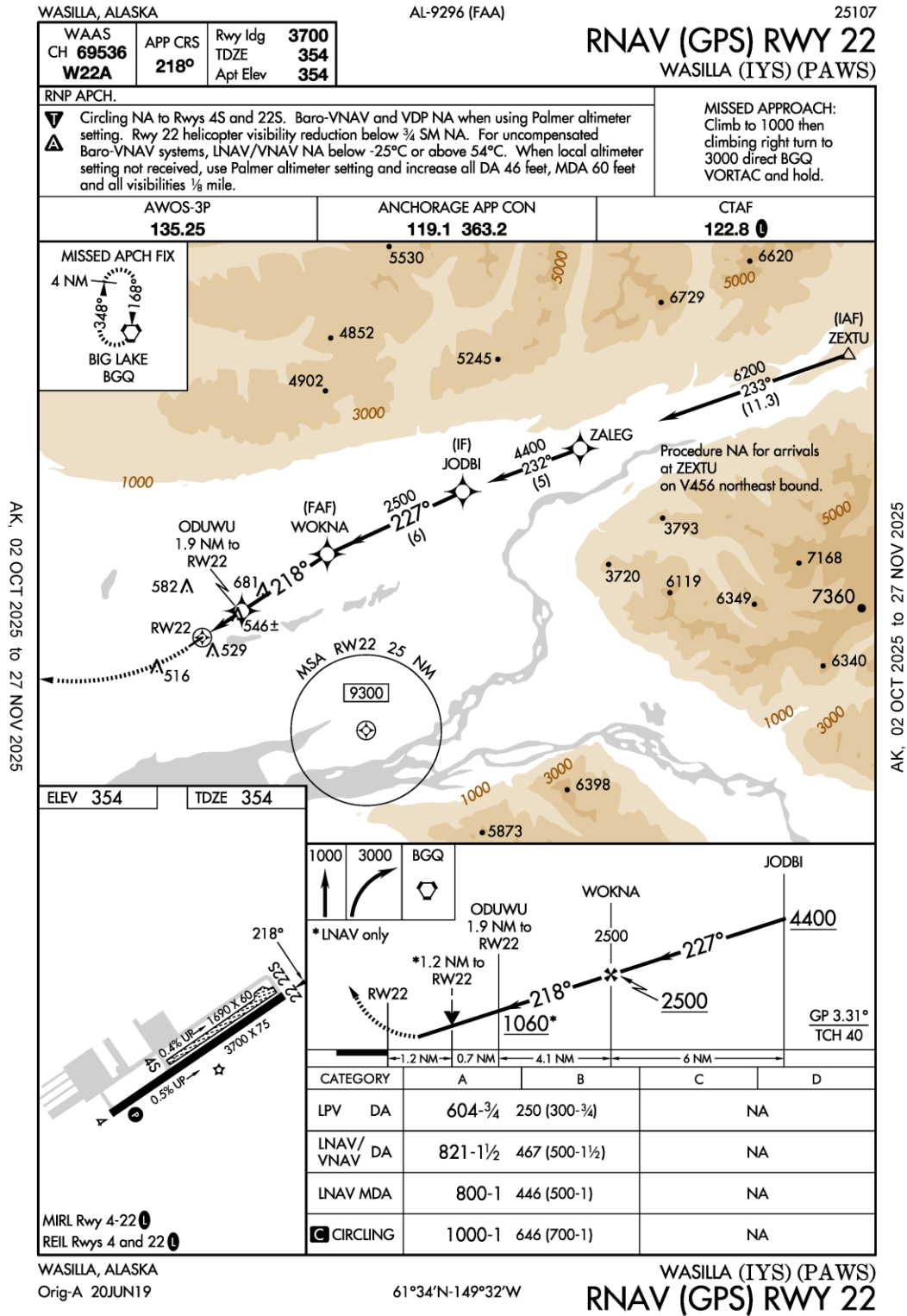


Figure 2-5: Runway 22 Approach

2.2 AIRSIDE FACILITIES

2.2.1 RUNWAYS

The existing airfield consists of two runways: Primary Runway 04/22 and Gravel Runway 04S/22S. Existing runway conditions reflected on the 2020 ALP update are summarized in Table 2-2. The runway separation of approximately 87.5 feet does not meet the required 700-foot separation for simultaneous operations during VFR conditions (FAA, 2022b).

Table 2-2: Current Runway Conditions based on 2020 ALP Update

	RUNWAY 04	RUNWAY 22	RUNWAY 04S	RUNWAY 22S
Visibility Minimums	≥ 3/4 mile	≥ 3/4 mile	≥ 3-mile	≥ 3-mile
Type	NPI	NPI	Visual	Visual
Category	Other than Utility ¹	Other than Utility ¹	Small/Utility ²	Small/Utility ²
Runway Design Code	B-II-4000 ¹	B-II-4000 ¹	A-I-VIS	A-I-VIS
Runway Length x width (ft)	3,700 x 75	3,700 x 75	1,690 x 60	1,690 x 60
Runway Shoulder Width (ft)	10	10	10	10
Runway Surface	Paved	Paved	Gravel	Gravel and Grass
Allowable Crosswind (knots)	13	13	10.5	10.5
Runway Safety Area				
Length Beyond Departure End (ft)	300	300	240	240
Length Prior to Threshold (ft)	300	300	240	240
Width (ft)	150	150	120	120
Runway Object Free Area				
Length Beyond Departure End (ft)	300	300	240	240
Length Prior to Threshold (ft)	300	300	240	240
Width (ft)	500	500	250	250
Runway Obstacle Free Zone				
Length Prior to Threshold (ft)	200	200	200 ²	200 ²
Width (ft)	400	400	250	250
Approach Runway Protection Zone				
Length (ft)	1,700	1,700	1,000	1,000
Inner Width (ft)	1,000	1,000	250	250
Outer Width (ft)	1,510	1,510	450	450
Area (acres)	48.978	48.978	8.035	8.035
Departure				
Length x Inner Width x Outer Width (ft)	1,000 x 500 x 700	1,000 x 500 x 700	1,000 x 250 x 450	1,000 x 250 x 450
Area (acres)	13.770	13.770	8.035	8.035
Runway Separation to:³				
Hold Position (ft)	200	210	NA	NA
Parallel Runway (ft)	87.5	87.5	87.5	87.5
Parallel Taxiway (ft)	300	300	212.5	212.5
Aircraft Parking (ft)	370	370	282.5	282.5

¹The existing critical aircraft for Runway 04/22 is changing to A-1 small/utility based on the findings of the Aviation Activity Forecast in Section 3.0

² Small/Utility runways are intended for use by aircraft less than 12,500 pounds gross weight (14 CFR Part 77, 2010) and (FAA, 2022b)

³ Distances noted are measured from runway centerline

PRIMARY RUNWAY 04/22

Runway 04/22 is the main runway at Wasilla Airport. The runway is a paved, non-precision runway measuring 3,700 feet long by 75 feet wide. The 2020 ALP Update classified the runway as a utility runway designed to accommodate Aircraft Approach Category (AAC) B and Airplane Design Group (ADG) II aircraft. The current Runway Design Code (RDC) for Runway 04/22 is B-II-4000, meaning the runway serves aircraft with an AAC of B, an ADG of II, and the runway's visual range (RVR) is 4,000 feet (based on $\frac{3}{4}$ mile approach minimums). Runway 04/22 is shown in Figure 2-6.

Runway pavement, lighting, and marking conditions are described in the sections below.



Figure 2-6: Primary Runway 04/22

GRAVEL RUNWAY 04S/22S

Runway 04S/22S was constructed in 2007 to serve tundra tire and ski-equipped aircraft with STOL capabilities. The "S" in the runway designation indicates its intended use as a STOL runway. The runway was constructed with a 1,690-foot-long by 60-foot-wide grass surface. The runway is located along the northwest edge of Runway 04/22 between Taxiways D and H. The RDC for Runway 04S/22S is A-I-VIS, meaning the runway serves aircraft with an AAC of A, an ADG of I, and that the runway only supports VFR operations, as is indicated by "VIS". Runway 04S/22S is unlit, edges are marked with cones, and the threshold is delineated with threshold markers. Runway surface maintenance, consisting of adding gravel surfacing and reestablishing grade, is performed by airport maintenance personnel on a yearly basis. Through continuous maintenance efforts, the surface of the runway has gradually changed from grass to gravel. The gravel portion is currently 50 feet wide,

centered on the runway centerline, which gives the visual impression that there is only 50 feet of runway width available for landing. Runway 04S/22S is shown in Figure 2-7.



Figure 2-7: Runway 04S/22S

RUNWAY SAFETY AREA

The Runway Safety Area (RSA) is graded to allow a deviation from the runway surface without significant damage to the aircraft or risk of injury. Both longitudinal and transverse grades are defined by the FAA. The RSA should provide a suitable safety margin in case of overshoots, underruns, and excursions adjacent to the runway. RSAs are required to be graded to minimum safe grades, be load-bearing under dry conditions, and be free of non-essential and non-frangible objects. The area should be capable of supporting snow removal equipment, emergency services, and passage of aircraft without causing major aircraft damage under dry conditions (FAA, 2022b).

Primary Runway 04/22 RSA: The RSA for Runway 04/22 is 150 feet wide and starts 300 feet prior to the thresholds of Runway 04/22. The standard RSA length before the threshold of a B-II runway is 300 feet. The graded portion of the RSA narrows down to approximately 140 feet at the end of each overrun area.

Runway 04/22 is located within the RSA of Runway 04S/22S. Simultaneous operations are prohibited on these runways.

Gravel Runway 04S/22S RSA: The RSA for Runway 04S/22S is 120 feet wide and 2,170 feet long and extends 240 feet beyond each runway end. Runway 04S/22S is located within the RSA of Runway 04/22. Simultaneous operations are prohibited on these runways.

RUNWAY OBJECT FREE AREAS AND OBSTACLE FREE ZONE

The object free area (OFA) is the area on the ground, centered on the runway centerline, that must remain free of all objects that are non-essential for air navigation and ground movement, such as signs and navigational aids. The Obstacle Free Zone (OFZ) is the volume of airspace located from the ground to 150 feet AGL that must remain free of non-essential objects, taxiing and parked aircraft, and other penetrations, except for frangible navigational aids, which have fixed locations by function.

Primary Runway 04/22 OFA: The existing OFA for Runway 04/22 is 500 feet wide and extends 300 feet beyond each threshold, meeting the requirements for B-II aircraft with greater than ¾-mile visibility minimums.

Gravel Runway 04S/22S OFA: The existing OFA for Runway 04S/22S is 250 feet wide and extends 240 feet beyond each threshold. These dimensions meet the requirements for A-I small aircraft for visual runways.

The OFAs and OFZs for both runways appear to be clear of non-frangible objects.

RUNWAY PROTECTION ZONES

The runway protection zones (RPZs) for both runways are outlined in Table 2-2 and shown in Figure 2-8. The purpose of RPZs is to protect people and property on the ground from aircraft operations during final approach and initial takeoff. The FAA requires that airport sponsors restrict the use of land within the RPZ to allowable uses defined by FAA Order 5100.38D “AIP Handbook” and reserve the right to control the height of objects in the RPZ to ensure safety on the ground and in the air. The FAA prefers that airport sponsors secure that right by owning the land inside the RPZ. When that is not possible, an aviation easement or a zoning restriction is acceptable (FAA, 2022c).

Approximately 0.66 acres of land in the northwest corner of the Runway 04 RPZ lies outside the City limits and overlaps two lots within the MSB Saska’s Meadows subdivision. The City currently has aviation and hazard easements on one of these parcels (Tract 3 Parcels) acquired through AIP No. 03-02-0417-01 (HDL, 2020). The 0.2-acre remainder of the RPZ is located on a privately owned residential parcel (Address: 1391 S Paddy Place), which is outside the city limits and contains no zoning designation. There is currently no aviation easement for this portion of the RPZ.

Roughly 1,620 feet of the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) railway bisects the Runway 22 RPZ perpendicular to the runway centerline, and the Runway 22 RPZ overlaps approximately 7.50 acres of the ARRC ROW. The northwest corner of the Runway 22 RPZ overlaps approximately 0.04 acres of the Parks Highway ROW. They both lie within City limits and are currently zoned for industrial and commercial use, respectively. No land use compatibility issues or airspace obstructions are anticipated in the Parks Highway ROW, and an aviation easement is not needed. There are approximately 0.63 acres on the northwest edge of the Runway 22 RPZ that fall outside the city limits and overlap one lot within the MSB McCallister subdivision. The City currently has aviation and hazard easements established for the ARRC ROW (Tract 4 Parcel B) and the MSB McCallister subdivision lot (Tract 4 Parcel D), which were acquired through AIP No. 03-02-0417-01 (HDL, 2020).

A summary and the status of existing aviation easements are shown in Table 2-3.

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Table 2-3: Avigation Easements Within Runway 04/22 RPZ

Label (Figure 2-8)	ALP Parcel Name	Description	Size
A	Tract 3 Parcel D	Portion of privately owned residential parcel (Address: 1431 S Paddy Place). Outside of city limits and no zoning designation.	0.5 Acres
B	Tract 4 Parcel D	Portion of privately owned residential parcel (Address: 3162 W Seims Street). Outside of city limits and no zoning designation.	0.6 Acres
C	Tract 4 Parcel B	ARRC ROW. Zoned for industrial use.	7.4 Acres

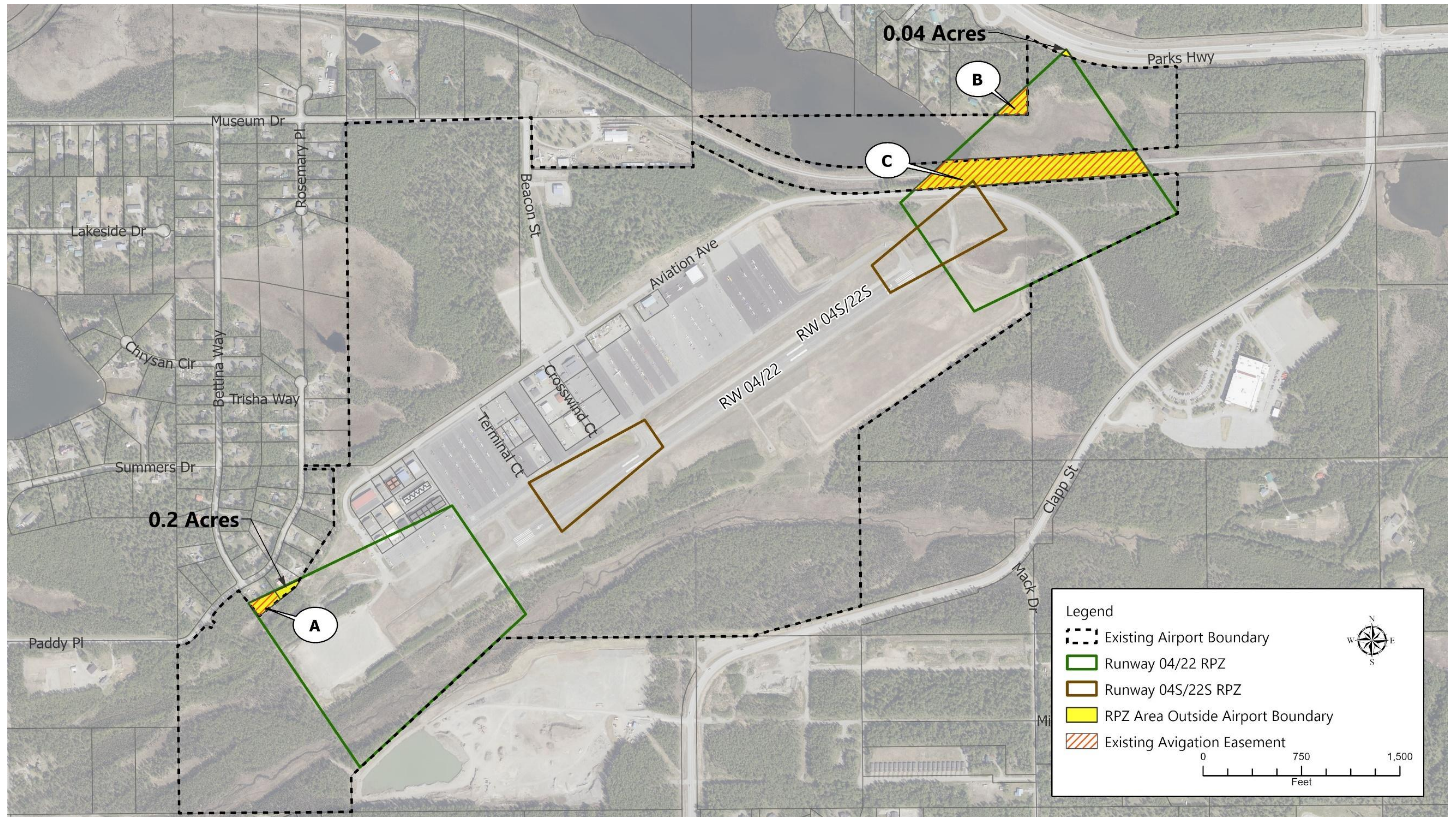


Figure 2-8: Runway Protection Zones

2.2.2 TAXIWAYS AND TAXILANES

TAXIWAYS

There are five taxiways at Wasilla Airport, as shown in Figure 2-9.

- Taxiway B is a 3,850-foot full-length parallel taxiway, terminating at Taxiway H (northeast end) and Taxiway F (southwest end).
- Taxiways A, D, and H are connecting taxiways that interlink Taxiway B and Runway 04/22. Taxiways A and H serve as entrance/exit taxiways onto Runway 04 and Runway 22 thresholds, respectively. Taxiway D connects at the midpoint of Runway 04/22. Taxiways D and H also serve as entrance/exit taxiways onto Runway 04S and Runway 22S, respectively.
- Taxiway C connects to Taxiway B and extends northwest to Aviation Avenue, providing access to various lease lots between Aprons B and C. Taxiway dimensions are summarized in Table 2-4.

Table 2-4: Existing Taxiway Dimensions

TAXIWAY DATA ¹				
Taxiway	Taxiway Width	Shoulder Width	Taxiway Safety Area (TSA) Width	Taxiway Object Free Area (TOFA) Width
A	40	5	79	131
B	35	10	79	131
C	40	15	79	131
D	40	5	79	131
H	35	10	79	131

¹ All dimensions given in feet

² Existing shoulder, TSA, and TOFA dimensions sourced from Wasilla Airport 2020 ALP

Taxiway pavement condition, marking, signage, and lighting are described in the sections below.

TAXILANES

The existing taxilanes are shown in Figure 2-9.

Aprons A and B are accessible from Taxiway B via Taxilanes A and F. Aprons C, D, and E in the northeastern terminal area are accessible via Taxilanes D and E. The Hangar Apron in the southwestern terminal area is accessible via Taxilanes N, O, P, and Q, with Taxilanes N and Q providing access to the northern and southernmost rows of hangars, respectively. Taxilane Q also provides sole access to the Hangar Apron tie-downs. Taxilane and corresponding safety area dimensions are summarized in Table 2-5.

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Table 2-5: Existing Taxilane Dimensions

TAXILANE DATA ¹			
Taxilane	Taxilane Width	Taxiway/Taxilane Safety Area Width ²	Taxilane Object Free Area Width (TLOFA) ²
A	40	49	79
D	40	49 ³	79
F	40	49	79
N	35	49	79
O	35	49	79
P	35	49	79
Q	35	49	79
E³	50	118	158

¹ All dimensions given in feet

² Existing TSA and TLOFA dimensions sourced from Wasilla Airport 2020 ALP

³ Existing dimensions for Taxilane E and corresponding safety areas are based on Taxiway Design Group (TDG) 3/ADG III design standards. Information sourced from Construct Apron E, Phase 1 (AIP No. 3-02-0417-021-2018) project documents

Taxilanes A, D, F, N, O, P, and Q accommodate GA activity and were designed to serve the airport's A-I Small critical aircraft. Taxilanes A, D, F, O, and P meet TDG 1A requirements. Hangars along Taxilanes N and Q, and wingtips of aircraft parked on the Hangar Apron next to Taxilane Q, currently lie within the 79-foot-wide TLOFA required for TDG 1A aircraft. Some hangars on the Hangar Apron are built to the edge of the TLOFA. Therefore, planes and vehicles that park in front of the hangar doors can occasionally block traffic on the taxilanes or require aircraft to maneuver around the parked obstacle.

Taxilane pavement and marking conditions are described in the sections below.

2.2.3 BASED AIRCRAFT APRONS

The airport has six primary aprons as shown on Figure 2-9: Aprons A, B, C, D, E, and the Hangar Apron. Table 2-6 summarizes the existing dimensions and features for each apron.

Table 2-6: Existing Apron Features

Apron	Approx. Size (ft x ft)	Tie-downs ¹ (ft x ft)	Lighted	Headbolt Heaters
A	330 x 655	25 (qty) @ 24 x 20	No	No
B	290 x 655	39 (qty) @ 24 x 20	No	No
C	545 x 530	26 (qty) @ 24 x 20 6 (qty) @ 35 x 30	Yes	Yes
D	230 x 530	18 (qty) @ 24 x 20	No	No
E	410 x 530	27 (qty) @ 24 x 20	Yes	Yes
Hangar	630 x 635	14 (qty) @ 24 x 19	No	Yes

¹Number of tie-downs for use in each area (quantity [qty]) per City records. Additional tie-downs may exist but are not used.

The condition of the apron pavement and markings is described in the sections below.

2.2.4 TRANSIENT AIRCRAFT APRON

There is approximately 4,220 square yards of transient parking space located at the northwest end of Taxiway C, immediately northeast of the Apron B limits, as shown in Figure 2-9. The parking area features nine 24-foot by 20-foot tie-down spaces reserved for transient A-I Small aircraft.

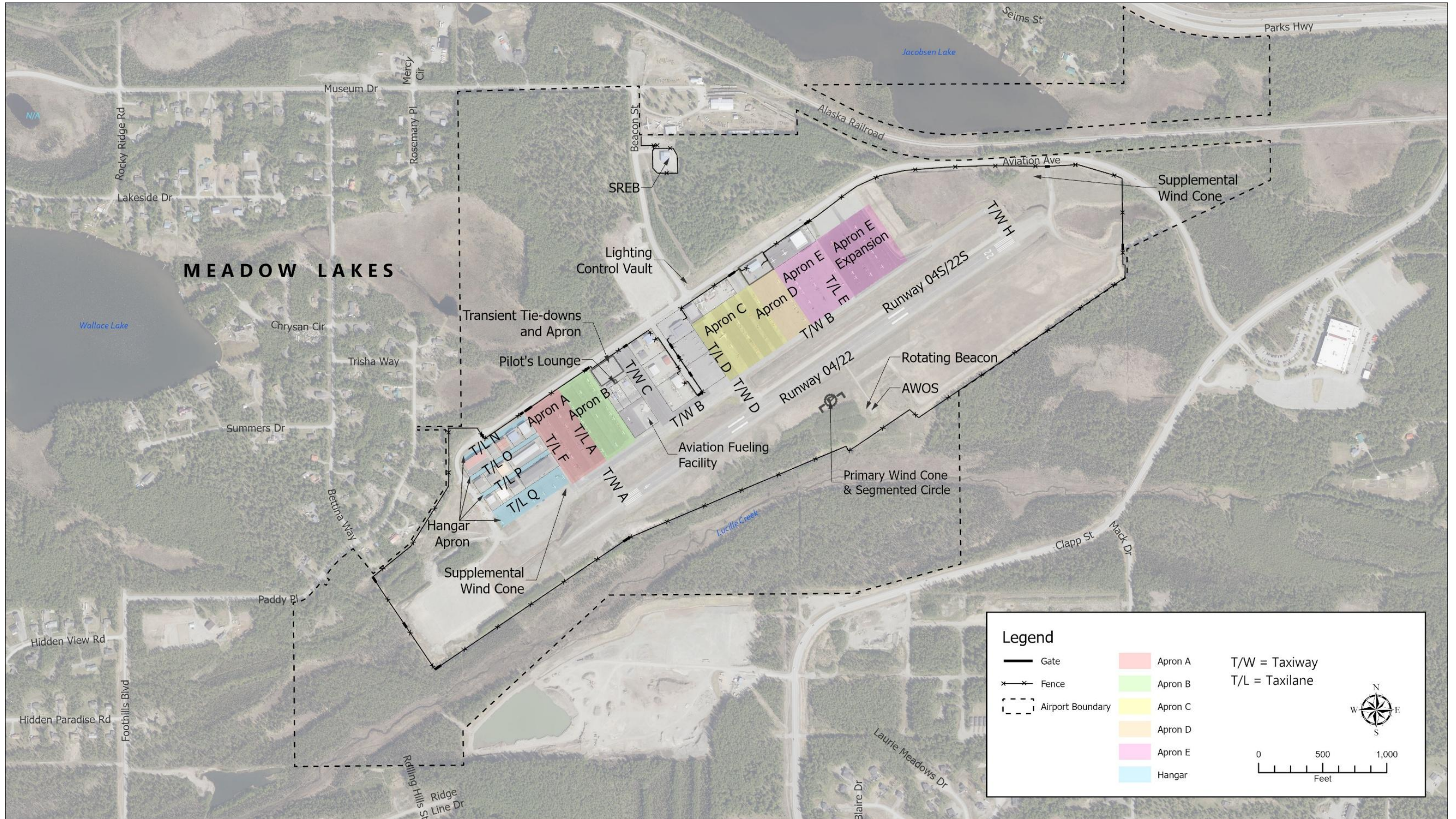


Figure 2-9: Existing Airfield Facilities (Taxiways, Taxilanes, and Aprons)

2.2.5 PAVEMENT CONDITION

RUNWAY 04/22 PAVEMENT

The latest pavement condition survey was completed by DOT&PF in 2024. The DOT&PF provides general recommendations based on pavement condition index (PCI) scores, as shown in Table 2-7.

Table 2-7: Recommendations Based on PCI scores

PCI Range	Recommendation
85-100	Preventative maintenance
70-84	Preventative and/or corrective maintenance
55-69	Rehabilitation
<54	Reconstruction

A maintenance project was completed in 2021-2022 that performed crack sealing on the surface of Runway 04/22. At the time of the 2024 DOT&PF pavement condition survey, Runway 04/22 was given a PCI score of 63, making it a candidate for rehabilitation.

TAXIWAY PAVEMENT

The 2024 DOT&PF taxiway pavement condition results are shown in Table 2-8 (DOT&PF, 2024).

Table 2-8: Existing Taxiway Pavement Conditions

Location	PCI
Taxiway A	63 – Rehabilitation
Taxiway B west of Taxiway A	61– Rehabilitation
Taxiway B between Taxiway A and D	67– Rehabilitation
Taxiway B east of Taxiway D	77- Preventative and/or corrective maintenance
Taxiway C	69– Rehabilitation
Taxiway D	69– Rehabilitation
Taxiway H	77 - Preventative and/or corrective maintenance

All existing taxiway pavement contains longitudinal and transverse cracking, which was recently sealed. The City's pavement maintenance (crack sealing) has increased the PCI value on taxiways and extended the life of the pavement.

APRON PAVEMENT

Pavement conditions for each apron are summarized in Table 2-9.

Table 2-9: Existing Apron Pavement Conditions

Apron	PCI Range
A (Includes Taxilanes A and F)	54-73 Preventative and/or corrective maintenance / Rehabilitation
B	71 Preventative and/or corrective maintenance
C (Includes Taxilane D)	69-73 Preventative and/or corrective maintenance

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Apron	PCI Range	
D	77	Preventative and/or corrective maintenance
E	94	Preventative maintenance
Hangar (Includes Taxilanes N, O, P, Q, and lease lots)	57-75	Preventative and/or corrective maintenance / Rehabilitation

The condition of the airport pavement with areas in need of preventative maintenance, preventative and/or corrective maintenance, or rehabilitation is shown graphically in Figure 2-10.

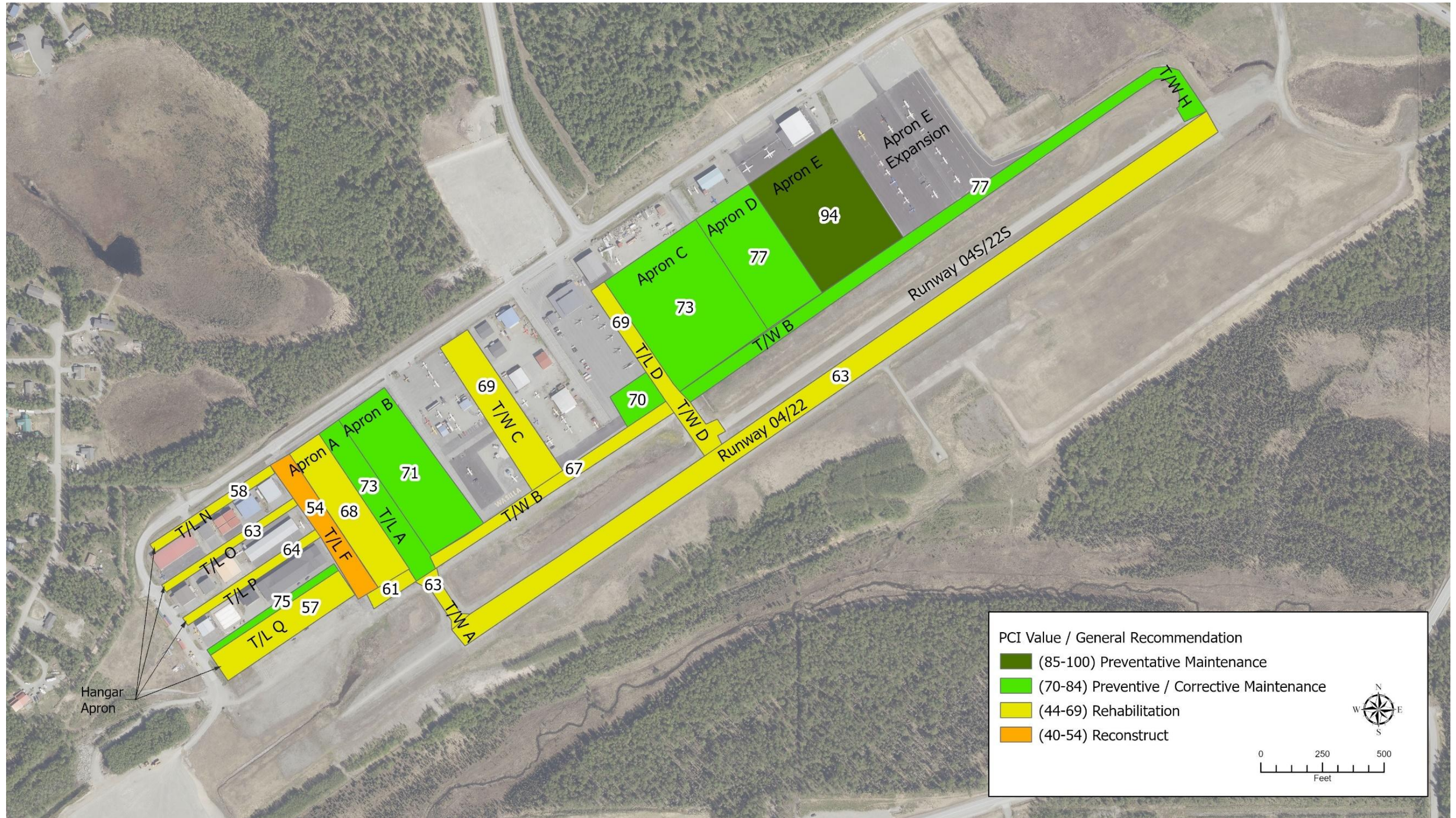


Figure 2-10: Department of Transportation and Public Facilities Pavement Condition Index Results

2.2.6 MARKINGS

Runway 04/22 is equipped with standard non-precision runway markings, which include threshold, designator, centerline, and aiming point markings.

Markings on parallel Taxiway B include edge and centerline striping on the portion of the taxiway that is northeast of Taxiway D. The portion of Taxiway B that is southwest of the Taxiway D intersection only has centerline striping.

Interlink Taxiways A, C, D, and H have centerline and edge striping.

The taxilanes all contain centerline stripes.

Markings on Runway 04/22, the interlink Taxiways A, D, and H, and the Taxiway B centerline were refreshed during a 2023 Runway striping project. The remaining Taxiway B edge striping, Taxiway C centerline striping, taxilane centerline striping, and tie-down striping are old and faded.

The airport includes a marked compass calibration pad located on the southwest corner of Apron A. In 2025, the City remarked the compass pad markings to align with the current magnetic declination of the airport.

2.2.7 SIGNAGE

All interlink taxiways (Taxiways A, D, and H) to Runway 04/22 are equipped with lighted destination/hold position signs of Size 1/Class 2. All lighted signs are situated in line with the hold position markings on each taxiway, with the exception of the lighted sign on Taxiway D, which is located approximately 20 feet on the airside of the current hold position, in line with the previous holding position markings.

Unlit signage includes:

- Signs on Taxiways A and D, indicating the direction of transient parking in relation to each taxiway.
- Signs on Taxiways D and H (entrance/exit taxiways onto Runway 04S/22S) stating “NO SIMULTANEOUS OPERATIONS ON RWY 4-22 AND GRAVEL RWY 4S-22S.”

All unlit signs are in line with the hold position markings on each taxiway, with the exception of the sign on Taxiway A, which is approximately 45 feet on the landside of the hold short markings.

All signs are installed on concrete footings and are standard in dimension.

The signage on connecting Taxiway H is not distinctly labeled and designates the taxiway as the continuation of parallel Taxiway B.

2.2.8 TIE-DOWNS

The current GA apron space available for based aircraft is approximately 148,335 square yards (including taxilane areas) and spans six primary aprons: A, B, C, D, E, and the Hangar Apron. Tie-downs within Aprons A, B, D, E, and the Hangar Apron are currently designed to meet the design criteria of A-I Small. Apron C is designed predominantly for A-I Small but offers six tie-down spaces that accommodate B-II aircraft. There are a total of 176 small tie-downs and six large tie-downs currently available. There are nine transient tie-down

spaces available on the airport near Apron B. All based aircraft tie-down spaces are leased, and there were approximately 66 potential tie-down holders on a waitlist in the summer of 2024.

2.2.9 AIRCRAFT FUELING

Crowley Fuels Alaska operates a lease lot at Wasilla Airport and provides a self-serve fueling station for 100LL and Jet A-50 fuel. No inadequacies with the existing fuel service were identified during the site inspection.

2.2.10 HANGARS

The tenants at Wasilla Airport include a mixture of private airport users with individual tie-down or hangar leases and aeronautical businesses, maintenance, and hunting or fishing guide charter services.

2.2.11 PILOT'S LOUNGE

The City owns a small Pilot's Lounge located on the south side of the transient aircraft parking lot adjacent to Apron B. The building consists of an 8-foot by 20-foot trailer situated on concrete blocks with a portable bathroom and dumpster, both located adjacent to the building. The building is heated and lit.

2.2.12 VISUAL AND APPROACH AIDS

RUNWAY AND TAXIWAY LIGHTING AND MARKERS

Runway 04/22 is delineated with Medium Intensity Runway Lighting, each being 24 inches tall. The current lighting system was installed in 1993 and has greatly exceeded its life expectancy; however, the system remains operational and is in working condition.

Runway 04S/22S is unlit and delineated with cones, and each threshold is equipped with three frangible reflective threshold markers located on each side of both runway ends (four sets of three markers total).

Taxiways are lit with Medium Intensity Taxiway Edge Lighting (MITL), each being 30 inches tall and appearing to be in overall good condition.

The following issues were noted during the airport inspection:

- Light cans have jacked out of the ground at Taxiways H and A. The units appear to be in compliance with the 3-inch frangibility requirements (FAA, 2018); however, grade work is recommended to mitigate safety issues.
- One taxiway light, on the corner of Apron E and Taxiway B, is damaged and should be replaced by maintenance.
- A ground rod at the intersection of Taxiway A and Runway 04 has jacked approximately 17 inches out of the ground and appears to no longer be connected to the grounding system. The ground rod should be reinstalled and reconnected to the system.

RUNWAY END IDENTIFIER LIGHTS

Runway End Identifier Lights (REILs) are not present at either end of the Runway 04/22 or 04S/22S. The runway currently has outboard threshold lights located on each side of both runway ends.

PRECISION APPROACH PATH INDICATOR LIGHTS

FAA owned Runway 04 Precision Approach Path Indicator lights (PAPIs) (4-box system) are located on the right-hand side of Runway 04 and appear to be properly sited and operating in good condition. PAPI systems are normally located on the left-hand side of the runway edge, however, installation of PAPI on the right side is permissible if required due to siting constraints. PAPIs are not located on the Runway 22 threshold or either end of Runway 04S/22S.

LIGHTED WIND CONE & SEGMENTED CIRCLE

The lighted wind cone and segmented circle are located on the southeast side of Runway 04/22, at approximately midfield. The lighted wind cone and pole appear to be in good condition. The segmented circle with traffic pattern indicators consists of buried drums. Runway 04's right traffic pattern is designated by the indicators. The orange paint on the segmented circle barrels is failing.

SUPPLEMENTAL WIND CONES

There are two unlighted supplemental wind cones at the airport. One supplemental wind cone is located beyond the southwest end of Runway 04, adjacent to the Hangar Apron tie-downs. The second supplemental wind cone is located beyond the northeast end of Runway 22, near the airport boundary and adjacent to West Aviation Avenue. Both supplemental wind cones are in fair condition.

ROTATING BEACON

The rotating beacon and pole are located on the southeast side of Runway 04, at approximately midfield, near the FAA's weather station. The beacon is operational, and the foundation, pole, and light appear to be in fair condition. The gravel access trail to the Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) and rotating beacon is in good condition and easily traversable.

2.2.13 WEATHER EQUIPMENT

The airport is equipped with an FAA-owned and maintained AWOS that is located at approximately midfield on the southeast side of Runway 04/22, next to the rotating beacon. The current location of the airport's AWOS is not within 500 feet of any buildings, and discrepancies between reported and observed wind directions or speeds have not been noted. Trees within a 500-foot radius surrounding the AWOS pad have recently been cleared. However, substantial brush growth is accumulating in the cleared area southeast of the AWOS pad. Lucille Creek and the surrounding floodplain are located directly south of the pad.

The AWOS is reporting data and appears to be in good condition.

2.3 OTHER AIRCRAFT FACILITIES

2.3.1 SKI-PLANE FACILITIES

Several of the small aircraft at the Wasilla Airport convert to ski operations during the winter months and operate off of Runway 04S/22S. Currently, these aircraft are based on various tie-downs and leases present throughout the airport. As a result, ski-equipped aircraft frequently need to taxi along plowed apron surfaces to access the runway.

2.3.2 GLIDER FACILITIES

Gliders occasionally operate at the Wasilla Airport and are generally stored in hangars and on lease lots. There are no specific glider facilities at the airport. Users stated that the existing airport generally accommodates glider use well. Glider users expressed a desire to lengthen the runway and fill in the drainage ditch in the infield between Runway 04/22 and Taxiway B to increase safety. Also, it is recommended that designated staging areas be constructed for glider and aircraft run-up and staging adjacent to Taxiway A and H such that glider staging and aircraft run-ups are not impeding accessing and exiting traffic to Runway 04/22.

2.3.3 SEAPLANE FACILITIES

As discussed in Section 2.5.2, the 2017 MSB Regional Aviation System Plan (RASP) Phase II stated that there was an unmet demand for a Seaplane Base in the southern portion of the MSB (MSB, 2017a). The study evaluated the Wasilla Airport as a possible candidate for future development of a Seaplane Base. The Wasilla Airport scored well in the categories of adjacent airspace availability, land ownership conditions, accessibility, and availability of utilities, and it had the capacity to meet the minimum and ultimate site size requirements. However, it was ranked as the 4th best choice of the top ten sites evaluated. The facility ranked lower due to the lack of nearby accessible waterways that would require development, the high number of adjacent wetlands, and the high number of possible environmental impacts. Ultimately, the study selected Sevenmile Lake as the preferred site for a Seaplane Base in the southern region of the MSB.

2.4 LANDSIDE FACILITIES

2.4.1 AIRPORT ACCESS ROADS

Four primary access roads inside the airport boundary facilitate the flow of traffic throughout the airport and are shown on Figure 2-11.

- Aviation Avenue provides the primary access to the airport from Clapp Street. The road runs along the northern edge of the airport and provides gated access to the airfield. Aviation Avenue east of Beacon Street is in good condition with occasional transverse and longitudinal cracking. To the west of Beacon Street, the condition of the road deteriorates slightly with greater transverse cracking.
- Beacon Street is a connector street running north from Aviation Avenue to Museum Drive. The pavement has transverse and longitudinal cracking and is in fair condition.
- Crosswind Court provides access from Aviation Avenue to Gate B and several lease lots. The pavement is in fair condition with transverse and longitudinal cracks that are sealed.

2.0 AIRPORT INVENTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Terminal Court is an access road inside the airport perimeter fencing that runs on the eastern edge of Apron B. The pavement is in fair condition and has transverse and longitudinal cracks that were recently sealed.



Figure 2-11: Access Road Conditions

2.4.2 LEASE LOTS

There are 27 platted lease lots at the airport: 13 located on the Hangar Apron, 11 located between Aprons B and C, and one each north of Aprons C, D, and E. All lots are currently under lease except for the new lease lot constructed on the northern perimeter of Apron E, which is currently under negotiation.

The City's standard airport leases include language requiring leaseholders to develop the property within 2 years of acquisition, or the lease is forfeited and returned to the City. Presently, all occupied lease lots are developed, with three leaseholders (Soloy Helicopters, Silver Sky Aviation, and one private leaseholder) currently planning further development.

The City regularly receives inquiries about lease availability for GA and commercial use. The City has received 68 separate inquiries since 2015, four of which were for potential Part 135 operations (City of Wasilla, 2023a). Conservatively assuming 50% of these inquiries would result in new lease lot development if space were available, there is an estimated unmet demand of 34 additional lease lots.

2.4.3 LIGHTING CONTROL VAULT

The lighting control vault, housing the airport lighting system and gate operators, is located at the northeast corner of the Aviation Avenue and South Beacon intersection. There are no operational issues with the lighting controls. However, an electrical box on the exterior of the building is damaged with exposed wiring. There is also a hole in the floor inside the building entry. The building is scheduled to be replaced in 2026.

2.4.4 SECURITY FENCING AND GATE ACCESS

The airport is surrounded by approximately 15,800 linear feet of 8-foot-tall chain link perimeter fence with three-strand barbed wire. Two sections of existing fence, southwest of Runway 04 and across the runway from its intersection with Taxiway D, are jacked out of the ground and/or falling over, allowing animals to access the airport property. The jacked and damaged sections of fence are scheduled for replacement in fall 2025/winter 2026. The remainder of the fencing appears to be in good condition.

The following is a breakdown of the 16 perimeter gates located on the airport, all of which appear to be in good condition (Figure 2-12).

- Gate A provides vehicle access to Apron C via a sliding gate with an automated operator and proximity card reader. Adjacent to the vehicle gate is a manual pedestrian gate with a push-button lock. Access at this gate is monitored by a camera.
- Gate B is located at the end of Crosswind Court and provides direct access to Apron B. The sliding vehicle gate has an automated operator and a proximity card reader.
- Gate C provides access to Terminal Court and consists of a sliding vehicle gate with an automated operator and proximity card reader. Adjacent to the vehicle gate is a manual pedestrian gate with a push-button lock. The sliding vehicle gate is on a timer and is open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The pedestrian gate provides access from the transient aircraft parking area to vehicle parking outside the perimeter fence. Access at this gate is monitored by a camera.

2.0 AIRPORT INVENTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Gate D provides access to the airfield off Aviation Avenue. Gate D consists of a sliding vehicle gate with an automated operator and a proximity card reader. The vehicle gate is on a timer and is open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Access at this gate is monitored by a camera.
- Access at Taxiway F consists of a sliding gate (with no powered operator) and a pedestrian gate. There is paved access to the sliding gate from Aviation Avenue; however, the pedestrian gate does not have paved access. Airport maintenance controls access to these gates; they are not regularly used.
- The gate access to Taxiway C consists of a sliding gate (with no powered operator) and does not have paved access from Aviation Avenue. Airport maintenance controls access to this gate; it is not regularly used.
- There are three unmarked sliding gates providing access to the Soloy Helicopters, LLC lease area.
- Apron E can be accessed from Aviation Avenue by vehicle through a double swing-style gate and gravel access drive. Airport maintenance controls access to this gate; it is not regularly used.
- There are six additional perimeter gates on the airfield that are controlled and used solely by airport maintenance as needed.



Figure 2-12: Gate Locations

2.4.5 SECURITY CAMERAS

The airfield is currently monitored by seven security cameras located at strategic locations to record entry and activity on the airport. However, the current system leaves several areas unmonitored. The City is in the process of upgrading the system to add more cameras and improve coverage, reducing existing blind spots.

2.4.6 VEHICLE PARKING

Tie-down customers and users park their vehicles in their vacant tie-down spaces when their planes are in use or along the perimeter of the GA aprons. Lease lot tenants and users park their vehicles on their lease lots. Parking is adequate on lease lots for existing businesses and activities. In addition, there are two designated vehicle parking areas: six spaces located near the transient parking area along the fence, and fourteen spaces situated between the Pilot Lounge and the Crowley Fuels Alaska fueling stations. These parking areas are sufficient to meet the current demand for transient users.

2.4.7 SNOW REMOVAL EQUIPMENT BUILDING

General maintenance at the airport is based out of the Snow Removal Equipment Building (SREB), located north of the airport on Beacon Street. Maintenance is performed by two City personnel shared with the Roads Department. A full-time maintenance person is dedicated to the airport in the winter to facilitate snow removal. Maintenance personnel plow and maintain the paved surfaces and unpaved safety areas and perform other routine maintenance on airport property. Maintenance vehicles and equipment currently located at the airport include the following:

- John Deere 930M Z-trac mower
- Case 821E loader
- Oshkosh snow blower
- Case 380 skid steer
- Skid steer blower attachment
- Ford F-350, two snow plow attachments
- Diamond brush cutter attachment
- Schulte brush cutter
- Metal Pless plow attachment
- All-terrain vehicle trailer
- Polaris Ranger
- Airfield lighting bench tester
- Greer 1,000-gallon fuel tank
- Two runway closure markers

The City's 4,760-square-foot SREB has three bays: two pull-through equipment bays and a single access bay with an office and restroom on the opposite side. The building houses the airport snow removal equipment and the controls for the security cameras. City maintenance staff mentioned that the sewer line to the building freezes every winter, but there are no other issues with the building.

2.4.8 UTILITIES

In 2014, the City extended a waterline on Aviation Avenue from Clapp Street to the east of Gate A. Airforms, LLC and Silver Skys Aviation are the only current users of the utility. Most tenants obtain water from private wells and dispose of wastewater via on-site septic systems.

The water system is planned to be extended to the south of the Runway 22 threshold in 2026 to service new lease lots and a large aircraft parking apron planned for construction in that area (Taxiway K). The City is also planning to construct a low-pressure sewer system connected to a single septic tank and leach field in that area to provide sewer service to hangars and businesses on the new lease lots.

The City's existing sanitary sewer system extends to the Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center, according to the South Mack Drive Water and Sewer Extension Project as-builts (USKH, 2004), which is the last known sewer system extension project in the area. The water and sewer utilities map currently provided on the City's website indicates that there is a proposed sewer main connection from the existing facilities near the Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center adjacent to the Clapp Street/Aviation Avenue intersection that would extend northwest along Aviation Avenue, terminating at South Beacon Street (City of Wasilla, 2025a).

Electrical service to the airport is provided by Matanuska Electric Association, the main feed supplied overhead from a distribution pole transitioning to underground on the corner of Beacon Street and Aviation Avenue. Services can be extended to individual lease lots from the underground system. Weatherproof outlets for tie-down users are available on the Hangar Apron and Aprons C and E.

Natural gas service is provided by ENSTAR Natural Gas Company. Services can be extended to individual lease lots from the gas line along Aviation Avenue, stemming from the main service on Beacon Street.

Telecommunication service to the airport is provided by Matanuska Telephone Association and consists of an underground copper and fiber optic cable. The services extend from Beacon Street, along Aviation Avenue from Gate A to Gate D, and then into lease lots.

The utility as-built is included in Appendix C.

2.5 LAND USE

An assessment of land use at and surrounding the airport was conducted to evaluate adjacent land for potential acquisition to better serve airport users and support future aviation-related development. This assessment looks at spatial constraints of the current airport layout, permitted uses of adjacent land, and where compatibilities exist to ensure optimal future use of the airport.

2.5.1 EXISTING LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE

Land surrounding the airport is composed of undeveloped, residential, and light commercial uses. Undeveloped land includes a mix of public and privately owned parcels. Residential land in the vicinity of the airport is generally located outside the city limits. Residential parcel sizes range from less than an acre to 40-acre tracts. Commercial land use is primarily arranged along the Parks Highway, with a material site south of Lucille Creek.

Notable additional land use in the vicinity of the airport includes the following (Figure 2-13):

- The ARRC right-of-way (ROW) is adjacent to the airport property boundary.
- West of the city limits, within the Meadow Lakes area, are private parcels that have mostly been developed for residential use.
- North of the museum are consumer-oriented businesses located adjacent to the Parks Highway, including a restaurant, an insurance agent, and a daycare facility (labeled #1).
- Land to the west of the museum is undeveloped (labeled #2).
- The City also owns a parcel to the northwest (labeled #3), which is considered part of the airport property but is currently located outside city limits.
- The private land immediately to the north of the airport and west of Jacobsen Lake is occupied by the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry (labeled #4).
- Private lands between the airport and the Sports Center and to the north of the highway (labeled #5) are undeveloped.
- To the south of Lucille Creek, there is land that has been developed into a material extraction site (labeled #6).
- The city-owned land to the east of the airport is occupied by the Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center (labeled #7).

The privately-owned land between the airport and the Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center may provide suitable areas for development of a hotel, airport-related business, or future multi-modal transportation facilities, as discussed in the City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan (City of Wasilla, 2011).

The City is actively pursuing purchasing land and acquiring land and aviation easements to the southwest of the airport to provide additional buffer area and accommodate the future runway extension. The subject properties, proposed action, and their acquisition status as of September 2025 are shown in Figure 2-14. Once the properties are acquired, they will be incorporated into the airport boundary, and the City will adjust the city limits around the newly acquired parcels and zone the property for industrial and/or commercial use.

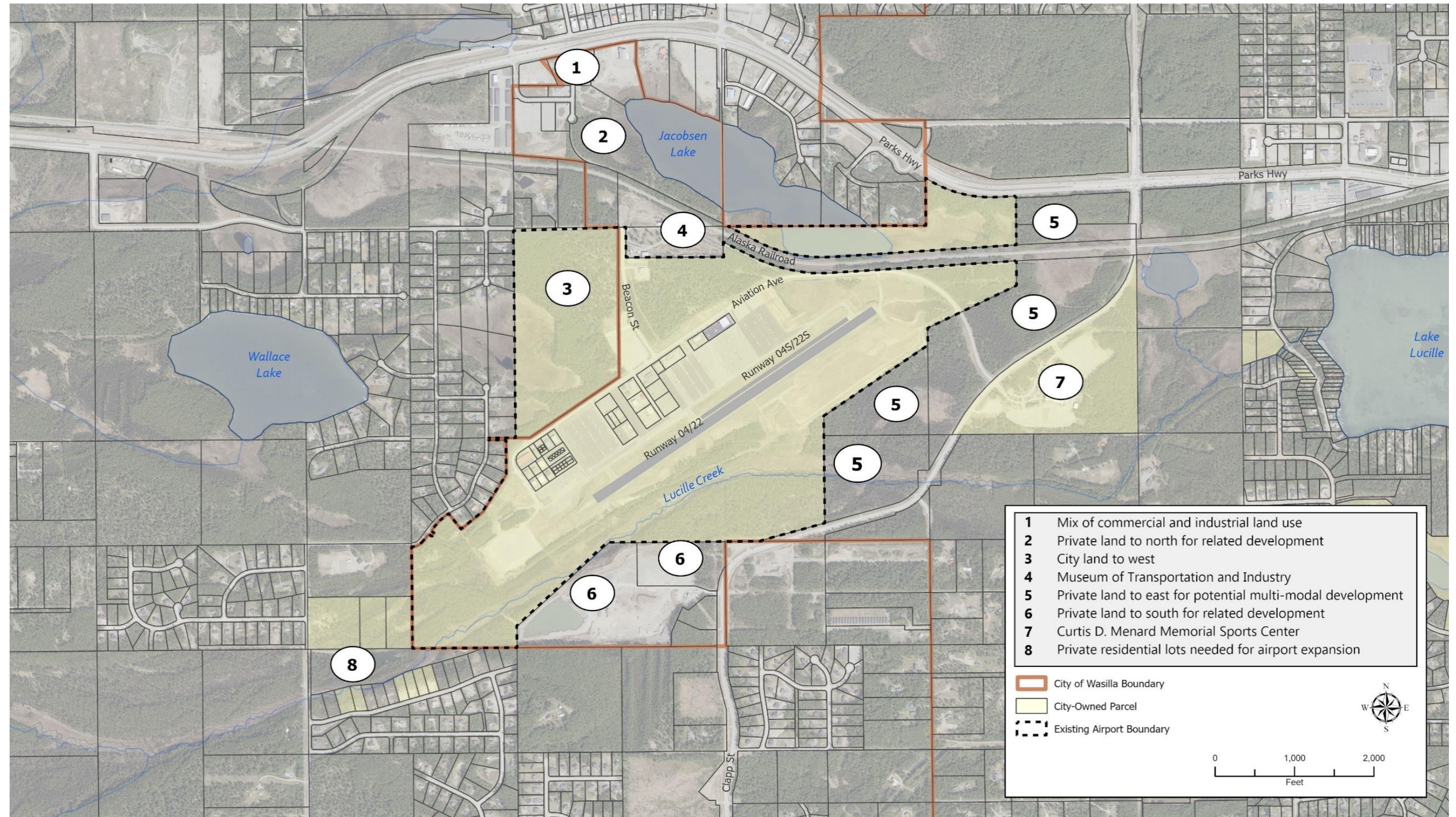


Figure 2-13: Land Use

2.0 AIRPORT INVENTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

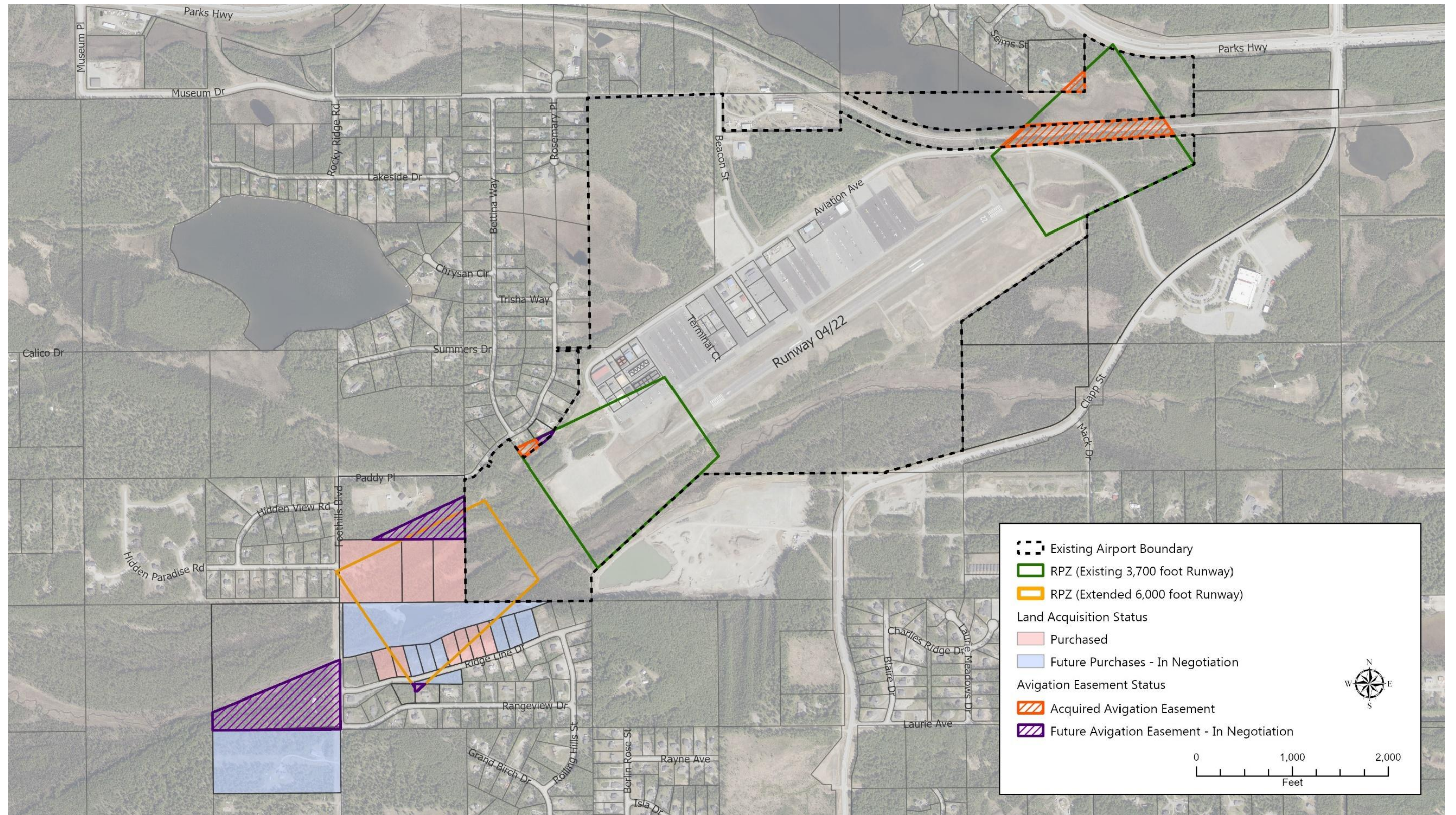


Figure 2-14: Land Acquisition Status

2.5.2 AREA LAND USE PLAN GOALS AND ZONING

The City of Wasilla's land development code classifies land use through zoning under municipal code 16.20.010 (City of Wasilla, 2023b). The airport property is classified as Industrial, which is further described in the code as:

The intent of the industrial district is to provide for and protect productive industrial areas. These areas are usually served by major highways or collector streets, the ARRC railway, the airport and public or community water or sewer. The designation of an area as industrial must contain specific provisions for traffic circulation and buffering of nearby non-industrial areas and uses from traffic, noise, dust, vibration, glare, pollution, and unsightly uses or activities.

The bulk of the airport is within the city limits, west of downtown Wasilla. A 70-acre parcel (MSB account ID: 17N02W12D006) owned by the City is adjacent to the airport to the north and considered part of the airport property. This property is outside the city limits and is a candidate for annexation. In addition, the properties that the City is in the process of acquiring below the Runway 04 approach (Figure 2-14) also fall outside of the airport boundary and city limits. These properties are within the Meadow Lakes Community Council (MLCC) area, under the municipal authority of the MSB. The MLCC area borders the airport along the western airport boundary as well as portions of the northern and southern airport boundaries. Proposed projects may necessitate plan reviews for the MLCC, MSB, and the City, and may require construction permits from the MSB and City.

The airport is zoned industrial (Figure 2-15). The surrounding land within the city limits is zoned commercial to the north and rural residential to the east. The MSB land located outside city limits is not zoned and appears to be used primarily for residential development. Rezoning the newly acquired land for industrial and commercial use will be necessary when it is incorporated into the airport boundary and city limits.

The areas to the north, east, and south of the airport are mostly undeveloped, except for the Museum of Alaska Transportation. The only adjacent development is a single-family residential area immediately to the west.

ANNEXATION AND REZONING PROCESS

Annexation in Alaska is governed under Alaska Statute 29.06. For municipally owned property that adjoins existing city limits, a streamlined local action procedure can be used. The process begins with adoption of an ordinance by the Wasilla City Council, followed by preparation of a petition to the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development, Local Boundary Commission (LBC) that includes a description of the property and justification for annexation. Public notice and opportunities for involvement are required, including advance publication of the proposal, notification of adjacent property owners and local governments, and time for public comment. The LBC then reviews the petition, conducts a hearing, and issues a decision; upon approval, the annexation takes effect (LBC, 2017).

Once annexed, the City can rezone the property under Wasilla Municipal Code Title 16. The rezoning process includes submittal of a rezoning application, public notice, and a public hearing before the Planning Commission. Following the Commission's recommendation, the City Council considers the rezoning request by the ordinance. Adoption of the ordinance amends the City's zoning map, completing the rezoning process.

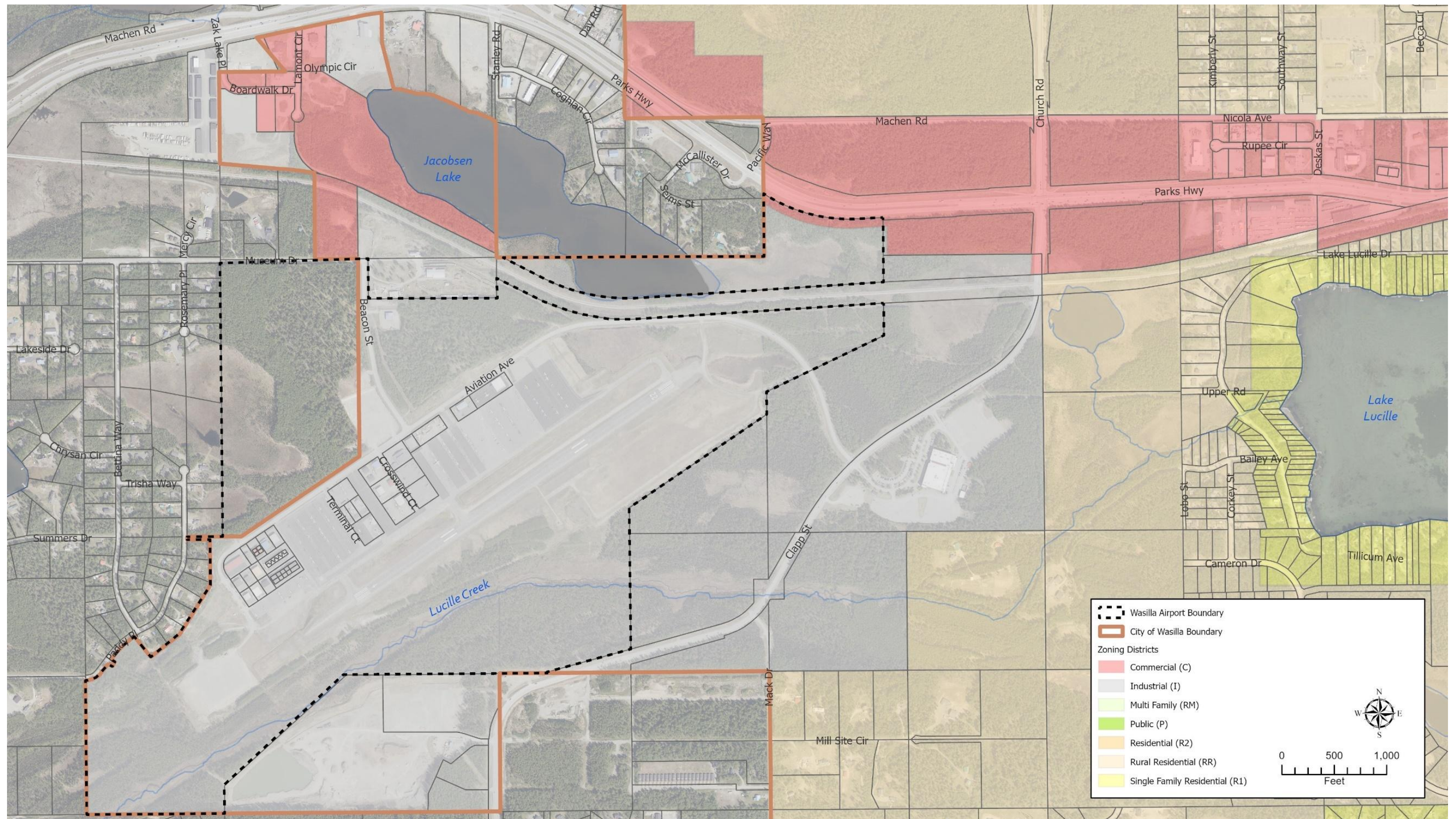


Figure 2-15: Zoning Around the Wasilla Airport

CITY OF WASILLA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan (City of Wasilla, 2011) notes the sizeable amount of City-owned industrial land at the airport and provides a desired future condition in which that land will have enhanced multi-modal connections (freight and commuter rail, plane, and road), along with infrastructure and rail connectivity to allow new economic enterprises to grow. These new enterprises would include local product development and manufacturing, and high-tech businesses that can take advantage of technical skills and education of former military and North Slope workers, material transport and resource storage/staging, and transit-oriented tourism and connectivity to the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry. Additionally, the airport would expand and become a regional hub for small jets and planes while small plane use safely flourishes.

Goals, objectives, and actions specific to the airport are presented in Table 2-10 (City of Wasilla Comprehensive Plan, 2011).

Table 2-10: Goals and Objectives for Wasilla Airport

Goal	Objectives and Actions
Diversify the economic base and attract new employment generators	• Continue to expand the City airport. • Encourage the development of adjacent economic generators on City-owned land.
Support the City as a transportation hub that provides connecting highways, railroad, and expanded air service	• Continue to support improved aviation and an expanded airport. ○ Adopt, implement, and regularly update an AMP to identify future aviation demand and support infrastructure and site development needs. • Improve road connectivity to the new multi-modal transportation node at the City airport. ○ Consider a Museum Drive extension and new airport access road.

WASILLA COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Public input gathered for the Wasilla Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (McKinley Research Group, LLC, 2023) showed that 22% of respondents identified the Wasilla Airport as an area of opportunity—a greater percentage than any other opportunity. Additionally, many of the other opportunities are linked to the airport, based on the City Comprehensive Plan (City of Wasilla, 2011), namely the opportunities to expand industries and the workforce. Table 2-11 presents goals, objectives, and actions that are relevant to Wasilla Airport planning.

Table 2-11: Goals and Objectives for Wasilla Airport (Wasilla Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy)

Goal	Objectives and Actions
Goal A: Improve Infrastructure to Support Economic Resilience	• Develop regional transportation infrastructure. ○ Adopt AMP to expand cargo and passenger service.
Goal B: Diversify Local Economy	• Attract new industries, e.g., manufacturing, logistics, and “value-added.” ○ Study available incentives to attract new businesses and industries. ○ Become an Economic Development Administration-designated “Tech Hub.” ○ Conduct direct marketing and outreach efforts to logistics, manufacturing, and value-added companies.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The MSB Long Range Transportation Plan is intended to guide transportation solutions, improvements, funding decisions, and policy development by the MSB and the State of Alaska both in the near- and long-term through 2035 (MSB, 2017b). It contains three recommendations pertinent to the Wasilla Airport:

- Adopt the proposed precision instrument approach, included in the 2012 Wasilla AMP, to address the lack of regularly scheduled airline commuting or air freight services available for residents.
- Continue to actively support the development, improvement, maintenance, operation, and funding of a system of public airports and seaplane bases throughout the MSB, recommending that the two municipal airports (Wasilla and Palmer) be improved to provide for the needs of commercial aviation companies, as well as air taxi operators and private pilots.
- Encourage public airport sponsors to investigate the potential for Public-Private Partnerships in the provision and/or operation of airport infrastructure in the MSB.

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA REGIONAL AVIATION SYSTEM PLAN

The MSB’s RASP consists of multiple reports focused on the development of aviation in the MSB. The RASP Phase 1 report (MSB, 2008a) notes that the purpose of the RASP is “to identify the current state of aviation in the MSB, how that might change over the next 20 years, and any actions that should be taken to ensure aviation can grow in a positive way for MSB citizens.” The Phase 1 report notes that, for the municipal airports (Wasilla and Palmer), “an optimum land use situation may be difficult because, in some cases, incompatible uses predated the current zoning,” highlighting in Wasilla Airport’s case that there is “existing and planned residential development north and west of the airport.” Residential development to the north of the airport has not yet occurred, though it has taken place to the west. Public input suggested four proposed improvements:

- Extend utilities to lease lots
- Gravel or grass strip and ski strip (completed)

- Extend runway and establish precision approach
- Establish seaplane base at Jacobsen Lake

After the initial RASP study identified the need for a seaplane base in the southern portion of the MSB, the Phase II report (MSB, 2017a) refined the potential for a seaplane base and recommended a long-term development program for a preferred site. The report identified factors that could affect airspace compatibility, including a future precision approach at the Wasilla Airport. Ultimately, the study identified Sevenmile Lake as the final site. The Phase I and Phase II RASP are available on the MSB planning website (<https://matsugov.us/planning/plans/rasp>).

MEADOW LAKES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Meadow Lakes Comprehensive Plan (MLCC Planning Team, 2005) noted that the southeastern corner of the MLCC boundary wraps around Wasilla Airport. Although the plan does not provide land use recommendations specific to the airport or adjacent areas, general land use policies identified in this plan would be applicable to future airport development within the MLCC boundary.

The Meadow Lakes Comprehensive Plan noted that:

The southeastern corner of the Meadow Lakes Community Council boundary wraps around the Wasilla Airport. ... With an extensive but mostly informal trail system, trails in Meadow Lakes have long been used by snowmachines, hikers, dog sleds, horse riders, and skiers; virtually all trails cross what are now private lands, and consequently, these trails are likely to be closed to future public use.

JACOBSEN LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Jacobsen Lake Management Plan outlines the goals and objectives to balance the physical and social demands of those who live or recreate on Jacobsen Lake and prioritizes maintenance of a healthy and productive lake ecosystem (MSB, 2008b). The plan acknowledges the City's consideration of Jacobsen Lake as a potential seaplane base site. The site was found to be unsuitable for development of the seaplane base due to airspace conflicts with Wasilla Airport. Further, the development of the lake to accommodate a floatplane facility is in direct conflict with the goals and objectives of the plan. Property owners and residents support the recommendation of the Jacobsen Lake Management Plan and prefer that no further floatplane development occur at the lake.

2.5.3 FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Stakeholders envision a future full of opportunities for the Wasilla Airport, with a focus on expansion, improvements, and increased functionality. They desire the airport to become a regional hub that accommodates scheduled airline service to destinations throughout Alaska. They envision the airport as a center for small businesses, tourism infrastructure, and commercial growth, with amenities such as restaurants, pilot lounges, a hotel, an aviation business center, and refueling services. Furthermore, stakeholder feedback highlights the need for efficient parking, access to electricity for tie-downs, and improved facilities for pilots and transient users. Overall, these visions represent a collective effort to position the Wasilla

Airport as a thriving aviation hub with enhanced services and infrastructure, catering to a diverse range of aviation needs while maintaining a neighborhood-friendly environment. Key aspirations include the following:

- Extend the runway to accommodate larger aircraft
- Install additional tie-downs and lease spaces for business and private hangars
- Develop an aviation business center with classrooms, onsite offices for airport administration, bathrooms, heated hangar space, and pilot support services
- Address noise abatement concerns and ensure harmonious coexistence with surrounding residential areas

Based on the adjacent, undeveloped land on three sides of the airport, there appear to be substantial opportunities to expand the airport to accommodate growth as well as develop a multi-modal node and new economic enterprises. Past studies identified challenges associated with a seaplane base linked to Wasilla Airport. Therefore, the concept of a seaplane base is not being advanced as part of this AMP.

2.5.4 LAND NEEDS FOR LONG-TERM AIRPORT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The land offering the greatest potential for long-term airport and economic development appears to be the privately owned parcels to the north, east, and south of the existing airport (labeled 2, 5, and 6, respectively, in Figure 2-13), along with the undeveloped airport property to the west that is outside the city limits. In particular, the land to the east of the airport (labeled 5 in Figure 2-13) could support a multi-model node with access to the airport, local roads, Parks Highway, and the railway. Land to the north and south (labeled 2 and 6 in Figure 2-13, respectively) could support the development of related businesses; transit-oriented tourism could be developed to the north (labeled 2 in Figure 2-13) so it could be tied in with the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry and other land around the airport could support other economic enterprises.

The airport is currently pursuing acquisition of additional property to the southwest, below the Runway 04 approach (Figure 2-13), to accommodate future runway expansion.

2.6 SOCIOECONOMIC EVALUATION

In 2023, Northern Economics, Inc. (NEI) completed a Socioeconomic Evaluation of the airport and surrounding region as part of this master planning process, which is summarized in this section and provided in Appendix D. The socioeconomic profile of the study area included the City of Wasilla as well as the MSB (NEI, 2023). The study area also encompassed nearby unincorporated areas designated as Census Designated Places (CDPs), including Knik-Fairview and Meadow Lakes, located to the south and west of Wasilla (Figure 2-16). These CDPs have larger populations than the City of Wasilla, with Knik-Fairview—directly adjacent to Wasilla Airport—having the highest population in the immediate vicinity (Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development [DOLWD], 2022a). The socioeconomic profile describes the current population, economic conditions, and key industries, and includes forecasts for regional and aviation-related growth.

2.6.1 POPULATION AND GROWTH

Users of the airport are primarily residents of Wasilla and the MSB. The MSB has experienced rapid growth over the last 40 years, from a population of under 18,000 in 1980 to nearly 109,000 in 2021. During this period,

Wasilla grew from 1,559 residents (smaller than Palmer's 2,141) to 9,227, an increase of 490 percent. That growth has made Wasilla the largest city in the MSB.

Figure 2-16 shows the relative populations of the cities and CDPs near Wasilla, with darker shading indicating increasing population levels (DOLWD, 2021a).

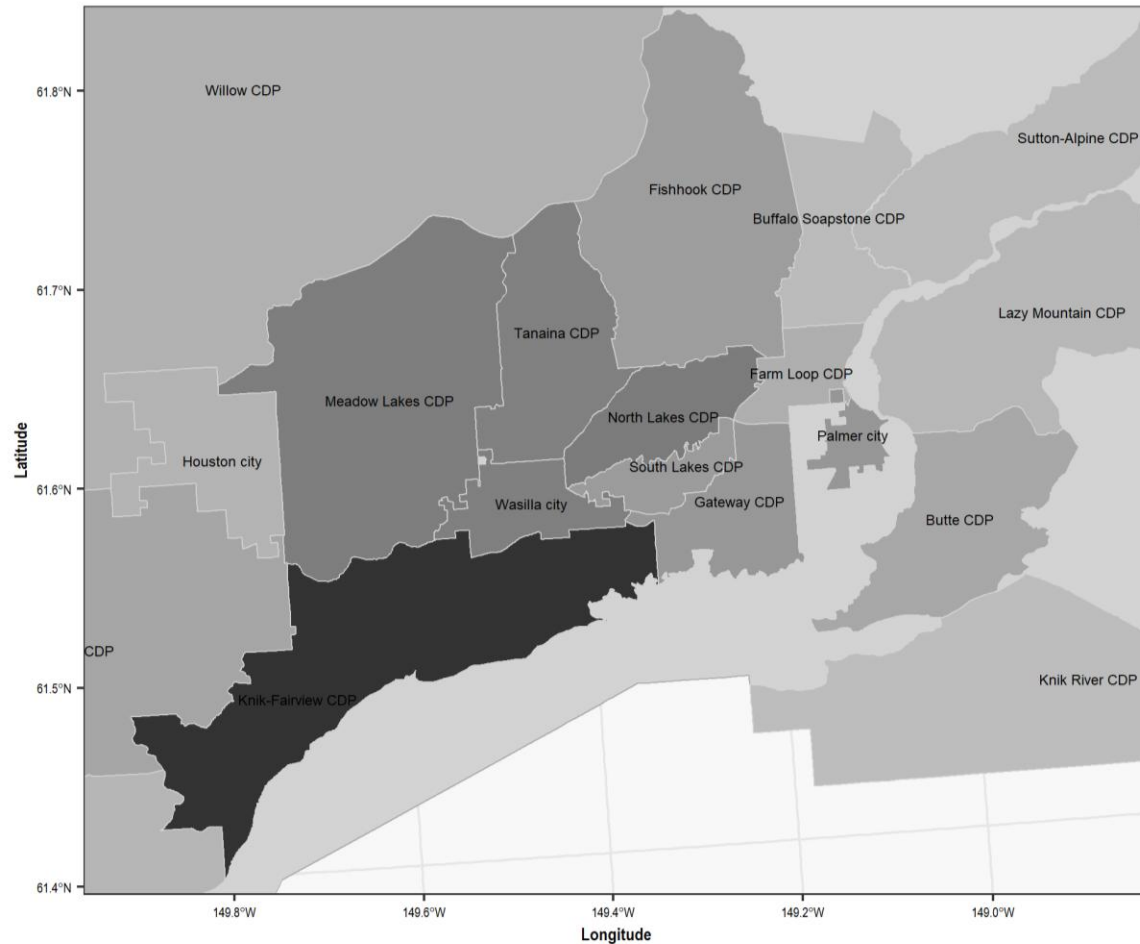


Figure 2-16: Cities and Census Designated Places near the City of Wasilla, 2020

The MSB reached an estimated population of 111,752 in 2022, with Wasilla making up approximately 8.5% of MSB's population (DOLWD, 2023). The MSB has been steadily growing over time, having nearly doubled in population since 2000 (Table 2-12).

Table 2-12: Population Estimates for Matanuska-Susitna Borough and City of Wasilla, 2000–2022

Area Name	2000	2010	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
MSB	59,322	88,995	99,715	102,317	103,988	104,971	105,980	107,081	109,086	111,752
Wasilla	5,504	7,831	8,420	8,682	8,809	8,750	8,706	9,054	9,250	9,547

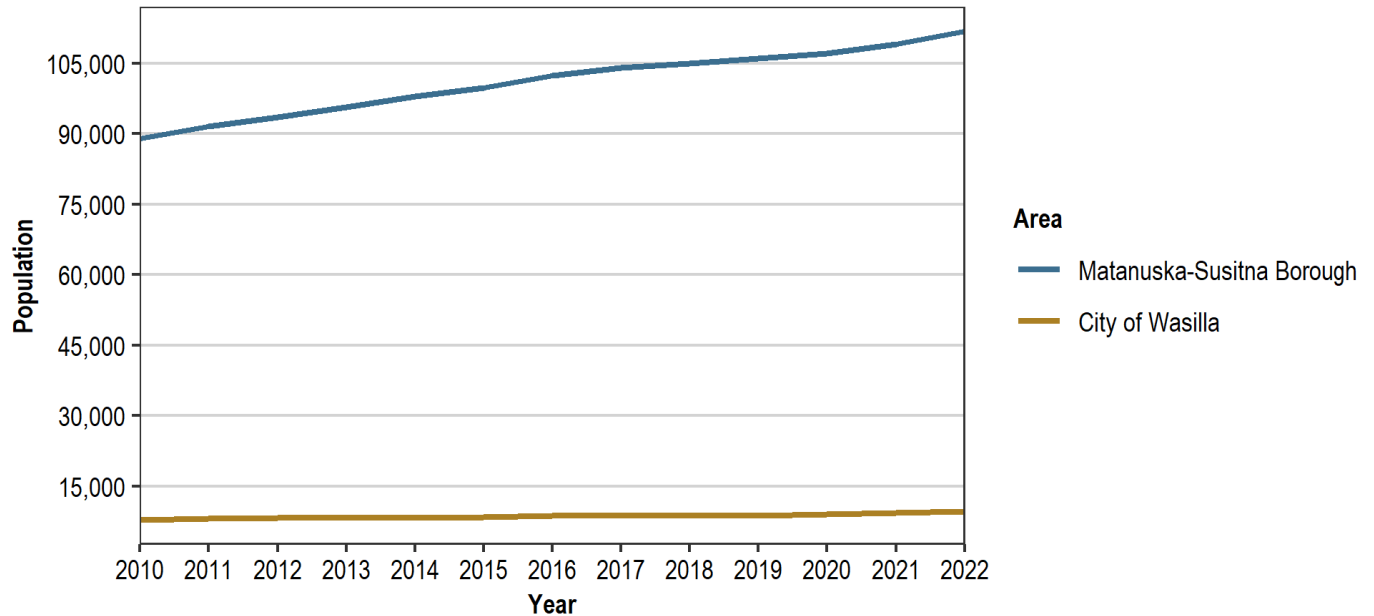


Figure 2-17: Population Trends for Matanuska-Susitna Borough and City of Wasilla, 2010–2022

The DOLWD (DOLWD, 2022b) forecasts growth at the borough level and expects the MSB to grow from its population of 108,805 in 2021 to over 147,000 by 2050 (Figure 2-18). The population is expected to be close to 120,000 in 2028 (5 years from the date of this evaluation), over 125,000 in 10 years, and approaching 140,000 in 20 years (Figure 2-18). It is important to note that this population forecast is based on natural changes (births and deaths) and net migration patterns from the MSB’s history. Changes to the MSB’s economy could also affect the growth it experiences in the future.

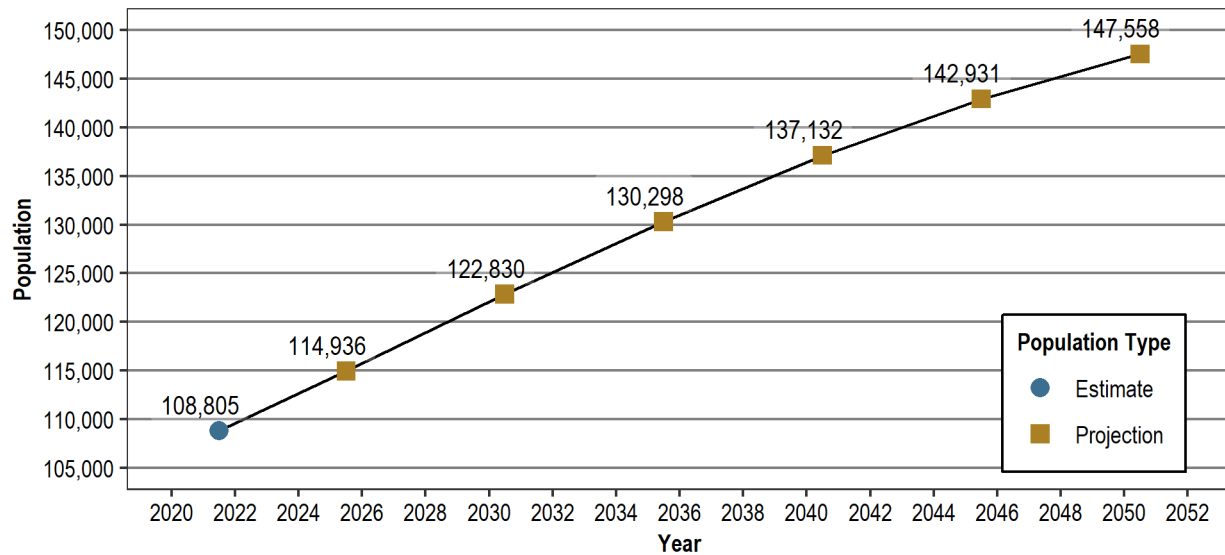


Figure 2-18: Population Projection for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, 2021–2050

Table 2-13 provides estimated changes in Alaska, the MSB, and the study area populations through 2050.

Table 2-13: Projected Change in Population for Alaska, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and Study Area, 2021–2050

Area	Total Population Change (%)					
	2021-2025	2025-2030	2030-2035	2035-2040	2040-2045	2045-2050
Alaska	0.82	1.29	0.80	0.43	0.10	-0.11
MSB	5.63	6.87	6.08	5.24	4.23	3.24
Study Area	8.60	8.81	7.82	6.84	5.73	3.42
City of Wasilla	7.41	7.84	7.05	6.18	5.18	2.93
Knik-Fairview CDP	9.62	9.34	8.25	7.18	6.03	3.67
Meadow Lakes CDP	7.66	8.65	7.69	6.72	5.64	3.33

SEASONALITY OF POPULATION

Data are not available to assess the seasonality of Wasilla’s resident population. Though the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) collects quarterly housing vacancy data for metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), the Anchorage area MSA (which includes the MSB) is not large enough to have data (Callis, 2022). Vacancy data for rental properties, which could speak to seasonal shifts in resident population, are only available on an annual basis from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC). It is worth noting that Wasilla had the lowest rental vacancy rate of any area when measured in 2022, at 2.13% (AHFC, 2022). Seasonality of employment is another potential indicator of the seasonality of the resident population, though data are only available for the MSB.

Some Alaska residents are snowbirds, spending winters in a more temperate climate in another state. Anecdotal, one real estate professional in the MSB indicated that the snowbird population within the city limits is very small and only slightly higher in surrounding areas. The rental market is also very tight, and he estimated that the seasonal swing in residential population is no more than $\pm 5\%$ (Van Diest, 2022). Similarly,

the tourist population increases in the summer months and during certain events, such as the start of the Iditarod; however, this seasonal activity has a variable effect on airport demand. While highway-based tourism that is common in the summer months may have limited influence on airport demand, higher visitor numbers can affect air taxi and flightseeing operations, particularly given the large helicopter presence at the airport.

2.6.2 ECONOMY

EMPLOYMENT

The MSB has experienced a rapidly growing labor force along with its population growth. Presently, there are about 50,000 members in the labor force (Figure 2-19), which is slightly less than half of the MSB’s population. Employment levels have largely tracked with the labor force, with the most notable exception in early 2020 at the start of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, as depicted in Figure 2-19. Since that time, however, the labor force and employment levels have nearly returned to the highs they saw at the start of 2020, and the unemployment rate is at a 30-year low (DOLWD, 2022c). Figure 2-20 provides a closer look at the unemployment rate, which, as of mid-2022, dropped to only 4% (DOLWD, 2022c).

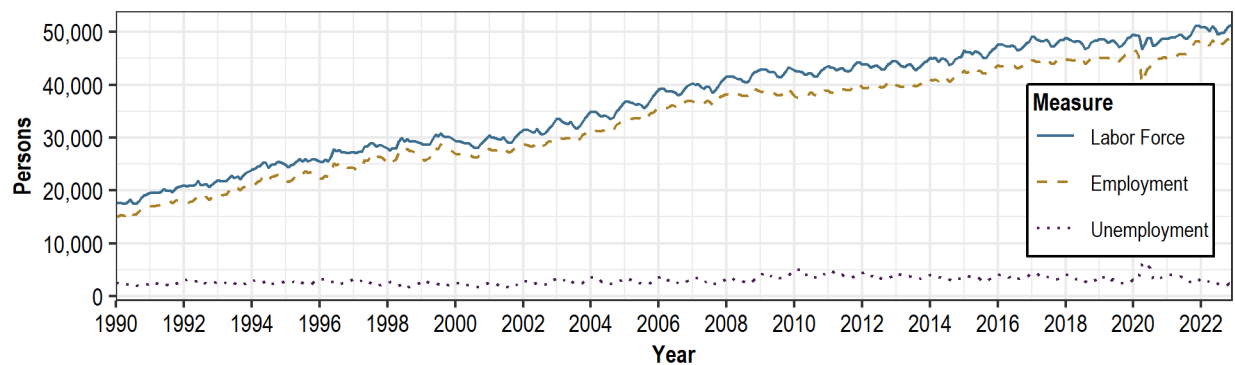


Figure 2-19: Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment in Matanuska-Susitna Borough, 1990-2022

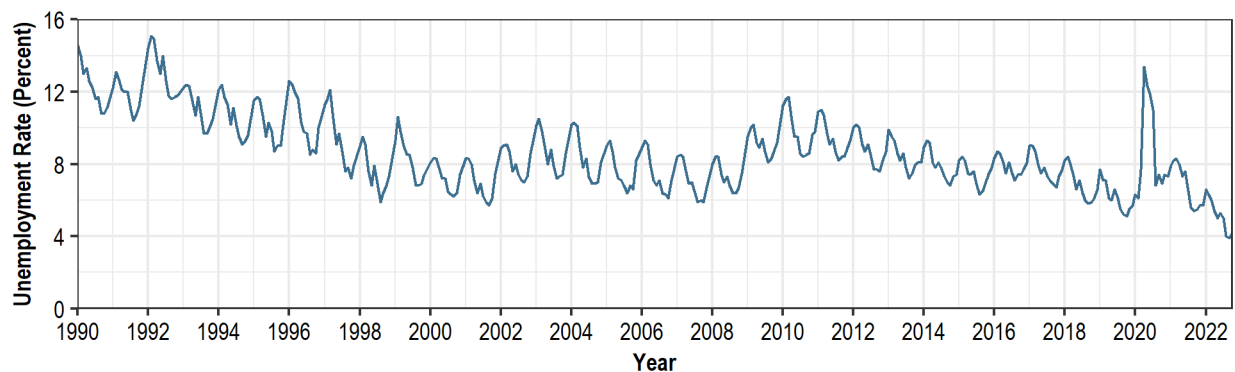


Figure 2-20: Unemployment Rate in Matanuska-Susitna Borough, 1990-2022

INCOME AND POVERTY STATUS

The MSB’s median family income was \$91,597 in 2020, with a median household income (which also includes non-family households) of \$76,118 and a per capita income of \$31,963 (USCB 2022). Slightly more than 10

percent of residents have incomes below the poverty level. The MSB has lower land and living costs than the larger urban area of Anchorage.

OCCUPATIONS

The DOLWD compiles data on workers in each of Alaska’s boroughs to provide insight into the most common occupations. In 2021, the MSB had an annual average employment of 43,200, 85% of which was private non-farm employment and 14% was in the public sector. The top five private sector occupations are healthcare and social assistance (5,907 workers), retail trade (5,774 workers), construction (4,775 workers), accommodation and food services (3,364 workers), and real estate (2,218 workers) (DOLWD, 2022c). Most jobs in the MSB are based on providing services to locals, while many residents are commuting to Anchorage for higher-paying jobs and choose to live in the MSB due to lower land and overall living costs compared to Anchorage (Fried and Howell, 2020). Notable exceptions are the oil and gas industry, where many workers commute to Alaska’s North Slope, and the MSB’s important agriculture industry that produces goods locally.

USCB’s occupation data show that the largest occupational group in the MSB is the *Management, Business, Science, and Arts*, at one-third of the workforce (USCB, 2022). Together, the two groups, *Service* and *Sales and Office*, make up slightly more than another third. The remainder of the groups, *Production, Natural Resources, and Military*, complete the occupational view for the MSB (Figure 2-21).

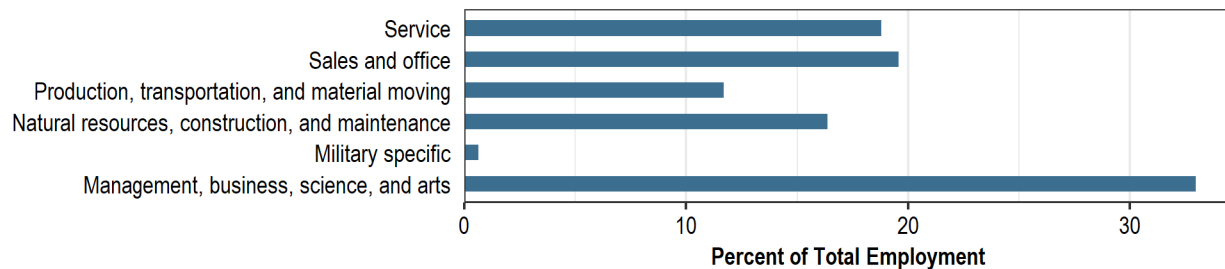


Figure 2-21: Occupations in Matanuska-Susitna Borough, 2020

KEY INDUSTRIES

The employment levels in most of the MSB’s industries are seasonal. Some industries understandably peak during the summer months (e.g., agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting; construction; and accommodations and food services), while others historically peak during the winter. Figure 2-22 shows the seasonality that each industry exhibited from 2015 to 2021 (DOLWD, 2019a, 2019b, 2020a, 2020b). As noted, some industries have traditionally peaked in the winter months (e.g., professional, scientific, and technical), even though that was not the case in 2021 (DOLWD, 2021b, 2021c, 2022d).

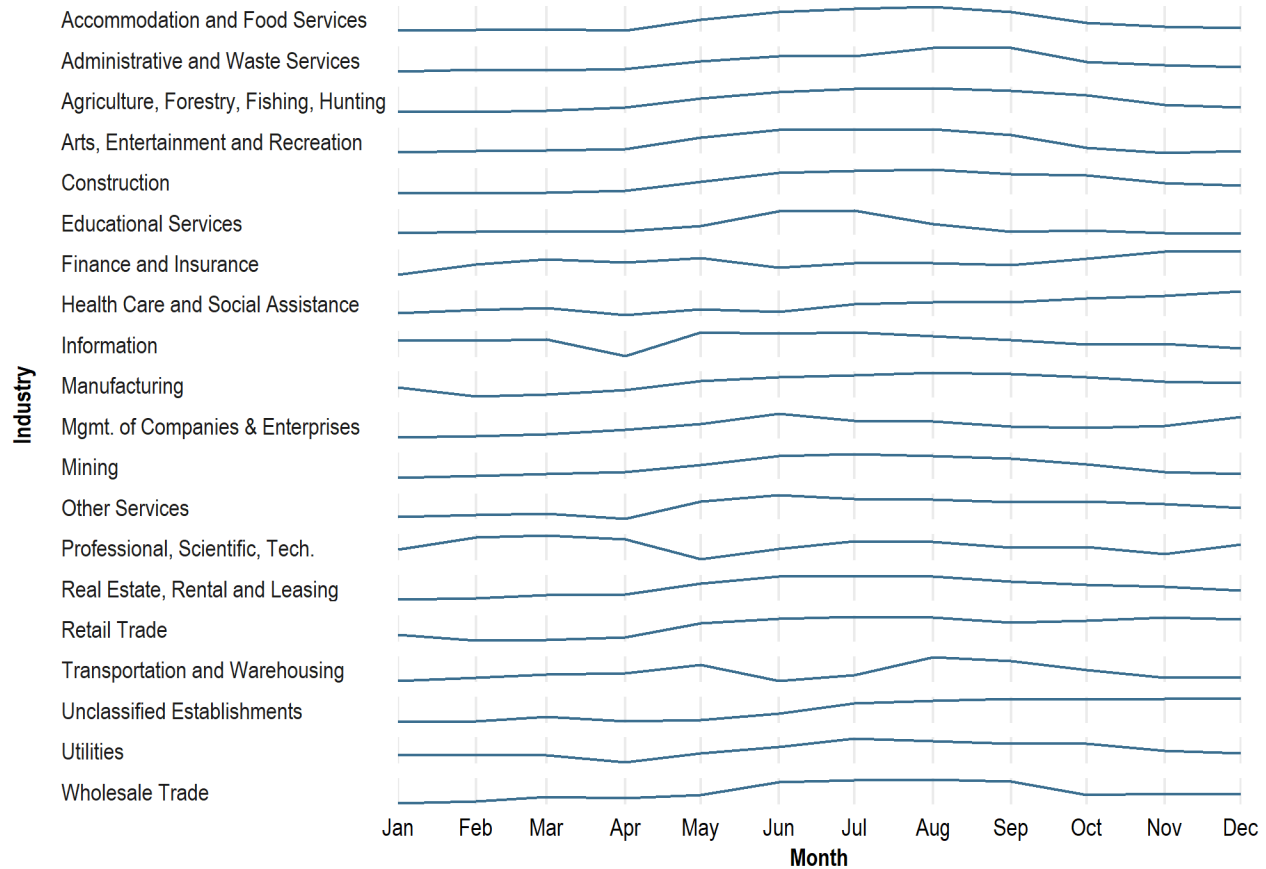


Figure 2-22: Seasonality of Employment by Private Industry in Matanuska-Susitna Borough, 2015-2021

Figure 2-23 looks more broadly at both public and private employment. The chart shows the seasonality of all industries, including oscillating employment in goods-producing industries, more pronounced changes in the service-providing industries, and the relative stability of federal and state governments. Note that school district employment is captured under local government, which causes local government employment to exhibit seasonality during the summer months when teachers and other school staff do not work.

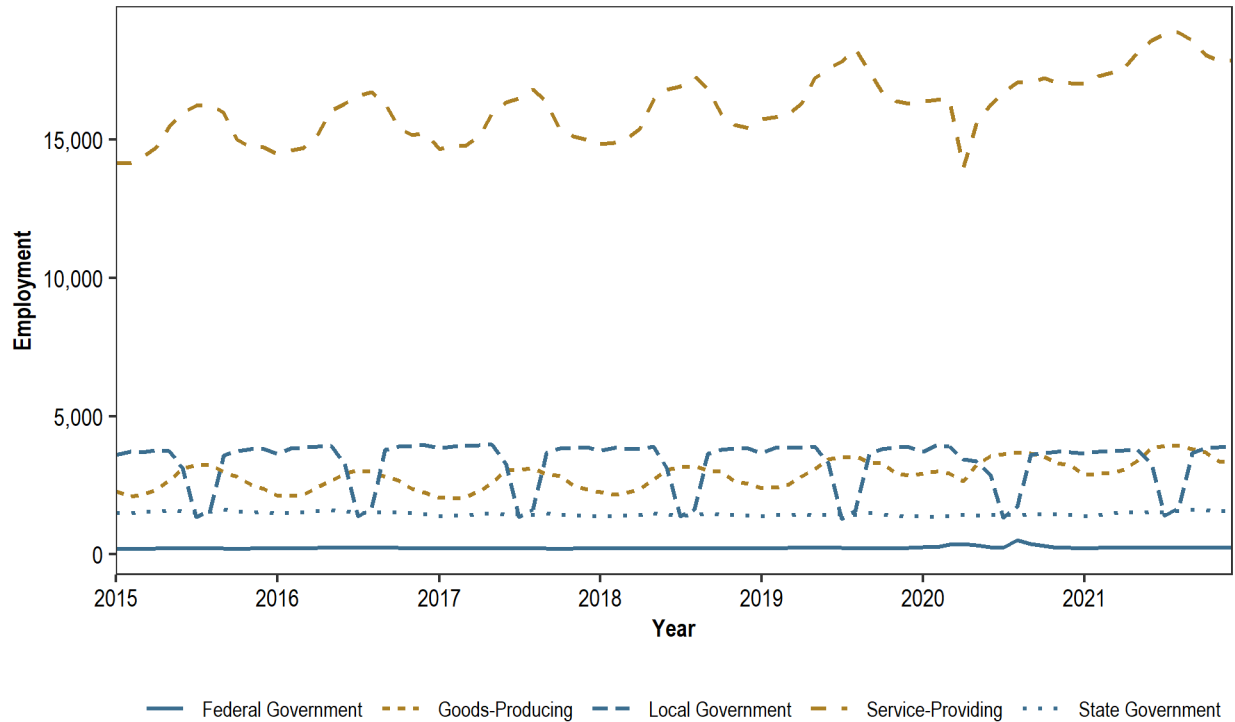


Figure 2-23: Seasonality of Employment in Matanuska-Susitna Borough, 2015–2021

GENERAL AVIATION & TOURISM

The aviation and tourism sectors are important for evaluating GA airports in the MSB. Figure 2-24 and Figure 2-25 look at MSB employment in specific industries indicative of the aviation and tourism sectors, respectively. The impact of the pandemic is visible in each figure, though the recovery from it has varied considerably. Employment in aviation-related industries in the MSB had been seasonal but steady over time prior to the pandemic. Since then, however, peak employment in the air transportation and scenic and sightseeing industries has struggled to reach prior years' seasonal lows. However, employment in the support services industry was nearly unaffected by the pandemic and has been on a steady rise.

On the other hand, tourism employment has exhibited a faster return to pre-pandemic levels. Accommodation businesses had a similar number of employees in 2021 as they did in 2015, and scenic and sightseeing employment (shown in Figure 2-24 but also part of the tourism sector) is still down, but food services and amusement employment has mostly recovered.

Note that scenic and sightseeing employment was not available in Figure 2-25 due to confidentiality restrictions based on the number of active companies. Likewise, museum, park, and zoo employment, shown in Figure 2-25 is not available prior to 2020. That industry peaked at only eight employees in 2020 and 13 employees in 2021 (DOLWD, 2022e).

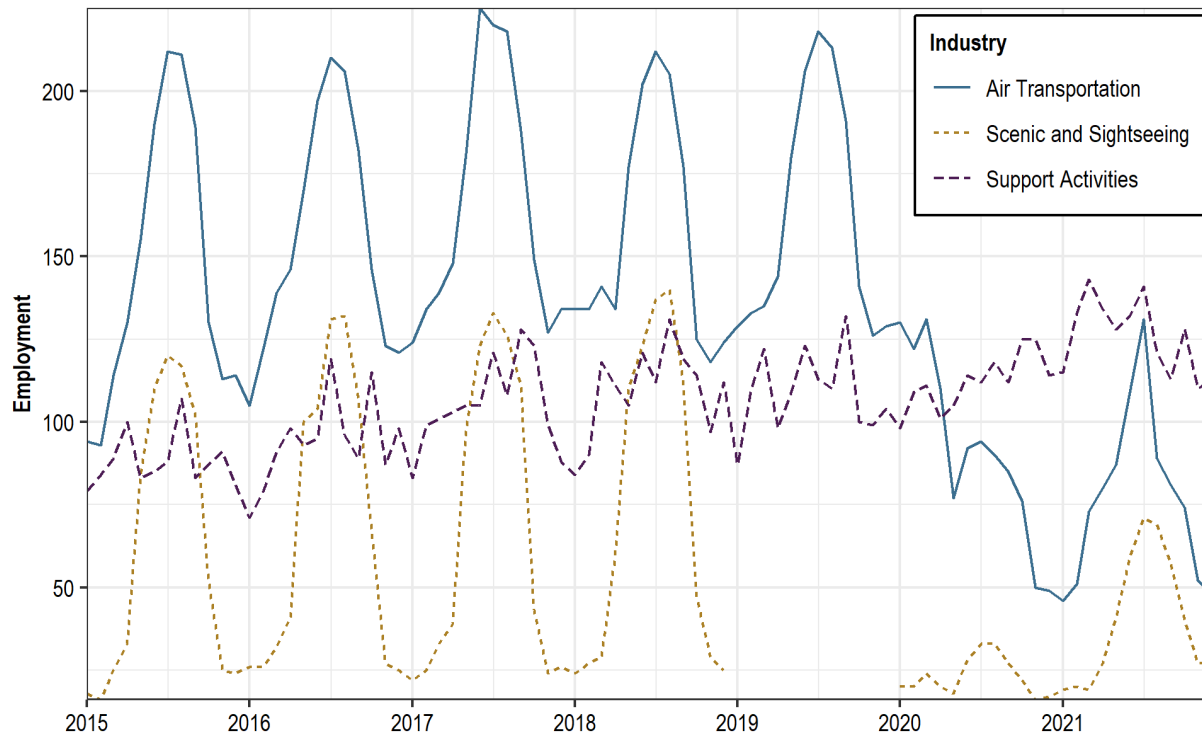


Figure 2-24: Industry Employment Related to Aviation, 2015–2021

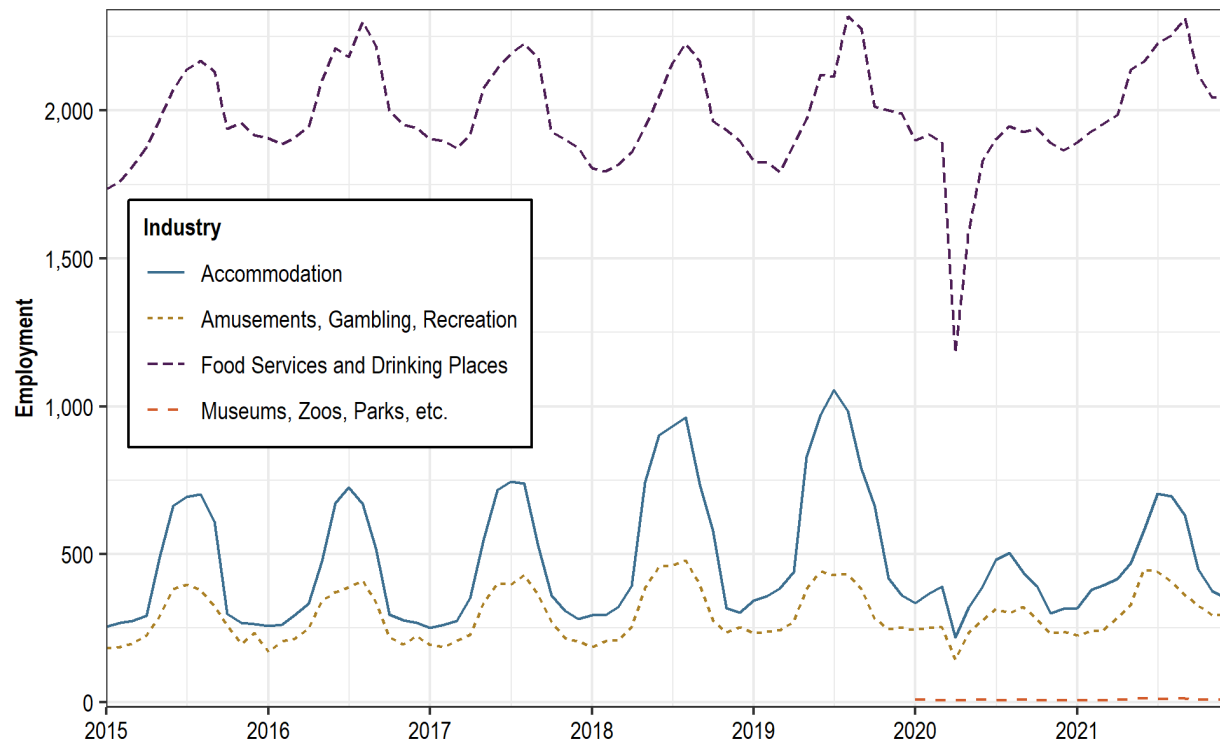


Figure 2-25: Industry Employment Related to Tourism, 2015–2021

2.6.3 OUTLOOK

As a GA airport, Wasilla Airport should benefit from continued population growth in the MSB, much of which will likely take place in the fast-growing areas near the airport. Population-based demand for airport and aviation services will likely remain strong and grow as the region expands. This is consistent with the steadily rising employment in the transportation support services industry, despite other aviation-related industries not yet having recovered to pre-pandemic employment levels.