

Detailed Supplemental Information on Six ARRA AIP Projects

The following six American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) Airport Improvement Program (AIP) project selections, questioned by the OIG in its ARRA Advisory, are justified under FAA policy and are in full compliance with the requirements of the AIP and ARRA as described below.

Akiachak and Ouzinkie, two native Alaskan villages, were awarded \$13.9 million and \$14.7 million respectively for replacement airports. The replacement airports were justified under FAA policy and are in full compliance with the requirements of the AIP and ARRA.

Air transportation is the only means of year-round transportation available to Native Alaskan residents of these villages for school activities, mail/cargo distribution, and medical evacuation.

Both Ouzinkie and Akiachak airports could not be rehabilitated in their existing locations to meet FAA safety standards so they had to be relocated to new locations. If rehabilitated in their existing locations, the National Priority Rating (NPR) would have been 66.

Both projects are in direct support of the FAA Flight Plan strategy to expand and accelerate implementing safety and air navigation improvement programs in Alaska. Specifically, the purpose of the initiative is to improve rural airports to permit 24-hour Visual Flight Rules (VFR) access.

Akiachak

There is no physical infrastructure (e.g. docks, seaplane pullouts) in place for the Akiachak seaplane base. The “seaplane base” is simply a bend in the Kuskokwim River with mud banks, ever-moving sand bars, and no defined landing area. There is a very limited number of sea planes in the Bethel area that could utilize such a facility and provide reliable access to the community of Akiachak.

No year-round road linkage exists between Akiachak and any other community in the region, including Bethel.

The cost of constructing and maintaining roads in the Bethel area to link communities is cost prohibitive.

Travel on the Kuskokwim River is not possible for weeks at a time during the winter freeze-up and spring break-up due to ice and debris floating in the river. During other times of the year, safe travel on the river is affected by extreme flooding in the summer,

and overflows (open water, cracks in the ice), white-out conditions, drifting snow, extreme temperatures, and extended darkness all during the longer winter months.

The straight line distance to fly to Bethel is 14 miles, but to travel along the river the distance is approximately 30 miles. To travel this distance in an open skiff can take upwards of two hours.

Ouzinkie

Access to the Kodiak airport via open skiff is very unreliable. Travel cannot be accomplished during non-daylight hours, which during the winter is even more difficult. From Thanksgiving through March access is very unreliable during the day. Ouzinkie residents can travel to Kodiak Island roughly only 10% of the time. From March to June access is slightly better, possibly up to 50% of the daylight hours. June through part of September the weather is more reliable; access is approximately 80% of the daylight hours. The rest of September to Thanksgiving access is possible roughly 30% of the time during daylight hours.

Findlay Airport, Ohio received a grant for \$4.8 million for a new taxiway. The project was justified under FAA policy and complies with the requirements of the ARRA and AIP.

Taxiway A has a Pavement Condition Index value of 32, meaning it is due for rehabilitation. Simply rehabilitating the taxiway would have scored the project with an NPR of 64. However, portions of the taxiway were too close to the parallel runway (240-foot separation versus the 400-foot standard). Rather than rehabilitate the taxiway in its existing non-standard location, the FAA approved the project to rebuild the taxiway 400 feet from the runway centerline. This would meet FAA design standards and improve safety at the airport, though it resulted in a lower NPR rating.

Funds were better spent bringing the taxiway up to standards rather than only rehabilitating the taxiway now (under ARRA) and relocating it later.

Ohio has identified Findlay Airport as an Advanced Service General Aviation Airport, contributing over \$13 million in economic benefit to the area and the state.

Skyhaven Airport, Warrensburg, Missouri received \$2 million to relocate the apron. The project was justified under FAA policy and complies with the requirements of the ARRA and AIP.

The Runway Safety Action Team identified the markings on the existing apron as non-standard, resulting in the airport operating under a modification to design standard.

The new apron site has already been graded as it is associated with a terminal relocation program at the airport to adequately provide runway centerline to taxiway centerline separation. Therefore, completion of this project at this time in conjunction with the terminal relocation is justified.

Delaware Airpark, Delaware. This GA airport received \$909,806 for the final design of the Construct Runway 9-27 project. The project was justified under FAA policy and complies with the requirements of the ARRA and AIP.

Design only projects like this one that are “ready to go” and meet ARRA requirements are ARRA eligible. Additionally, design projects create jobs with different skill sets.

This airport serves the general aviation needs of central Delaware and the Capital of Dover. It is the base for flight training by Delaware State University for the Air Force, Department of Interior, and NASA. It also relieves congestion for corporate traffic at the Civil Air Terminal at Dover Air Force Base.

Completion of this project will remedy non-standard conditions that have contributed to two accidents in the recent past.

It is the only ARRA project in Delaware. Approved FAA ARRA guidance provides advice to our field personnel to ensure that ARRA distribution consider not only the NPR, but also regular AIP discretionary funding patterns, including geographical distribution and types of airports.

Wilbur Airport, Washington. The \$2.2 million runway extension project at Wilbur, WA cited by the OIG is actually a runway rehabilitation project that includes widening and extension. More importantly, the NPR is 66, so the airport should be excluded from this Advisory.