



Needs-Based Planning for a Stronger Aviation System: Airport Needs

April 2026

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Abbreviations

AASP	Alaska Aviation System Plan
ACIP	Airport Capital Improvement Plan
AIP	Airport Improvement Program
ALP	Airport Layout Plan
APEB	Aviation Project Evaluation Board
CIMP	Capital Improvement and Maintenance Program
DOT&PF	Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
M&O	Maintenance and Operations
NPIAS	National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems

The preparation of this document was supported in part with financial assistance through the Airport Improvement Program from the Federal Aviation Administration (AIP 3-02-0000-033-2024) as provided under Title 49 USC § 47104. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the FAA. Acceptance of this report by the FAA does not in any way constitute a commitment on the part of the United States to participate in any development depicted therein, nor does it indicate that the proposed development is environmentally acceptable in accordance with appropriate public laws.



Introduction

The key function of an aviation system plan is to address the needs of airports within the system. To ensure resources are effectively allocated, it is important to maintain a centralized, standardized record of *all* needs across the system. The Airport Needs List is how the DOT&PF tracks systemic needs to inform the project development process and the Airport Capital Improvement Plan (ACIP), providing supporting documentation for unfunded needs and transparency about how airport deficiencies are addressed.

A ‘need’ is an identified improvement, repair, or replacement of critical elements needed at an airport, from installing airfield lighting, to resurfacing a runway, or replacing an aging grader. Some needs are not eligible for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funding, but it’s important to document them in the Needs List for future consideration through other funding sources. Day-to-day maintenance is generally not included in the list; maintenance issues identified during inspections are directed to the appropriate M&O Specialist for resolution through routine processes.

The Airport Needs List is an internal, online database within the Alaska Aviation System Plan (AASP) accessed and updated by designated DOT&PF staff. Development of the Needs List began in Phase I (2008–2013) of the AASP and continued through Phase II (2013–2019). Prior to this effort, no centralized system for tracking airport needs existed, creating inefficiencies and redundancies. The Needs List was substantially updated in Phase III (2020–2025) to improve accuracy and usability, as described in detail in Chapter 5 of the Phase III Report. The output of the Needs List is the Needs Directory, a publicly available report of all documented needs within the AASP. The public Needs Directory can be filtered by state region or maintenance district.

Life Cycle of Airport Needs

Airport needs are identified through inspections, public and leaseholder comments, and planning studies, as well as by DOT&PF staff through everyday tasks. These needs are added to the internal AASP website, where they are processed and monitored by DOT&PF airport planners. Federally eligible needs through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) are assigned the appropriate FAA work codes. Ineligible needs are either directed to M&O (Maintenance and Operations) or categorized as Community/Economic Development Needs. Airports included in the FAA’s National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) must demonstrate at least \$750,000 in eligible development needs over a rolling five-year period to justify inclusion, and the Needs List helps DOT&PF track this information. This threshold ensures that airports in the system reflect measurable capital

FAA WORK CODES

The FAA uses work codes to prioritize projects in the AIP. Work codes are a sequence of three 2-character codes that correspond to the project purpose, component, and type. Each of the 2-character codes has an associated point value to determine the project’s national priority rating (NPR).

For example, the need “Acquire Snow Removal Equipment (Akiachak Grader)” is assigned the FAA work code ST EQ SN.

ST: standards

EQ: equipment

SN: snow



requirements and play a defined role in the national aviation network, rather than existing without documented investment needs.

Federally eligible airfield and building needs are eventually incorporated into defined project scopes, which advance through the Aviation Project Evaluation Board (APEB) scoring process; project scores are one component that assists in determining funding priority. After being scored by the APEB, projects are considered for inclusion in the Department's Airport Capital Improvement Program (ACIP). AIP-eligible maintenance and equipment needs are also included in the ACIP, but do not route through the APEB process. The AIP project development process¹ and APEB project prioritization process² are both described in more detail on the AASP website. Figure 1 shows a high-level summary of the life cycle of AIP-eligible needs; Figure 2 shows a simplified version of the process of identifying and funding all needs. For more detailed information about these processes, see Phase III Chapter 5.

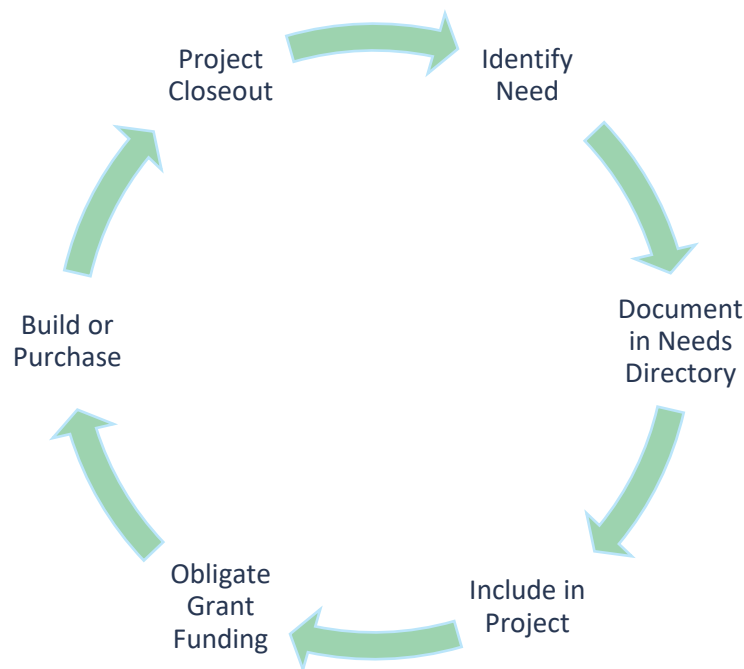


Figure 1. Cycle of Airport Needs.

¹ https://www.alaskaasp.com/media/4032/aasp_aip_project_process_fact_sheet_final_web.pdf

² https://www.alaskaasp.com/media/4014/aasp_apeb_fact_sheet_final.pdf

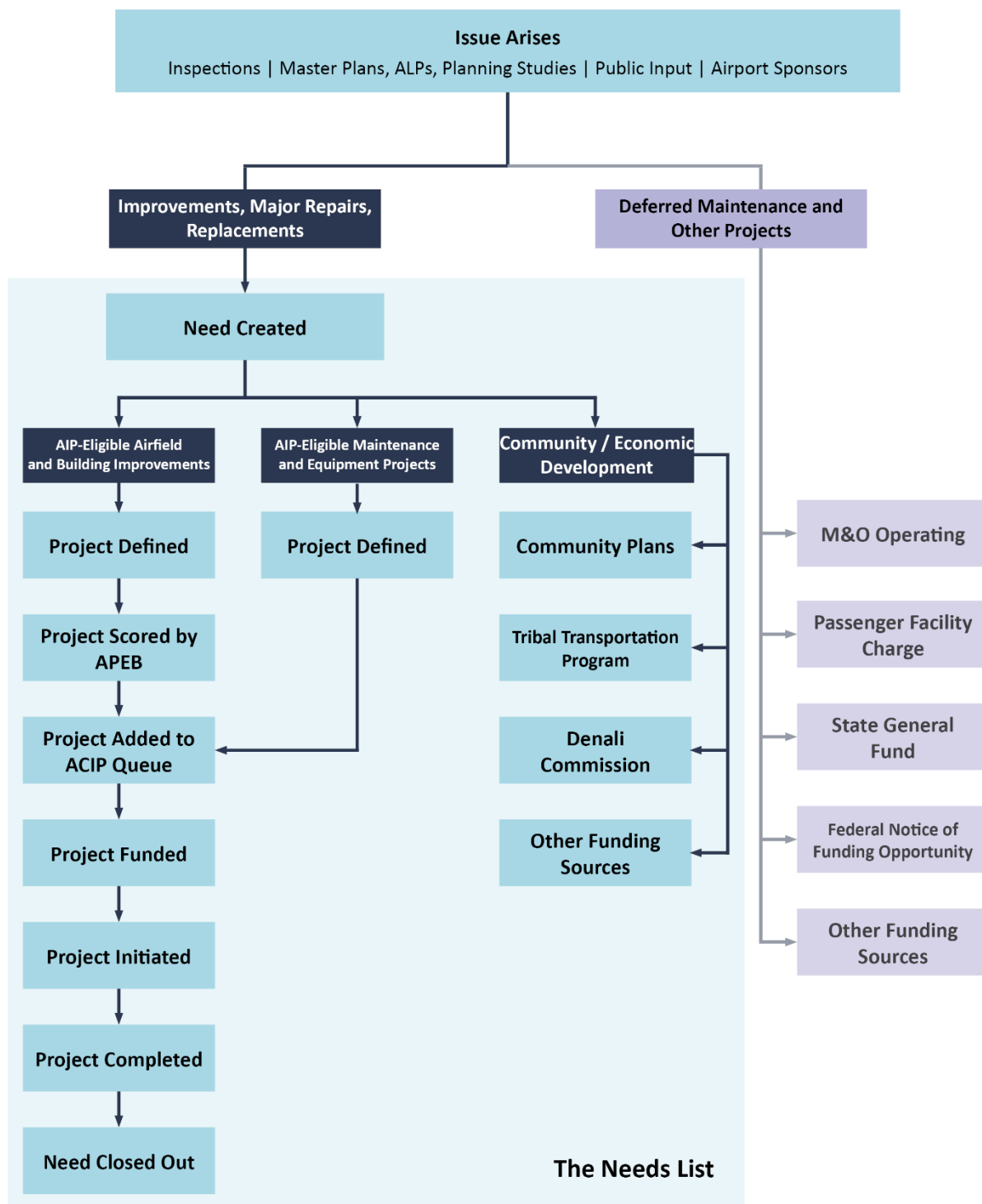


Figure 2. Flow of Airport Needs.



Airport Needs Directory

The Airport Needs Directory is publicly available on the AASP website. The Directory contains all recorded needs, organized by airport, and is not fiscally constrained. The Directory provides basic airport information such as the owner, AASP and NPIAS classification, road system access, annual enplanements, revenue and operational costs, and contact information. It also summarizes ratings from the last Capital Improvement and Maintenance Program (CIMP) inspection, and the needs themselves, organized into *Airport Needs in Planned Projects*, *Additional Identified Needs*, and *Community Economic Development Needs*. At this stage in the process, any cost estimates are “planning level” or “rough order of magnitude” only, rather than detailed estimates, and are intended to guide big picture planning decisions that lead to future design and construction projects. Costs are more clearly defined during later stages of the project development process. Community and Economic Development needs are not assigned cost estimates, as the solutions will be defined by the community or through other funding sources. Municipalities, Tribes, or other agencies can use the Airport Needs Directory when applying for other funding opportunities, to demonstrate that the need is documented and tracked over time.

The Airport Needs Directory exports as a PDF with airport needs organized alphabetically, as shown in Figure 3. The top of the individual needs report provides general facility information, followed by the **Airport Rating Summary from Last CIMP Inspection**. The rating summary shows the count of each rating (A–F) from the last CIMP inspection; Ds and Fs are considered deficiencies that require repair or reconstruction, which are then linked to needs in the Needs List.

The next section shows the **Airport Needs in Planned Projects**, which are identified as *Obligated* (funding secured), *Programmed* (future funding planned), or *In ACIP Queue* (APEB scored project but no assigned funding year).

Additional Identified Needs are deficiencies that have been identified but not yet included in a

FISCAL CONSTRAINT

The Airport Needs Directory is not fiscally constrained; it documents systemwide needs for future funding consideration. The information is then used to develop fiscally constrained plans (such as the Capital Improvement Program) or to apply for funding from other sources.



AKIACHAK (Z13)
 FAA Associated City: AKIACHAK

Airport Needs Directory
 January 21, 2026

Owner: ALASKA DOT&P CENTRAL REGION		
Borough/Census Area: Bethel Census Area	AASP Classification: Community Off-Road	NPIAS Level of Service/Number: Commercial Service - Nonprimary 02-0345
Population (2024): 716	Part 139 Certified: No	Revenue (2025): \$0
Enplanements (2024): 3,448	USPS Bypass Mail Hub: No	Expenditures (2025): \$42,470
Road Access: None	Essential Air Service: No	PFAS Identified in Soil: N/A
Planner Name: Philana Miles	Planner Email: philana.miles@alaska.gov	

Airport Rating Summary from Last CIMP Inspection: (08/30/2021)				
A	B	C	D	F
			9	19

Airport Needs in Planned Projects*	Location	Funding	Estimated Cost	Status	Expected Year
Equipment: ST EQ SN: Acquire Snow Removal Equipment (Akiachak Grader)	38646	NPE	\$500,000	Programmed	2026
Equipment, Security, and Fencing: ST EQ SN: Acquire Snow Removal Equipment (Acquire Loader (Replace 38646))		NPE	\$500,000	Programmed	2028

* Several needs may be combined in one project. Funding is planned, not guaranteed.

Additional Identified Needs**	Funding	Estimated Cost	Priority	Need Origination
Airport Master Plan	AIP	\$115,980	Short	Inspection
Apply Dust Palliative	AIP	\$32,456	Short	Inspection
Minor Gravel Resurfacing	AIP	\$347,781	Short	Other
Rehabilitate Apron	AIP	\$588,798	Mid	Other
Rehabilitate Runway	AIP	\$4,710,306	Mid	Other
Rehabilitate Runway Lighting	AIP	\$226,600	Short	Inspection
Rehabilitate Taxiway	AIP	\$588,798	Mid	Other

** Additional Identified Needs are documented and verified but not yet included in a project.

Community Economic Development Needs***	Need Origination
Construct Passenger Shelter	Community
Construct Toilet Facilities	Community
Construct Tie-Downs	Community

***Community Economic Development/Quality of Life needs make the airport more viable for reasons of economic development, community comfort (passenger shelter/waitroom), and may be accomplished through community funds combined with other sources such as: Denali Commission, Tribal Transportation, or private sources. Each community solution to these needs will be unique; therefore, the funding source, estimated cost, and priority are not tracked.

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Figure 3. Example Individual Airport Needs Report from the Airport Needs Directory.

project, such as “Rehabilitate Runway Lighting.” **Community Economic Development Needs**, such as “Construct Passenger Shelter,” are included at the end of the report, without cost estimates or funding sources identified; because these needs are outside the scope of DOT&PF’s typical airport funding but maintain important to capture, so they are tracked at a higher level.

As of December 2025, the majority (78%) of the needs in the Airport Needs Directory are planned for funding through the AIP and approximately 5% are planned for funding through stimulus funding or other sources; the remaining 17% do not have an identified funding source, but some may be eligible for the AIP. Most needs (52%) are prioritized as immediate or short-term needs. The most common Community/Economic Development needs are public restrooms (123) and passenger waiting shelters (108). Figure 4 shows additional information about the makeup of the Needs Directory.

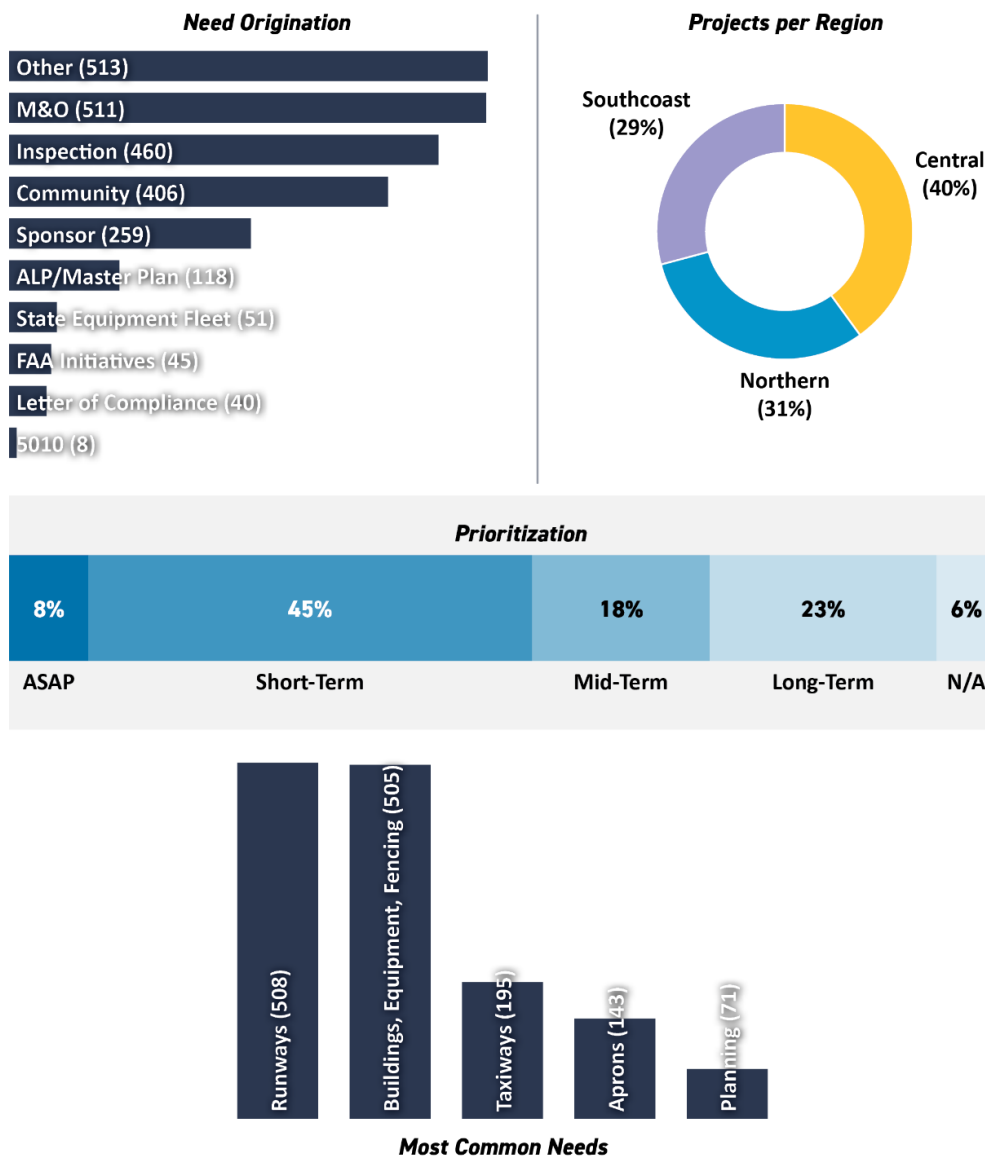


Figure 4. Needs Directory Make-up as of December 2025.

Reporting Needs

Community members and airport users and stakeholders can report needs by participating in airport planning processes, such as a master plan, feasibility study, or project work group, or by contacting their DOT&PF airport planner. Contact information for each airport can be found on www.alaskaasp.com/ by searching for an airport. Reported needs may relate to any airport component, including runways, taxiways, aprons, lighting, navigational aids, safety areas, drainage, erosion control, snow removal equipment and buildings, fencing, terminals, leasing areas, access roads, utilities, or other operational and safety features. Needs may also address compliance with FAA design standards, changes in critical aircraft, weather-related damage, environmental concerns, or long-term system planning considerations at various sites. All submitted needs are reviewed and, when appropriate, documented through the AASP for tracking, evaluation, and future prioritization.

Needs submitted for inclusion in the Needs List must include a clear name, detailed description, assigned priority level (ASAP/immediate, short term, mid-term, or long term), and justification explaining the operational, safety, or compliance concern. Providing thorough information, including supporting context, documentation, and photographs when available, helps planners accurately define the scope of the issue, assess eligibility, and ensure the need is properly evaluated and addressed within the planning and funding process.

The Public Airport Comment Map³ is also available to report needs and requests to DOT&PF.

Completion of the Airport Needs Process

Project closeout information is documented through the **Close the Loop** process, a key Phase III enhancement that completes the full lifecycle of an airport need—from initial identification and data entry through planning, design, development, construction, and final closeout. Through this structured process, DOT&PF planners confirm which needs were addressed by a project, update or create records as necessary, document final inspection and as-built dates, and upload photographic documentation of completed work.

All records are maintained within the Alaska Aviation System Plan (AASP) database to ensure long-term traceability and accountability. Once a project is constructed or equipment is procured and the associated grant is financially closed with the FAA, the corresponding need is formally removed from the active Needs List. This approach maintains a current and accurate inventory of system needs while preserving a permanent, searchable record of completed improvements, and is one of the final updates for this phase of the overarching plan. See Phase III Chapter 5 for more information about this process and how implementing Close the Loop allows additional reporting opportunities that highlight completed work, while continuing to track ongoing projects and needs within the Needs Directory.

³ <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a614eca77f13467a899c6ccb346ba2e7>



Conclusion

Maintaining the Airport Needs List is a fundamental component of the aviation system process, allowing for the efficient development of the Airport Capital Improvement Program and creating a record of completed work. Digitizing this process was a primary focus of the AASP over the past two phases, not only to support staff in project development, but also to track and document systemic needs at the largest airport system in North America. The public-facing Airport Needs Directory is also useful for other community and regional planning efforts, as it can be used as supporting documentation for funding requests.

References

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. *Reports: Airport Needs Directory*, accessed online at <https://internal.alaskaasp.com/Reports/Reports.aspx?tab=needs>

Federal Aviation Administration, 2015. *Change 1 to AC 150/5070-7, The Airport System Planning Process*, available online at https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Advisory_Circular/150-5070-7-change1.pdf

