

**From:** Borough Manager

**To:** Haines Borough Assembly

**Subj:** Estimate of Sound Monitoring Costs - Revised

1. The assembly has directed the administration to submit a cost estimate for conducting a noise, social, and economic study regarding the proposed 26 mile heliport.
2. **Noise Impact Study:** The attached document details how the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) uses a noise contour model to gauge the noise levels surrounding a airport or heliport. This modeling does not require a site visit and can be achieved for \$5000 to \$6000.
  - a. This option would provide a computer generated model of sound levels surrounding the proposed heliport. A second phase of this project could be “ground truthing” the numbers during actual operations. This is estimated to cost an additional \$1000 to \$1500 using an independent consultant.
  - b. Of note, the FAA has set a threshold of 65 decibels, above which, residential land use is not compatible. Before authorizing this spending, the Assembly may want to consider how they will use this data.
3. **Background Noise:** It is also possible to create a noise contour map showing noise levels of existing uses such as tour buses, heavy equipment, snow machines, etc. This would be an additional cost.
4. **Social Impact Study:** The administration asked a noise consultant how to address social impacts and his response is below.
  - a. “ The social aspects are very subjective as people all respond to noise in a different manner. That is why the FAA uses a noise contour to predict compatibility and does not try to address the subjective issues. Noise quality can be associated with social aspects, along with surface transportation impacts and level of service to roadways if that is a concern. These things are normally addressed in an environmental assessment associated with heliport development but since there is no anticipated federal money involved, there is no federal requirement unless y’all want to prepare one on your own.”
5. **In House Impact Study:** The administration does have some ideas on how to conduct an “in house social impact study”, but to insure the validity of the study, We may need to share this method with the assembly in Executive Session. The cost of an” in house study” is estimated at \$1000 in staff time.
6. **Economic Impact Study:** The McDowell group has proposed an economic study of winter tourism in Haines. This \$29,000 study is expected to capture the economics of heliskiing in Haines. Changing the location of the heliport by itself, probably does not affect the economic impact of this industry. However, if the heliport change leads to a lodge and other recreational development, the economic impact could be significant in the long term.
7. **Unresolved Issues:** At present the language that will establish the conditions for the study has not been adopted. As is noted above, the wider the scope of the study the greater the cost. There is also a need to determine what our goals and thresholds are and determining what standard will be employed to determine future actions. The benefit to the FAA threshold of 65

decibels is that it is objective and easy to determine if there has been a violation. More subjective assessments, while taking into account the perceived differences of helicopter sound from other types of sound, have the potential to create decibel levels of one sound that are acceptable (snow machine or truck) and a similar or lower decibel level of another sound that is not permissible. Establishing parameters and conditions also provides a degree of certainty to all sides on the issue as a tool for moving forward.

8. **Recommendation:** The Administration requests that a motion be made authorizing the Manager to solicit bids for an FAA Noise Impact Study with background noise contours, and an on ground monitoring study of the specific model type aircraft as well as Background Noise monitoring for comparison. An additional recommendation is made that the Assembly schedule time to review various standards and select an objective criteria before the study is conducted.
9. **Recommended Motion:** The Administration requests that a motion be **made** authorizing the Manager to solicit bids for an FAA Noise Impact Study with background noise contours, and an on ground monitoring study of the specific model type aircraft as well as Background Noise monitoring for comparison.

Respectfully Submitted,

David B. Sosa

Borough Manager