



## **Durango – La Plata County Airport**

### **Environmental Assessment**

#### **Public Open House, April 21, 2016 Comment Responses**

The following comments were received at the **April 21, 2016** EA Public Open House held in at the Ignacio Town Hall. Responses are reflected below.

1. My concerns include: noise of planes, lights of tower hitting homes, and home values falling.

Thank you for your comments. The noise, visual, and socioeconomic impacts resulting from the alternatives will be assessed in the EA.

2. Let those who use and those who benefit pay for it. Everybody pays sales tax and some pay property tax. I'm concerned with highway safety as well. If Durango wants it, let Durango pay for it.

Thank you for your comments. It is important to receive input from the community on the tax initiative. Please note that users of our air transportation system (including people shipping packages, private pilots, airline passengers, and corporate aircraft users) pay for the costs of maintaining and developing the National Airspace System and public use airports such as DRO. Similar to the national highway system, much of an airport's infrastructure is paid for with user taxes on airline tickets, air freight, and aviation fuels.

Typically, federal funding is provided by the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and state funding from the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Division of Aeronautics. AIP funds are derived from taxes on national and international travel, air cargo taxes, and noncommercial aviation fuel which are deposited in the federal aviation trust fund for the purpose of improving the nation's aviation infrastructure. Ultimately, the airport users fund the local share for improvements through rent, fees, passenger facility charges and purchases at Durango-La Plata County Airport.

The relocation of the airport access road would directly improve the safety of those entering and exiting the airport as well as those driving past as the intersection will be moved to an area with an improved line of sight. Additionally, the existing intersection will be limited to right turn in and out only.

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The Durango City Council and the La Plata County Commissioners have held several joint study sessions to evaluate the funding options. Meeting minutes can be accessed at their respective websites.

3. No action alternative is my choice, but if it comes to pass, it should not be a property tax but a sales tax. The entrance needs to be moved to the west end of the county property, not the east side. 309A runs in front of businesses so that road would need to stay there. Wildlife will be greatly affected as well as water (irrigation and ground water).

Thank you for your comments and concerns. It is important to receive input from the community on the tax initiative.

Coordination with CDOT as well as the County determined the best location for the new airport access and intersection. Access to the businesses along CR309A will remain.

The EA is evaluating impacts to wetlands, water, and wildlife and any impacts will be mitigated as required by local, state, and federal laws. It should be noted that water flow will not be altered.

4. Our irrigation waste water is currently coming from the area of the wetland delineated through current runoff and ditch system. I spoke with Tom Fiddler (water commissioner) and was told that the ditch system carrying the water cannot be changed. I am concerned about that wetland which is currently channeled at the NE corner of the runway on 309A.

Thank you for your comment and concerns. The EA will assess any potential impacts to the irrigation waste water and significant impacts will be mitigated. However, no changes or alterations of water rights or flow are anticipated. Design will incorporate culverts or similar drainage conveyance structures to allow water to pass underneath the road to existing drainage paths.

5. Without the wetlands and collection of the water, it will negatively impact existing wildlife. I'm upset that the eagle tree has already been taken down, they have already been impacted. Also, the deer heavily cross at the NE end of the runway and ½ mile south of the DOT tract.

Thank you for your comments and concerns. The majority of wetlands will remain undisturbed north of the runway. Although impacts to wetlands are unavoidable due to the alignment of the new access road and realignment of CR309A, impacts will be minimized to the extent possible and coordinated with the Army Corps of Engineers to obtain a permit. Mitigation will also be required. The EA will assess any potential impacts to existing wildlife and significant impacts will be mitigated.

6. The no action alternative is the best action that can be taken. A sales tax would be better than a property tax, with an airport user fee being the best way to fund an airport. No new taxes is best.

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7. I prefer the existing site!

Thank you for your comment. We appreciate your participation.

8. Well done – information was well thought out and I love the idea of the expansion and modernization of the facilities.

Thank you for your comment and continued support of your airport.