



Durango – La Plata County Airport

Public Open House, September 18, 2014, Comment Responses

In an effort to respond to comments received at both the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting and Public Open House, both held on September 18, 2014, comments have been consolidated into overarching themes. Original copies of the received comments are located on-line. The number of comments received on each topic is reflected in parentheses following the comment.

1. Plans should include an Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT). (1)

Based upon the current economy and funding structure, an ATCT is not likely to be constructed at the Durango-La Plata County Airport in the near term. Should the Airport opt to construct an ATCT the cost of the building as well as controller salaries would be the Airport's responsibility as current and projected future volumes do not warrant the installation of an ATCT at this time. The vast majority of the world's airports are non-towered.

However, it should be noted that Durango is one of four Colorado airports that has wide area multilateration (WAM), a cooperative surveillance technology that works by employing multiple small remote sensors throughout an area to compensate for terrain obstructions and is also a tool that enhances air traffic surveillance. The data from multilateration sensors is fused to determine an aircraft's location and identification. This data is then transmitted to air traffic control for use in providing surveillance separation services.

2. Options/Plans did not illustrate facilities to be provided in terminal. (1)

Terminal facilities will be detailed further in the chapter narrative (i.e. airline space, vendor space, restrooms, holdrooms, etc.).

3. Funding and construction schedule should be added to Project Timeline. (1)

Thank you for your comment. The current Project Timeline's intent is to illustrate the timing of the Master Plan. Funding is a component of the Master Plan that will be discussed following the selection of the preferred alternative. Unfortunately, a detailed construction schedule will not be available until the project has moved into the design process. However, a general discussion of the project timing (by year) will be depicted in the Financial Implementation Plan chapter of the document.

4. Crosswind runway option should be included although cost prohibitive at this time. (1)

A crosswind wind analysis performed as part of this study determined the single runway provides adequate coverage.



- 5. Would it be possible to move runway to east and use existing runway as future taxiway? (3)**
Many factors would need to be considered to relocate the runway to the east. The most critical item would be the need to maintain operations on the current runway while the new runway was being constructed. Thus, the new runway would have to be outside the existing safety areas of the current operational runway. As the Airport is located on a mesa top the buildable areas are limited without fill. In order to construct a new runway to the east several areas would require fill which drives the cost of a project up significantly. In addition, in order to accommodate the amount of embankment that would be needed, land acquisition would be required. Relocation of the existing County Road 309A would also be necessary along with other site preparation and pavement needs to construct an equivalent runway (9,200' long by 150' wide). Additionally, demolition of the current parallel taxiway and partial demolition of the existing runway width to meet taxiway design standards would be required. Consequently, moving the runway is not considered feasible when other alternatives exist.
- 6. If the terminal were to move to the east side construct tunnel/tram to move passengers to west side to board to save costs on new parallel taxiway/apron. (1)**
Should the Master Plan process determine the east side be the best option for the community and Airport it would be most feasible to locate associated facilities on the east side as well to maintain safe and efficient operations. A tunnel would have to take into account loading from the aircraft above it, ventilation, shut down of the runway for open excavations in the runway safety area, and numerous other items. Consequently, the construction of a tunnel or transportation to the west side may not result in a cheaper option compared to constructing a new parallel taxiway and apron.
- 7. General Aviation (GA) development was not depicted; what are the future plans? (1)**
General aviation development will be analyzed but future expansion of GA is dependent upon the location of the terminal. Options of the GA expansion will be presented in the narrative and at the next scheduled open house in January.
- 8. What general aviation rules will exist in future? (1)**
Many rules and regulations are required to remain in compliance with federal (FAA) law and assurances in order to receive federal grants. When federal requirements do change, it is often due to safety and security enhancements at all airports.
The Airport's Minimum Standards and Rules and Regulations are administered by airport management and any changes to the existing would be announced.



- 9. Suggestion to implement left turn lane for general aviation gate 'D' access or installation of a gate 'E' to avoid stopping traffic. (1)**
Thank you for this suggestion. A review of the current access will be analyzed to see if this is a feasible option.
- 10. Will the Master Plan address handicap accessibility? (1)**
The Master Plan covers a broader spectrum of overall development and needs and addresses handicap accessibility in the context of providing guidance to designers on community concerns. However, renovation of the existing terminal or construction of a new terminal would be required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please feel free to contact the airport administration with any concerns or ideas for improvements.
- 11. Request for forecast justification. (1)**
Chapter 3, Aviation Demand Forecast details the justification for the projected demand activity. Revisions to the chapter are currently being worked on per FAA comment. Once complete the chapter will be uploaded to the website, www.flydurango.com.
- 12. Request of aviation activity forecast range of high and low. (1)**
A high and low forecast range has been added to the forecast chapter. A revised chapter will be available on-line prior to the next scheduled open house in January.
- 13. Plans to improve/pave CR 309A? (1)**
Yes, improvements are anticipated, but paving of CR 309A is limited to only what is required to access terminal facilities from the north. There are no plans to pave CR 309A south of a proposed new airport entrance. Any improvements to the southern portion of the road would be decided by the County as it is a county road.
- 14. Any plan that requires a tax increase is most likely a non-starter. (1)**
Thank you for your comment.
- 15. Plan should make Durango-La Plata County Airport the regional airport. (2)**
The Airport is a very important asset to both the surrounding community and region. Currently, it is the airport of choice for the Four Corner's region and in order to maintain this it is critical to develop facilities that meet the existing needs and future demands of the region at the Durango-La Plata County Airport.
- 16. Disappointed presentation did not include costs and impacts to tax payers. (3)**
Costs were not presented at the September 18th Open House as the alternatives presented were still in a preliminary phase. It would not have been fair to include costs for the alternatives prior to final analysis of the alternatives to understand all items that would impact costs, i.e. grading,



drainage, utilities, environmental impacts, etc. Costs will be presented at the next scheduled open house in January.

17. Twenty years is actually short-term, we should be looking out 30-50 years. (1)

Per FAA guidance, the Master Plan looks at a 20 year period; however, in the case of DRO we are definitely thinking beyond that 20 year period to ensure the alternative selected best meets the needs of the community well beyond 20 years.

18. Consideration should be given to move the U.S. Forest Service base or general aviation to east side. Why is moving terminal better? (2)

This alternative was examined but not carried forward for further consideration. One of the hurdles to having aviation activity on the east side of the Airport is the requirement for a parallel taxiway between the development and the runway. This is a significant cost item that the Airport would seek partnership from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to fund. However, it is far less likely that FAA funding would be available to relocate another federal installation or general aviation facilities compared to terminal facilities. Thus, the cost to implement this alternative would likely be borne locally and would also be additional to alternatives 1 or 2 to meet the program requirements.

19. Support of improving existing terminal based upon local voter opinion and cost. (3)

Community outreach and opinion is a critical element of this Master Plan. Consequently, the selected alternative will consider public comment.

20. Support of keeping terminal on west side but building new and maximizing west side. (1)

Thank you for your comment. The alternatives are currently under analysis and based upon the selection criteria and advantages/disadvantages the best option will be selected for further analysis.

21. Advantages and disadvantages of alternatives should be based upon facts, explained in more detail, and based on practical items (i.e. more flights, more competition, etc.) (2)

Thank you for your comment. We felt it important to capture some feedback on preliminary alternatives before fully developing them. By design, the complete analysis was not available and thus not presented. Please stay tuned!

22. Comparable alternative board should have shown existing square footage of each as well as the size and enplanements 10 years ago.

Thank you for this suggestion. We will make an effort to obtain the past information and add to the board. The existing square footage of each was depicted on the board.



23. Will change in aircraft size by carriers be met with each alternative? (1)

Yes, the forecasted demand developed for the Master Plan took into consideration the changes in aircraft sizes by carriers. Therefore, the each alternative considered would meet the demand over the planning period.

24. How does each alternative rank in terms of sustainability/environmental and financial? (1)

These items will be discussed in the narrative document and presented at the next scheduled open house in January.

25. Please promote "Go Where Your Bag Goes" tour heavily. (2)

The tours are promoted on the website, www.flydurango.com and sign-up was available at the September 18th open house and will be promoted more in the coming weeks.

26. Will potential of a business park be addressed in Master Plan? (1)

Having the ability to put the Airport's land to productive use is a strong qualitative objective. The Master Plan will not be examining the demand for such development but will advocate for the diversification of revenue sources as a hedge against the somewhat volatile airline market. One of the alternatives includes the ability to open up parcels for aviation and non-aviation expansion and new construction. This is a strong positive advantage.

27. Ground transportation to/from the airport was not discussed. Is it currently adequate? (1)

Ground transportation provided by private companies currently meets the demand. It is assumed that should demand increase the companies would increase operations to accommodate.

28. Consideration to mass transit (bus/shuttle service) should be given instead of only building more parking lots. (1)

We appreciate your comment and understand the desire for Durango to have mass transit. However, the feasibility of mass transit would require a separate study involving the County and City. The Airport is does not currently meet the demand for existing parking needs and with the forecasted growth projected, more parking is necessary.

29. Additional direct flights to major cities. (2)

Airport management continually promotes additional flights to air carriers in service to the community. Due to the current airline facilities at the Airport the ability to accommodate new activity during peak times is severely constrained. Also, initiation of new service is heavily dependent upon the airline carriers and their decision to operate or not to operate out of Durango.



30. Request for more jet aircraft in place of the Q400/turbo-prop planes. (1)

The airlines make the decisions about type of aircraft operated at Durango. However, based upon the information received from the airlines that operate the Q400 aircraft, they do plan on phasing them out and replacing them with jet aircraft in the future.

31. Suggestion that airport layout drawings include an enlargement of terminal area. (1)

A Terminal Area Plan will be part of the Airport Layout Drawing Set. The drawing set will be drafted once the preferred alternative has been selected.

32. An overview should have been given at beginning of open house so attendees understood background of information being presented. (3)

Thank you for your comment. Based upon the number of comments received, both verbal and written, the next scheduled public open house will begin with an introduction and background of what is being presented.

33. Alternative boards contained too much information and were too small. (1)

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. In the future the boards will contain less detail so that the information is easily seen and understood.

34. Presentation contained too many acronyms. (4)

Thank you for this comment. Future presentations will be sure to spell out items instead of using acronyms.

35. Moving the terminal to the east is the best option for long-term success of the airport. (10)

Thank you for your comment. The alternatives are currently under analysis and based upon the selection criteria and advantages/disadvantages the best option will be selected for further analysis.

36. Discuss parking, roads, etc. issues in all three alternatives. (1)

Parking, access, airside needs, etc. is being analyzed in all three alternatives. The chapter narrative will discuss and further detail is to be presented at the second public open house.

37. Projected timing of plan?

As the existing terminal does not meet current needs, it is the intent of the Airport to move as quickly as possible on the solution. However, Federal Aviation Administration processes/regulations must be followed which include the completion of the Master Plan (scheduled for completion in September 2015, funding, and environmental review (National Environmental Policy Act compliance). Design and construction timing will depend on the alternative selected. The next phase of this master plan will prepare a complete schedule of projects, timeframes, and funding requirements to implement the preferred alternative.



38. Concern that facility depicted on east side does not seem large enough to meet demand. (1)

The drawings presented at the September 18th Public Open House were broad based and did not necessarily depict the true sizes. However, it should be noted that the east side terminal option has ample room to meet current and projected needs beyond the 20-year planning horizon.



Durango – La Plata County Airport

Public Open House, January 21, 2015, Comment Responses

Comments received at the January 21, 2015 Public Open House and responses are reflected below.

1. Please contact the young Professionals of Durango regarding a presentation regarding the Master Plan.

Your interest in the Master Plan and future of the Durango-La Plata Airport is greatly appreciated. The Airport Manager will be in contact.

2. We should not build a church for Easter. It would be better to spread out landing and take-off times with an auction process or let the market dictate who gets premium times. The Airport is idle the majority of the times

Thank you for your comment. Peak travel times are dictated by passenger demand. Airlines set schedules based upon demand. With the exception of a few major hub airports that manage peak activity with slot allocations, airline business models do not support an airport dictating arrival and departure times.

3. I much support the expansion of the Airport. It will get us more air carriers and which may lead to lower fares. It will attract new major business here with well-paying jobs we really need for our community to prosper. Residents will benefit even if they never fly as the economic stimulus will help their businesses.

Thank you for your comment and support of your Airport. Improved terminal facilities will definitely support additional carriers and destinations. Airport management continually promotes additional flights to air carriers in service to the community.

It is feasible to think a better Airport will support existing and future businesses in the area and help boost the economy of Durango, La Plata County, and the Four Corners Region.

4. Bonds are the only fair way. Certainly 20-30 year bonds should be able to pay for airport needs and people who use the airport can pay the needed fees.

La Plata County is reviewing the feasibility of bonds to aid in the terminal improvements. A detailed financial analysis is underway as part of the Master Plan. This analysis will consider all available funding opportunities, including but not limited to the Federal Aviation Administration, Colorado Department of Transportation, Aeronautics, Airport, and City/County.



5. Great presentation, great plan! I have lived here 20 years (very happily) and am 100% behind the plan. Thank you!

Thank you for your comment and continued support of your Airport!

6. Durango has potential to attract European tourists in droves to make Durango the hub of their exploration of U.S. national parks and the western U.S. All that's lacking is a better airport, better transportation from the airport (rental car, charter bus), and better international/national marketing.

The Airport is a very important asset to both the surrounding community and region. Currently, it is the airport of choice for the Four Corner's region. We agree that in order to maintain this and market to a broader base it is critical to develop facilities that meet the existing needs and future demands of the region at the Durango-La Plata County Airport.

7. Alternative #3 is clearly the best. Cheaper and better in the long run. If demand is less than projected it can be scaled back, if more, expanded. Not so with Alternatives 1 and 2. Would love to hear projected revenue, taxes included, generated by a bigger airport to Durango and surrounding county.

Thank you for your comment. A detailed financial analysis is underway as part of the Master Plan study to determine funding opportunities and future revenue. Once completed, the analysis will be available on the project website, www.flydurango.com.