1. INTRODUCTION

The Durango-La Plata County Airport (DRO or the Airport) is proposing development that would require federal actions/approvals by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). FAA actions/approvals include possible funding and Airport Layout Plan (ALP) approval. This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This EA has been prepared in accordance with FAA Orders 5050.4B[1] and 1050.1F,[2] as well as applicable Executive Orders, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA, and other federal, state, and local requirements. For this EA, the required content and required information is organized in the following manner:

Chapter 1, Introduction: Provides a brief overview of the Airport and structure of the EA.

Chapter 2, Purpose and Need: Provides a brief description of the problems the project is intended to address (i.e., the Purpose) and the data that substantiates that a problem exists (i.e., Need). The chapter also discusses the actions DRO is requesting of the FAA to meet the Purpose and Need.

Chapter 3, Alternatives: Provides an overview of the various solutions to the problems the Airport is facing and how those alternatives were selected (or rejected) for further analysis in this EA.

Chapter 4, Affected Environment: Describes the existing environmental conditions within the project study area, as well as the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions that will be used in the EA's cumulative impact analysis.

Chapter 5, Environmental Consequences: Describes the potential environmental effects that the No Action, Proposed Action, and each reasonable alternative would have on the affected environment. Pursuant to regulations in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Sections 1508.7 and 1508.25(a)(2), as well as CEQ guidance documents,[3] this chapter also discusses cumulative impacts. This discussion focuses on the effects the Proposed Action would have on some environmental resources, in combination with the effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions.

Chapter 6, Public Outreach: Discusses the coordination and public involvement associated with the EA process. The chapter also presents a list of federal, state, and local agencies and other interested parties that have been involved in EA coordination efforts.

Chapter 7, Glossary and Acronyms: Contains terms and acronyms used in this EA.

Chapter 8, References: Contains a list of all references used in the development of this EA.

Chapter 9, List of Preparers: Contains a list of names and the qualifications of individuals who prepared, contributed to, and reviewed this EA.

Chapter 10, Appendices: The relevant material, analyses, and technical reports that were used to prepare this EA.

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[1] Federal Aviation Administration, Order 5050.4B, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions, April 26, 2006.
[2] Federal Aviation Administration, Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures,* July 16, 2015.
[3] CEQ, *Considering Cumulative Effects*, January 1997, and *Guidance on the Consideration of Past Actions in Cumulative Effects Analysis*, June 24, 2005.

1.1 Overview of the Airport

DRO is a public-use airport located approximately 14 miles southeast of the Central Business District of Durango (**Figure 1-1**) and within the Southern Ute Indian Reservation. Its elevation is 6,689 feet above mean sea level (MSL) and occupies approximately 1,382 acres. The original 257 acres were purchased in 1947; the other 1,125 acres were purchased between 1959 and 1992.

DRO is co-owned by the City of Durango and La Plata County and is overseen by the Airport Board of Commissioners. Through an intergovernmental agreement (IGA), DRO functions as a City department with direct oversight by the City of Durango. Pursuant to the IGA, the Airport Board of Commissioners serves in an advisory capacity and is made up of nine board members (four members appointed by the City Council, four members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, and one joint member). The City and County jointly own and maintain the airport facilities, and have ultimate responsibility for all airport policy considerations, as well as compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations.

The FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airports System (NPIAS) classifies the Airport as a non-hub primary airport.[4] According to the NPIAS, airports of this size enplane less than 0.05 percent of all commercial passenger enplanements but have more than 10,000 annual enplanements.

DRO's facilities (as shown in **Table 1-1**) include the airfield (runway, taxiways, and aprons), terminal area, parking areas, navigational/visual aids, Fixed-Based Operator (FBO), and hangars. More specifically, the airfield includes Runway 3/21 (9,201 feet long by 150 feet wide and constructed of asphalt); parallel Taxiway A and connector Taxiways A1 through A8 and C; and commercial and general aviation aprons.

Figure 1-2 depicts DRO's existing layout.

[4] Federal Aviation Administration, *National Plan of Integrated Airports System*. Available at: http://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/npias/reports/ Accessed: October 2015.

TABLE 1-1 – AIRPORT FACILITIES

Item	Description
Runway 3/21	– 9,201 feet by 150 feet – 25-foot Paved Shoulders – Consists of Dense Graded Grooved Asphalt – Published Strength: 95,000-lb Single Wheel Gear (SWG), 150,000-lb Dual Wheel Gear (DWG), 210,000-lb Dual Tandem Wheel Gear (DTG)
Taxiways	– Parallel Taxiway A – Connector Taxiways A1 through A8 and C
Aprons	– Commercial: 25,168 square yards – General Aviation (GA) / FBO: 53,724 square yards – North GA: 25,263 square yards – U.S. Forest Service: 21,780 square yards
Navigational Aids (NAVAIDs)	– Instrument Landing System (ILS) - Runway 3 – VHF Omnidirectional Range (VOR)/Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) – Area Navigation (RNAV)
Visual Aids	– High Intensity Runway Lights (HIRL) – Precision Markings (3 and 21) – Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System with Runway Alignment Indicator Lights (MALSR) – Runway 3 – Precision Approach Path Indicators (PAPI) – Runway 3 – Visual Approach Slope Indicators (VASI) – Runway 21 – Runway End Identifier Lights (REIL) – Runway 21 – Airport Rotating Beacon – Runway & Taxiway Edge Lights – Runway Distance Remaining Signs (RDR) – Runway & Taxiway Guidance Signs – Segmented Circle / Wind Cone (lighted)
FBO (AvFlight) Hangars	– Hangars (3) – 32,400 square feet – Apron – 53,724 square yards (includes south GA apron)
Terminal Building	– 41,500 square feet (includes temporary departure lounge)
Parking	– Employee – 60 spaces – Credit Card Lot – 267 Spaces – Main Lot – 385 Spaces – Rental Car – 219 Spaces – Overflow Lots – 342

Source: Jviation

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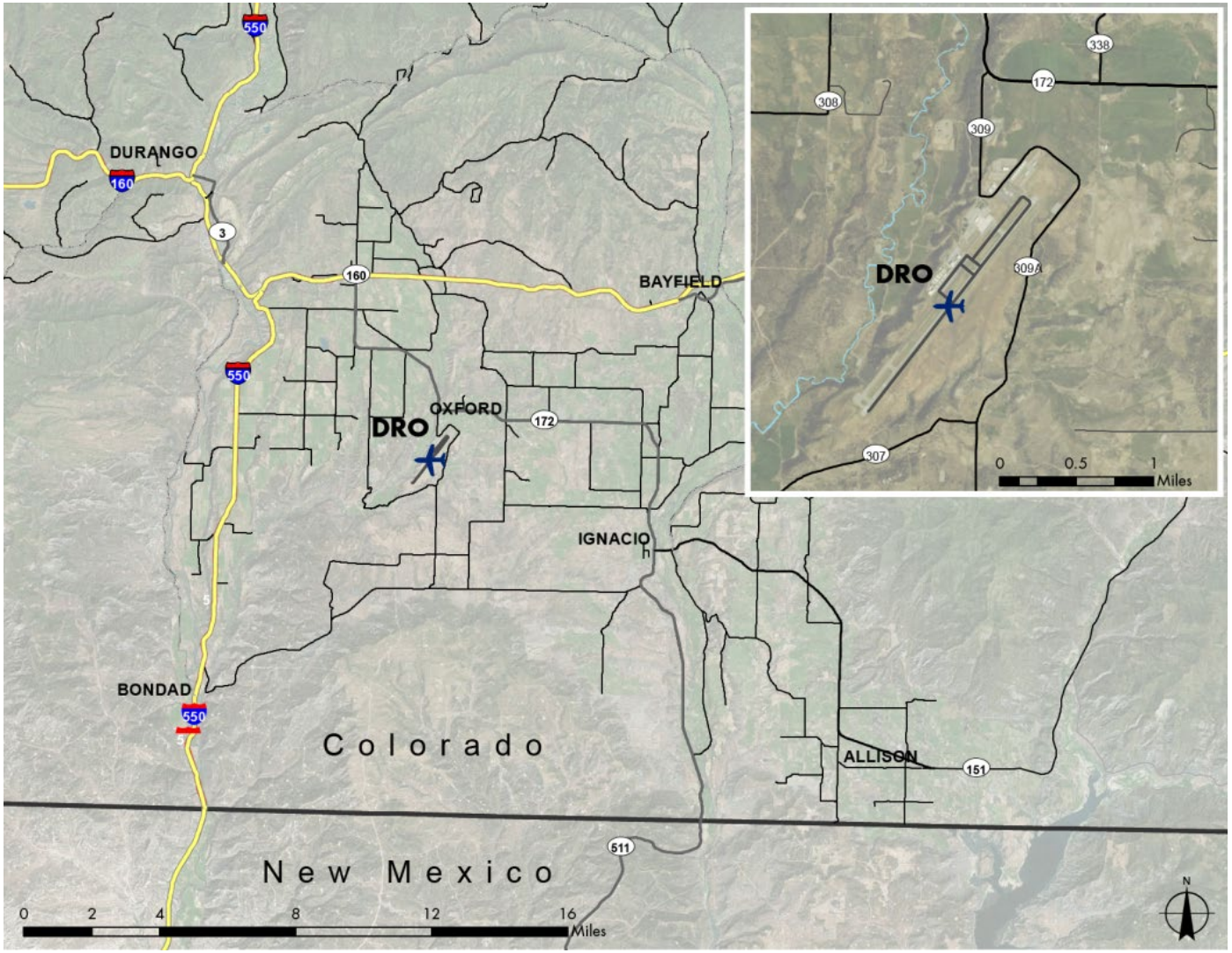
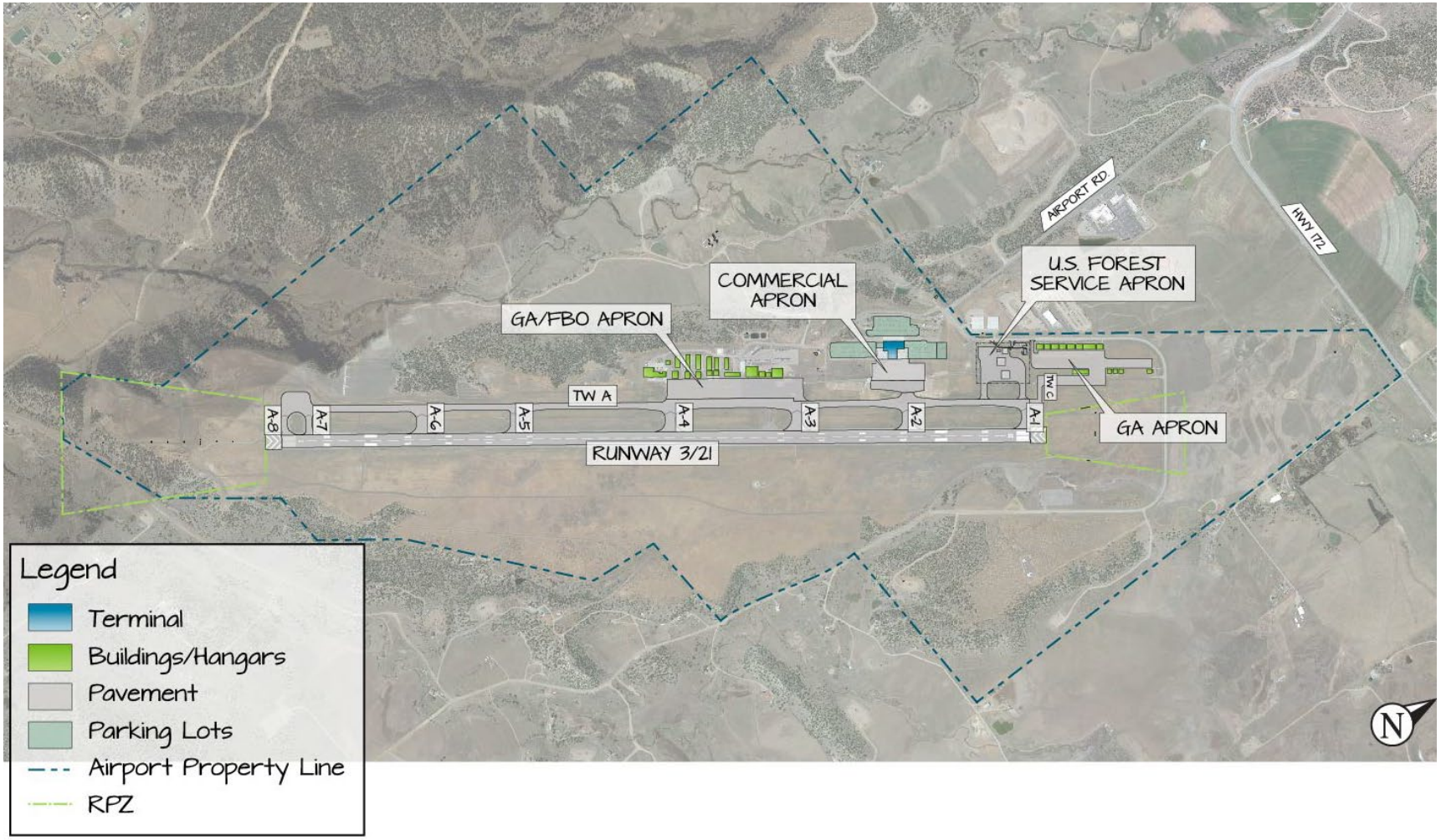
FIGURE 1-1 – LOCATION MAP



Source: Jviation
Note: Not to scale

FIGURE 1-2 – DRO EXISTING LAYOUT



Source: Jviation
Note: Not to scale

1.2 Background Information

1.2.1 Terminal Development

The 2017 Master Plan's 10-year forecast shows a growth in DRO's total operations from 27,928 in 2015 to 34,439 operations in 2025 (**Table 1-2**). This forecast is based on different growth rates for commercial operations and GA operations. The recommended operations forecast is higher than the FAA Terminal Area Forecasts (TAF) five-year forecast by 1.0 percent and the 10-year forecast by 6.4 percent. This difference is primarily due to the FAA TAF showing a low growth rate for GA operations (0.7 percent) and no growth for military operations, whereas the recommended growth rate for GA operations is 1.4 percent. It should be noted that the actual operations numbers differ from what is shown in the TAF as commercial operations changed significantly in 2013 due to loss of an air carrier. The TAF began to reflect this change in 2014; however, DRO experienced the initial operation decline in 2013.

TABLE 1-2 – DRO TOTAL OPERATIONS FORECAST

Year	Itinerant Commercial	Itinerant GA	Itinerant Military	GA Local	GA Total	Total Forecasted Operations	Total Actual Operations
2013	7,128	6,902	500	13,398	20,300	27,928	27,928
2015	7,965	7,132	500	13,844	20,976	29,441	29,734
2020	8,471	8,045	500	14,942	22,987	31,958	NA
2025	9,010	8,974	500	15,955	24,929	34,439	NA

Source: Jviation and FAA TAF (published January 2018)

The 2017 Master Plan[5] recommends a preferred forecast of 283,505 enplanements by 2025 (see **Table 1-3**). The recommended enplanement forecast is higher than the five-year FAA TAF by 4.4 percent and the 10-year forecast by 11.9 percent. A primary factor driving forecasted passenger enplanement growth is the continued trend in larger regional aircraft that will serve markets such as DRO, the conversion of existing seasonal frequency in favor of year-round service, plus the probable addition of one or more new destinations and additional frequency to existing destinations in the future. Most recently, the Four Corners Regional Airport in Farmington, NM, ceased commercial service flights; subsequently, DRO is now the only airport still offering commercial service to the Four Corners Region.

TABLE 1-3 – DRO PASSENGER ENPLANEMENT FORECAST

	Year	DRO Forecast	TAF	AF/TAF (% Difference)
	2013	192,797	192,797	0.0%
Base year	2015	205,594	205,594	0.0%
Base year + 5 years	2020	241,427	231,186	4.4%
Base year + 10 years	2025	283,505	253,344	11.9%
Base year + 20 years	2035	390,941	304,784	28.3%

Source: Durango-La Plata County Airport 2017 Master Plan

[5] Jviation, Durango-La Plata County Airport Master Plan, Chapter 3, Forecast, 2017

The DRO forecast, as presented in the 2017 Master Plan, also discusses existing and future commercial operations, total airport operations, and based aircraft. These forecasts are not directly related to the terminal building expansion; however, they can be found in **Appendix A, Durango-La Plata County Airport 2017 Master Plan**.

The FAA, along with the International Air Transportation Association (IATA), has developed standards for analyzing airport space requirements. IATA defines standards in relation to the "Level of Service" that should be maintained by the airport operator.[6] These service levels are discussed to assess the ability of the particular areas to comfortably perform their intended purpose. The service levels are as follows:

A – Excellent level of service. Conditions of free flow, no delays, and excellent levels of comfort.

B – High level of service. Conditions of stable flow, very few delays, and high levels of comfort.

C – Good level of service. Conditions of stable flow, acceptable delays, and good levels of comfort.

D – Adequate level of service. Conditions of unstable flow, acceptable delays for short periods of time, and adequate levels of comfort.

E – Inadequate level of service. Conditions of unstable flow, unacceptable delays, and inadequate levels of comfort.

F – Unacceptable level of service. Conditions of cross-flows, system breakdowns, and unacceptable delays; an unacceptable level of discomfort.

The 2017 Master Plan found the existing level of service (LOS) for the DRO terminal to be a "D during peak periods due to the current constraints experienced throughout the terminal;" however, it is desired that DRO have a LOS of "B." To meet the LOS "B," the Airport needs additional terminal space, specifically for airlines, TSA, and general public space as shown in **Table 1-4**. This assessment was made during several site visits to DRO during the 2017 Master Plan to observe passenger flows, combined with a detailed analysis of the facility using industry standard planning factors. Using these planning factors as a tool for analysis, the varying demands placed on the different components of the terminal can be studied. **Figure 1-3** is a graphic representation of the most significant "hot spots" – areas where the DRO terminal frequently experiences constraints.

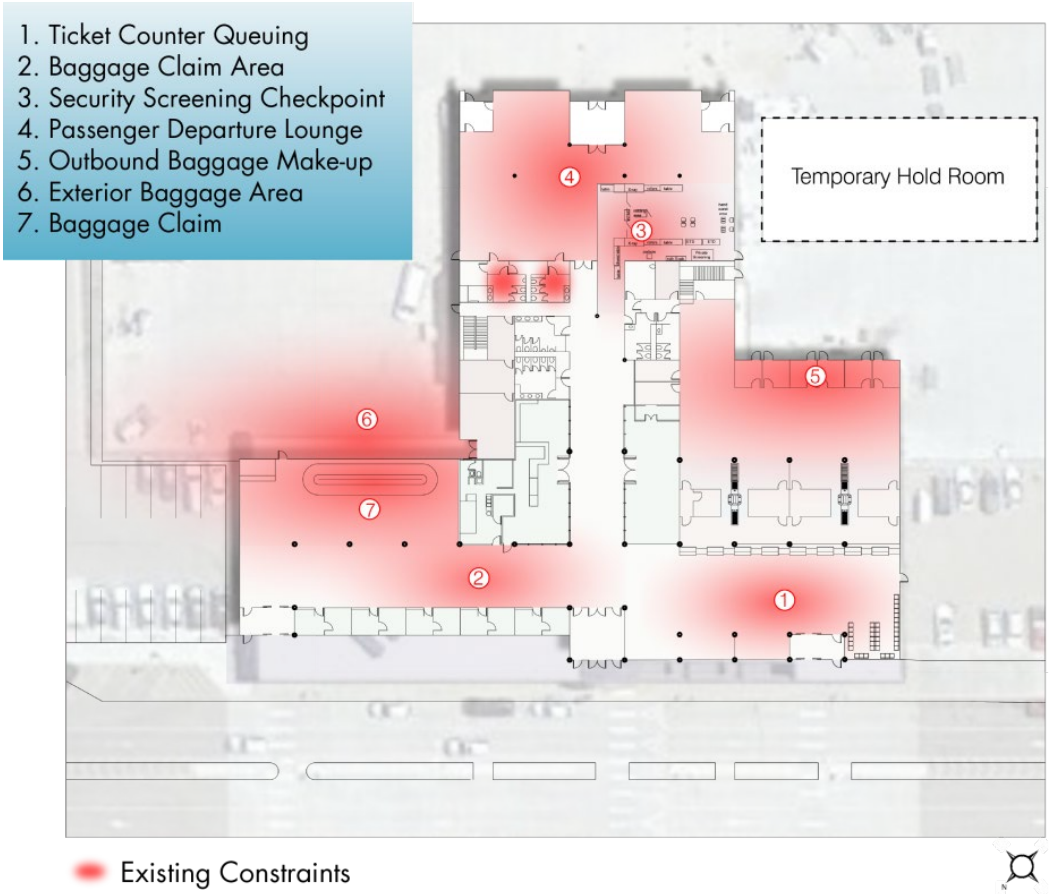
[6] International Air Transportation Association's *Airport Terminal Reference Planning Manual*, 9th Edition, 2004.

TABLE 1-4 – DRO TERMINAL FACILITY REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

Type of Occupancy	Existing Space (square feet)	Need as of 2015
Airline Space	17,000	26,924
Transportation Security Administration Space	2,500	14,830
Concessions	4,200	3,500
Public Space	13,500	28,160
Airport Administration	2,400	5,000
Utilities and Support Spaces	1,900	3,686
Total Terminal Area (Rounded)	**41,500[1]**	**82,100**

Source: Durango-La Plata County Airport 2017 Master Plan
Note: [1]The areas described above are approximate based on available archived drawings and CAD files for the existing terminal building, therefore rounded totals were used for the existing facility.

FIGURE 1-3 – TERMINAL HOT SPOTS/EXISTING CONSTRAINTS



Source: RS&H, Inc.

1.3 Other Considerations

In late 2017, DRO was notified that the owners of the “Crossfire Property” were interested in selling their property. The property is located west of the existing terminal building and adjacent to the current airport boundary. Given that DRO was unsure if they would be able to acquire the property and how the property would be used, a Categorical Exclusion was completed just for the land acquisition and approved by the FAA in August 2018 (**Appendix B, FAA Land Acquisition CATEX Approval**). There is the potential that this property, if acquired, could be used in connection with Alternative 1 or Alternative 2. However, future use is currently undetermined. Additional NEPA will be completed once the land is acquired and a future use is determined.