

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Great Lakes Region
Des Plaines, Illinois
and
Dakota Minnesota Airports District Office
Bismarck, North Dakota

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RECORD OF DECISION (ROD)

for

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT AIRPORT (XWA)
SERVING D-III AIRCRAFT

in

WILLISTON, NORTH DAKOTA

Proposed by the

CITY OF WILLISTON
WILLISTON, NORTH DAKOTA

SEPTEMBER 2015

Introduction

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)/Record of Decision (ROD) has been prepared for the proposed replacement airport (XWA) serving D-III aircraft, located in Williston, North Dakota. The current airport (Sloulin Field International Airport – ISN) and proposed replacement airport (Williston Basin International Airport – XWA) will be owned and operated by the City of Williston. The proposed action, associated actions, and their environmental impacts are described in detail in the attached Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA) dated August 2015. The EA was prepared in accordance with the guidelines and requirements set forth by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to implement the environmental review and disclosure provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

Based on the evaluation in the attached EA and mitigation commitments defined in this document, no significant impacts associated with the development actions were identified in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures* and FAA Order 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*; therefore, no environmental impact statement will be prepared and this FONSI/ROD was prepared. This FONSI/ROD and attached Final EA provide a review of the impacts expected to occur to the environment from a decision to implement the Proposed Action and provides the FAA's basis for its decision.

I. The Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the proposed action is to develop aviation facilities that meet FAA airport design standards and accommodate current and projected levels of aviation activity for the Williston area. The need for the proposed action is to provide aviation facilities necessary to meet the expected demand for the forecasted growth of air traffic in Williston area consistent with FAA airport design standards for ARC D-III aircraft, as well as provide the capability for anticipated future operation of larger aircraft.

II. Proposed Action

The City of Williston proposes to decommission the existing Sloulin Field International Airport (ISN) and construct, operate and maintain a new airport located in Williston, North Dakota. The Airport will be relocated approximately 6 miles north and 5 miles west of Williston. The proposed new terminal building would be located approximately 2.5 miles from US Highway 2. The proposed new airport would be called the Williston Basin International Airport and the airport identifier changed to (XWA).

The City of Williston proposes to relocate the Sloulin Field International Airport to develop aviation facilities that meet FAA airport design standards and accommodated current and projected levels of aviation activity. They propose to construct two runways

and related aviation facilities that meet FAA airport design standards for Airport Reference Code (ARC) D-III aircraft as well as acquire land for compatible land use and expansion of facilities to future aviation demands. Development of a replacement airport requires FAA approval of an airport layout plan (ALP), the final EA and FONSI/ROD and approval of funding from local agencies, North Dakota Aeronautics Commission (NDAC), and the FAA. The proposed action would require the acquisition of land for the construction of access roads, construction of runways, taxiways, aprons and various airport structures, and the installation of navigational aids to meet FAA design standards for ARC D-III aircraft. The proposed action includes acquisition of land for compatible land use, expansion of facilities the closure and sale of the existing Sloulin Field International Airport. The relocated airport is anticipated to be constructed from 2015–2018, pending environmental approval and funding availability.

The issuance of an environmental approval establishes the eligibility for the Airport to compete for and receive federal funding for the development. This environmental determination and grant eligibility is conditioned on the ability to acquire the land necessary to fully implement the project, including but not limited to, mitigation of wetlands, protection of environmentally sensitive resources, relocation/burial of various utilities (powerlines and pipelines), and the relocation/closure of roads in the project area.

The proposed action includes unconditional approval of the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) for the development items in the attached final EA and summarized below for the construction and operation of the new airport. The following list identifies the necessary facilities and design considerations needed to provide an aviation facility that could accommodate current and anticipated forecast activity:

- Acquire land for the airport, airspace protection, land use control and widening and paving existing roads to provide an airport access road. Acquisition of 1,560 acres of airport property referred to as Site #5;
- Construction of a 7,500-foot long by 150-foot wide runway, with lighting and markings (MALSR, HIRL, and precision markings);
- Construction of a 7,500-foot long by 50-foot wide full-length parallel taxiway, with MITL, signs, and markings. As noted in the previous bullet, capacity to accommodate future expansion to 8,500 feet is incorporated into the site layout;
- Construction of a 4,500-foot long by 75-foot wide crosswind runway with MIRL and non-precision markings;
- Construction of a 4,500-foot long by 35-foot wide crosswind parallel taxiway with MITL;
- Installation of applicable NAVAIDs and AWOS system (ILS, DME, NDB);

- Construction of general aviation (approximately 51,000 square yards of apron, 60,500 square feet of hangars including 26 t-hangar units), corporate hangar (approximately 31,700 square feet of corporate hangars), and terminal apron (approximately 37,000 square yards) development areas, with associated taxiways;
- Construction of a 108,000 square foot passenger terminal building with associated 1,500 stall parking lots;
- Construction of an ARFF building and fuel farm (approximately 7,700 square feet expandable to 8,600 square feet);
- Construction of an airport perimeter road for airfield maintenance and airport access roads to provide connections to major highways;
- Construction of an enclosed wastewater treatment facility/facilities to provide wastewater management at the airport;
- Connection of airport utilities to existing utility lines;
- Construction of a perimeter wildlife/security fence;
- Removal of wetlands identified as moderate or high wildlife attractants in the Wildlife Hazard Evaluation Report;
- Relocation of the existing hangars and FBOs at the current airport site, in accordance with the City of Williston' Relocation Policy;
- Construction of SRE storage building (20,000 square feet expandable to 27,000 square feet);
- Construction of a fueling area (approximately 100 feet by 100 feet) to accommodate a minimum of 30,000 gallons of Jet A fuel storage, and all other airport fuel storage for equipment and vehicles;
- Construction 8,000 square yard cargo apron with possible future expansion to 39,000 square yards;
- Construction of air cargo sorting facility;
- Construction of deicing fluid containment facility;
- Approval of an amendment to the incumbent airlines operating certificates and operational specifications under 14 CFR Part 119¹ and Part 121² by the FAA.

¹14 CFR Part 119, Certification: Air carriers and commercial operators

This approval allows for the operation of scheduled turbojet aircraft carrying passengers into the relocated Williston airport;

- Environmental approval for new instrument flight procedures at the new Airport;
- Environmental clearance to develop a land release and reuse plan to decommission the existing airport, and sell the land to the city of Williston. This would involve conducting an FAA land release, clean-up and reclamation of the existing site, and implementing protections of cultural resources and wetlands on airport property. All runways and taxiways would be marked or removed at the time of the release so there is no indication of available landing surfaces. Additionally, all FAA owned NAVAIDs would be decommissioned and removed from the airport. Prior to the release of the existing airport, the FAA will need to approve the land release and reuse plan. This could result in further environmental documentation and analysis; and
- Mitigation associated with construction such as: 6.6 acres of jurisdiction wetlands, protection of environmentally sensitive resources, tribal monitoring of all ground disturbing activities.

III. Alternatives Considered

The completed site analysis identified five relocation sites potentially suitable for airport development, in addition to developing the existing airport, as options for meeting the existing and forecasted needs of the Williston region. During the development of the spatial model, a total of five sites were identified as potential locations for the airport. Initially, Sites #1, #2 and #3 were identified. After further refinement of the spatial model to better represent terrain issues and expansion to include McKenzie County, Sites 4 and 5 were additionally found.

The five relocation sites included:

- Site #1: Construct a new airport 3 miles north and 7 miles west of Williston (discarded at initiation of EA)
- Site #2: Construct a new airport 8 miles north and 3 miles west of Williston (carried forward as Alternative C)
- Site #3: Construct a new airport 9 miles west and 2 miles north of Williston (discarded at initiation of EA)
- Site #4: Construct a new airport 5 miles north and 6 miles west of Williston (discarded during EA development)

²14 CFR Part 121, Air Carrier Certification

- Site #5: Construct a new airport 6 miles north and 5 miles west of Williston (carried forward as Alternative E)

Planners and engineers reviewed the potential of all five alternative site discovered in the GIS site selection model, performed on-site inspections and reviewed the potential alternative sites with the City of Williston, FAA Staff and North Dakota Aeronautics staff to determine which sites should move forward for additionally analysis. After this preliminary screening which considered the totality of the potential impacts, costs and utility of each site, two of these initial alternatives (Site #1 and Site #3) presented potential impacts of greater significance than the other sites that resulted in them being discarded from further detailed analysis.

As a result of the areas studied, the five alternatives carried forward to the EA process included:

- Alternative A, No Action;
- Alternative B, Expand the existing airport site;
- Alternatives to relocate/build new airport
 - Alternative C/Site #2;
 - Alternative D/Site #4; and
 - Alternative E/Site #5).

Both Alternative C and Alternative E include analysis of impacts for the disposal of the current airport. The new airport would be issued a new 3-letter identifier through the airspace determination process within the FAA.

Alternative C and Alternative E include removal of the current airport from service in conjunction with the start of operation of the new airport. Buildings and facilities may be left in place, removed, relocated, or recycled. All semblances of the current airport facilities' (runway and taxiways) shall be removed.

IV. Preferred Alternative

Therefore, on the basis of the evaluation of the alternatives carried forward and evaluated for affected environment and environmental consequences in the attached final EA, Alternative E is the preferred alternative. This alternative is to construct a new airport suitable for ARC D-III operations at Alternative E, Site #5. This would require acquisition of approximately 1,565 acres of land for airport use and road right-of-way. The existing airport property would be reclaimed and the land released back to the city of Williston, ND. Covenants or other protections would be implemented on the existing airport property to protect wetlands and cultural resources. Alternative E has been identified as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) for wetland impacts.

V. Alternatives Considered and Discarded

The final EA provides a discussion of project alternatives that were initially considered for this project (Site #1 and Site #3) and an explanation of why each alternative was discarded from further analysis. During the EA process, Alternative B, Expand Existing Airport, and Alternative D/Site #4 were discarded after further review due to potential impacts. Further discussion of discarded alternatives is included in the final EA.

VI. Environmental Consequences of the Preferred Alternative

Environmental impact categories identified in FAA Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*, and FAA Order 5050.4B, *National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*, were evaluated in the final EA. Environmental Consequences of the Alternative A (No Action), Alternative C/Site #2, and Alternative E/Site #5 are detailed in Chapter 2 of the final EA.

Alternative E - Construct a new airport suitable for ARC D-III operations at Alternative E, Site #5 is the Preferred Alternative and the environmental consequences are detailed in the final EA and summarized below: The No Action Alternative would not have any of the below listed environmental consequences except for normal maintenance of airport facilities.

Air Quality. North Dakota is in attainment with the Clean Air Act as amended and would experience minimal air impacts. The project is not located in a non-attainment or maintenance area; the General Conformity Rule does not apply. Emissions inventories indicate that the project's total net emissions from the new airport do not exceed threshold de minimis levels. A more detailed analysis is not necessary. Temporary, impacts during construction would be minimized using BMPs.

Climate. The proposed Alternatives C and E would increase GHG emissions by 2,666 MT CO₂e over Alternative A, an increase of 26 percent. This increase would comprise less than 0.000084 percent of U.S. based GHG emissions and less than 0.000027 percent of global GHG emissions.

Coastal Resources. No Coastal Resources Present. No Impacts.

Compatible Land Use. No significant compatible land use impacts:

The build alternatives each have impacts related to removal/monitoring of wildlife hazards, burial/relocation of transmission lines, relocation of pipelines, and impacts to roadways. The Airport will work with the City of Williston and/or Williams County to develop zoning regulations to ensure compatible land use adjacent to the airport site.

Removal of two wetlands onsite for wildlife hazard purposes. Monitoring of off-airport wetlands identified as wildlife hazards.

There are no residential properties affected, however, there are two homes located immediately adjacent.

There is a need to bury: a 25kV line; 0.3 miles of MWECC proposed 3-phase line; and 0.9 miles of distribution line and bury or relocate: 1.4 mile of MWECC 115kV transmission line.

Alternative E requires the closure of approximately 1.2 miles of road leading to the VOR, the rerouting of 1.0 miles of 59th St NW and approximately 2.6 miles of road improvements along 58th Street and 140th Ave to connect to truck bypass.

Construction Impacts. Temporary and minor impacts will occur as a result of construction activities:

Construction activities, specifically the earthmoving phase of the project, are likely to produce some amount of airborne material or dust. Measures to control and limit the amount of dust in the air would be required. The City of Williston shall comply with all Federal, State, and Local laws and regulations controlling pollution of the environment. Necessary precautions shall be taken to prevent pollution of streams, lakes, ponds, and reservoirs with fuels, oils, chemicals, or other harmful materials and to prevent pollution of the atmosphere from particulate and gaseous matter. This may mean employing adequate dust filters, smoke collectors, controlling burning, watering haul roads, providing erosion protection, or any other means needed to meet existing requirements. In accordance with recommendations from the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDOH) measures would be taken to minimize fugitive dust emissions from construction activities. Noise levels would be minimized by ensuring construction equipment is equipped with a working muffler.

During construction, it may be necessary to designate certain areas as borrow pits. Spoil pits for the purpose of disposing of the unsuitable material from the construction may also be required. Prior to the removal of any soil or waste from borrow or spoil pits, topsoil would be removed from these areas. Upon completion of their use, they would be re-landscaped, topsoil replaced, and reseeded in a manner so as to blend with the surrounding terrain, while minimizing wildlife attractants. The Authority shall obtain borrow site clearance (material quality, cultural resources, wetlands, and threatened or endangered species) before taking materials from any borrow sites not identified and cleared in the final EA.

It is anticipated, that the water quality of the area would experience minimum impact during construction. Construction activity would be limited to the days when the soil is dry enough to allow for proper compaction. Water would be added as necessary, to obtain optimum density and to reduce dust in the embankment areas. The hauling and spreading of water over the excavation and embankment areas would not be in such

great volume as to produce any runoff into neighboring streams. The potential for heavy rains during the construction period does exist. Provided the rain is of sufficient quantity to produce free water across the construction area, a certain amount of silt might be carried away from the graded areas. In order to prevent this type of erosion, the Authority would be required to install a silt fence and hay bales, or use other acceptable methods, to intercept this silt.

Alternative E would require grading 2.5 million cubic yards of dirt. Potential temporary impacts include increased noise, mobile source emissions, fugitive dust, and soil erosion. It is anticipated that all earthmoving activities associated with the build alternatives would take place on Airport property; additional fill or excess waste materials are not anticipated. The use of haul roads is expected and these haul roads are within the area already cleared for the project. The City shall properly maintain public roads and streets and any portion of the airport property that are used for haul roads for the duration of the project. The City is responsible for the approval from the local officials for all routes. Haul roads shall be left in original or better condition as prior to hauling operations.

Overall, construction impacts would be minimized through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs). Specifications for the proposed project shall include Item P-156 Temporary Air and Water Pollution, Soil Erosion, and Siltation Control. These specifications are contained in FAA Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5370-10, Standards for Specifying Construction of Airports. The Contractor would be advised of the need to abide by these specifications throughout the duration of the project.

DOT Section 4(f). No impact, provided cultural resources identified on existing airport are protected during land release and a site located adjacent to the access road right-of-way is avoided during construction. On the existing airport the property containing the golf course and gun range would be released to the city of Williston and it will or shall remain a Section 4(f) resources. This would not result in a “use”.

Farmlands. Conversion of approximately 1,565 acres of agricultural land to airport land. Of those acres, 3 acres are prime farmland and 1, 265 are of statewide importance. A score of 195 for the airport site (Form AD-1006) and 159 for the access roads (Form CPA-106), which represents a loss of 0.1% of farmland in Williams County. On June 24, 2015 a revised AD-1006 form was submitted to National resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Fish, Wildlife, and Plants. Determination of “may affect but is not likely to adversely affect” whooping cranes; “no effect” to the pallid sturgeon, gray wolf; interior least tern; piping plover, northern long eared bat and rufa red knot. Determination of may affect, not likely to jeopardize the species to Sprague’s pipit. Any new power lines required for the project would be placed underground to avoid the potential for whooping crane fatalities. Efforts to minimize impacts to migratory birds would be implemented. As it is assumed construction cannot avoid being completed from February 1–July 15, impacts

to migratory birds would be minimized through either pre-construction migratory bird surveys to identify nests or mowing/maintaining the construction site so it is unsuitable for nesting prior to the nesting/breeding season.

Floodplains. No impact. Not located within a floodplain.

Hazardous Materials, Pollution Prevention, and Solid Waste. No known contamination sites associated with relocation sites. Reclamation of the existing airport would require removal/remediation of recognized environmental conditions identified at the existing airport. Removal/remediation would be done in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements. An asbestos inspection would be required for any buildings being demolished and a Notification of Demolition or Renovation Form would be submitted to the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDOH). Any removal of hazardous materials would be done in accordance with state and federal requirements.

Historic, Architectural, Archeological, and Cultural Resources. Received State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurrence for “No Historic Properties Affected” on May 13, 2015 as long as cultural resources on existing airport are protected and tribal heritage sites are avoided and protected.

Light Emissions and Visual Impacts. Additional light emissions would occur from runway lights and other lights associated with the airport. The visual landscape of the new sites would be changed from open grassland to airport development and the landscape of the existing airport would be converted to other uses, possibly municipal and commercial uses.

Natural Resources and Energy Supply. Energy and natural resources will be used in construction. Increased energy use will occur as operations increase. This increase is not anticipated to have a measureable effect on local energy or natural resource suppliers. No adverse impact.

Noise. No Impacts. All of the DNL 65 dB contour would be within airport property. No houses or buildings are located inside the DNL 65 dB contour line. The analysis showed that there would be no significant impact, individually or cumulatively, over noise sensitive areas.

Socioeconomic Impacts. Acquisition of approximately 1,565 acres of land. Economic and infrastructure growth due to improvements in airport transportation services and efficiencies. No substantial social impact is anticipated. No disproportionate risk to children would be present and only small increases in permanent employment expected.

Water Quality. Minimal impacts during construction. Applicable permits would be acquired and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be developed..

Wetlands. Approximately 6.6 acres of wetlands would be taken. Impacts to wetlands would be mitigated and a Section 404 permit would be required for impacts to jurisdictional wetlands. An on-site wetland delineation was completed in the spring of 2015, a jurisdictional determination was requested on June 17, 2015, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) issued a preliminary jurisdictional determination on July 17, 2015 requiring a Section 404 permit. The Airport submitted a permit application to USACE on July 24, 2015. On September 14, 2015, the USACE provide the draft 404 permit application for a 21-day public and agency review. This will allow for the review and approval of the wetland impacts and associated mitigation for the project.

Coordination with the environmental resource agencies will be completed during the design/404 permitting phase of the project for impacted wetlands. Ducks Unlimited has identified that mitigation credits are available and may be purchased through the Ducks Unlimited Wetland Mitigation Bank.

Wild and Scenic Rivers. No wild or scenic rivers are located within the study area for the proposed build alternatives or at the existing site. No impact.

Additional environmental factors for the selection of Alternative E:

- Alternative E has the least dirtwork associated with construction (approximately 2.5 million cubic yards of dirt versus 6.3 million cubic yards associated with Alternative C).
- Alternative E would impact the least amount of wetlands (approximately 6.6 acres versus 13.1).
- Alternative E is more compatible with local development plans as it would be located within close proximity to the US Highway 85/2 truck bypass.
- Alternative C would require relocation of larger transmission lines when compared to Alternative E (345kV verses 115kV). These lines are more difficult to relocate and are up to 20 times more expensive to bury than smaller lines. The cost and/or design considerations to relocate or bury the smaller power lines (2.3 miles for C verses 1.2 miles for E) for each site are not considered to be appreciable.
- Alternative E would require the least intrusive road closures and relocations along public roads.

Alternative	Closures	Relocations
Alternative C	0.9 miles of 61 St NW(Prairie Road)	0.8 miles of 60 th St NW(Prairie Road)
Alternative E	0 miles (1.2 miles to VOR not needed anymore)	1.0 miles of 59 th St NW(Prairie Road)

- Alternative E enables a site design with maximum southern exposure of apron surfaces, which would improve snow and ice removal at an airport.
- Alternative E contains a runway configuration that separates the general aviation and commercial service facilities, which enhances security at the commercial terminal.
- Alternative E is the least environmentally damaging alternative when mitigation, BMPs and protection of the environmentally sensitive resources are implemented.

VII. Public and Agency Involvement

Involving members of the public is of primary importance in the development of alternatives and analysis for the project. As part of the continuing coordination process, a series of public meetings were held throughout the project. Additionally, newsletters providing project updates were sent to various agencies, potentially affected landowners, and other interested parties on October 30, 2012 and June 18, 2013. Comments from potentially affected landowners were also received during phone calls and other correspondence completed to achieve permission to access land for field studies. Additionally, public involvement was also completed as part of the planning process that was conducted concurrently with this EA. Information related to those efforts can be reviewed in the Master Plan for the airport.

Public Input Meetings

The first public informational meeting was held the evening of July 31, 2012 at the El Rancho Hotel in Williston, North Dakota. The meeting was held from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and included a presentation with a question and answer period. Over 100 people attended the Public Informational Meeting. At the conclusion of the 15-day comment period, 14 written comments were received.

A stakeholder meeting was held May 1, 2012 at the Hampton Inn & Suites in Williston, ND. The meeting was held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Landowners located within the study area for each of the project alternatives were invited to attend. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for landowners to discuss the project and any concerns. 16 landowners attended the meeting, in addition to representatives from the City of Williston and KLJ. Comments received during this meeting were combined with comments received as part of Public Informational Meeting #2.

The alternatives public workshop was held the afternoon of May 2, 2012 at the Hampton Inn & Suites in Williston, North Dakota. The workshop was held from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and was an informal period where individuals could view exhibit layouts of the project alternatives, receive handouts on the project, and discuss the project with the project team. About 50 people attended the Alternatives Public Workshop.

The second public informational meeting was held the evening of May 2, 2013 at the Hampton Inn & Suites in Williston, North Dakota. The meeting was held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and included a presentation and a question and answer period. About 39 people attended the second Public Informational Meeting. At the conclusion of the 15-day comment period, comments were received from 11 people.

The methodology for responding to comments received is based upon the general guidelines developed as part of NEPA. Public coordination for the project is ongoing.

Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA)

Prior to the Public Hearing, the Draft EA was available for review from August 25, 2014. The comment period ended October 13, 2014. At the conclusion of the comment period, written comments were received from three people.

Public Hearing

A Public Hearing was held on September 25, 2014 at the Williston Area Recreation Center in Williston, North Dakota. An open house was held from 11:30 am to 8:00 pm, with a formal presentation given at 6:30 pm. Approximately 49 people attended throughout the day. In addition, six people gave comments to the court reporter during the Public Hearing.

Final Environmental Assessment (Final EA) and Draft FONSI

The Final EA and Draft FONSI were available for review from August 19, 2015 to September 19, 2015 for a 30 day public and agency comment period.

During the 30-day comment period, the Airport/Consultant received a letter providing comments on the final EA and draft FONSI/ROD from Ms. Phyllis Owan dated September 18th, 2015. Her letter and comment responses are attached to the FONSI/ROD in Appendix A.

VIII. Environmental Impact Mitigation

The City of Williston shall implement the following mitigating measures as a condition of environmental approval of the proposed action items listed in this FONSI/ROD to support existing and proposed aeronautical activities at the Airport. Prior to the disbursement of Federal funds for this project, the Airport will provide the FAA Dakota Minnesota Airports District Office (DMA-ADO) a copy of all permits and mitigation approvals obtained as required in the attached EA, and commits to comply with the following permit and mitigation requirements:

Air Quality. Implementation of BMPs to control wind erosion of exposed areas and material stockpile will be incorporated into project design and construction. Measures will be taken to minimize fugitive dust emissions created during construction activities.

Compatible Land Use. The airport will coordinate with the city of Williston and/or Williams County to develop zoning regulations limiting the land use types near the new airport to those compatible with airport operations. Zoning at the existing airport would need to be updated to account for the change in land use if the airport is relocated. A Wildlife Hazard Assessment/Wildlife Hazard Management Plan will be required to be completed to more accurately identify hazards specific to the new location. The sponsor's comprehensive land use plan will also determine whether any of the airport's excess land can be retained for agricultural use consistent with wildlife hazard criteria.

Construction Impacts. Measures to minimize harm will be incorporated into design and during construction through use of BMPs. Specifications for the proposed project shall include Item P-156 *Temporary Air and Water Pollution, Soil Erosion, and Siltation Control*. These specifications are contained in FAA AC 150/5370-10E, *Standards for Specifying Construction of Airports*. If offsite borrow is required, borrow must be obtained from an approved borrow source free of cultural materials, wetlands, and threatened and endangered species. Disturbed areas should be re-seeded with a mixture of seeds native to the project area.

Fish, Wildlife, and Plants. All efforts would be made for construction activities to begin after July 15 and end prior to February 1, in order to avoid impacts to migratory birds during the breeding/nesting season. In the event that a construction activity would take place within the nesting and breeding season, pre-construction surveys for migratory birds and/or their nests would be conducted within five days prior to the initiation of construction activities. Alternatively, the site may be mowed/cleared outside of the nesting season prior to construction to remove potential breeding habitat for nesting migratory birds. The site would be maintained until the end of the breeding season or when construction is complete. If whooping cranes are observed within one mile of the proposed construction area, work will cease until the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is contacted. If a bald or golden eagle nest is sighted within 0.5 miles of the area being disturbed by construction, construction activities shall cease and the USFWS shall be notified for advice on how to proceed. An updated determination letter for the proposed redevelopment of the existing airport property will be required to be sent to USFWS, with the most current redevelop options, prior to the land release of the existing airport.

Hazardous Materials, Pollution Prevention, and Solid Waste. Removal/remediation of recognized environmental conditions identified at the existing airport would be done in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements. If demolition of the existing buildings is completed, an Asbestos Survey would be conducted prior to demolition, pursuant to NDDOH requirements. A Notification of Demolition or Renovation form would be submitted to the NDDOH and the Contractor would notify the NDDOH at least 10 days prior to demolition. Also, any removal of lead-based paint would be done in accordance with state and federal requirements. In the event that previously unknown contaminants are discovered during construction, or if a spill occurs during construction, work shall cease until the contractor notifies the National Response Center

(800.424.8802). If contamination is encountered, the Contractor must also notify the NDDOH. Any encountered contaminated soil would be temporarily stockpiled and sampled to determine disposal requirements. During construction, in the event that unknown contaminants are discovered or a reportable spill occurs, the City shall take immediate response actions and notify the appropriate local, State, and Federal agencies including the National Response Center and the NDDOH, as specified in the attached EA.

Pursuant to NDDOH requirements, an Asbestos Survey is required prior to the demolition of the buildings on the existing airport. In addition, a Notice of Demolition or Renovation form will be submitted to the NDDOH. The City or Contractor will notify the NDDOH 10 days prior to the demolition.

Historical, Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources. Consultation with the SHPO was conducted and a finding of “No Historic Properties Affected” was determined for the proposed action. If any construction activity results in discovery of cultural resources, work shall cease until the Airport notifies the SHPO and the Dakota Minnesota Airports District Office (DMA-ADO). The City shall protect the area until cultural resource concerns have been appropriately addressed, and the Airport shall take action to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, as appropriate. Borrow sites shall be cleared by the SHPO prior to the use of material from the borrow site. Covenants or other protections would be placed on cultural resources within the existing airport property and avoidance measures, such as fencing, would be incorporated to ensure cultural resources within the access road right-of-way are avoided. The proposed new site identified a number of environmentally sensitive areas. These areas are identified on the ALP for future protection. They will be fenced or otherwise protected during all ground disturbance construction. During coordination with the tribes, they requested to have tribal monitors present during all earthwork and ground disturbing activities. Tribal monitoring will be provided by the Airport and/or Contractor during the project. Prior to construction, an inadvertent discovery and mitigation plan will be developed to address any resources discovered during construction.

Additionally sites deemed of importance to the represented tribes were recorded; the sites are *potentially eligible* for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria D, however further private consultation would be required to make full determination of eligibility. The features and sites deemed to be important to the represented tribes will all be avoided by the construction activities association with Alternative E. Protective measures would be required to ensure that no unintentional disturbances of these sites occur during construction, this would include the use of construction fencing or other markers placed under the observation of an appointed tribal monitor(s). Due to the potential for additional discoveries during construction, the airport will be required to provide tribal monitors an opportunity to observe any new ground disturbance in accordance with guidelines to be provided by the FAA and

prepared in consultation with the Tribes. One newly recorded site was identified in the access road inventory. The site is unevaluated for the National Register of Historic Places. It retains integrity of location, but other aspects of integrity have been degraded. It is believed the site can be avoided and/or protected during construction, as the site boundary is near the edge of the 200-foot boundary that was surveyed, which would be outside of the road right-of-way. The existing airport contains cultural sites in the area northwest of the airport. It is recommended covenants or other site protection be implemented if the existing airport land is released. The FAA will continue to work with the tribal representatives throughout the life of the project.

Light Emissions and Visual Impacts. Design elements such as landscaping and architectural features will be used to reduce the adverse effect of the visual intrusion into the rural environment.

Socioeconomic Impacts, Environmental Justice, and Children's Environmental Health and Safety Risks. Acquisition of property will follow the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. It is not anticipated that any homes would require relocation as part of this project. However, there are landowners adjacent to the site that may desire to be purchased as part of the project. While not a federally-funded expense, those landowners could coordinate with the City to determine if the City wishes to purchase those properties.

Water Quality. Implementation of BMPs for sedimentation and erosion control will be incorporated into project design and construction. Stormwater drainage will be managed according to FAA AC 150/5320-5D. The airport and its tenants follow BMPs spill prevention. The contractor will apply for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NDPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges through the NDDOH (NDR10-0000). Additionally, a permit will be required from NDDOH to permit the wastewater treatment at the new airport site. A North Dakota Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NDPDES) General Permit for Storm Water Discharges associated with Construction Activities shall be applied for and obtained as required by the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDH). Mitigation measures include implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sedimentation and erosion control subject to the NDDH, and other measures listed in the attached EA. A NDPDES General Permit for Temporary Discharges for construction activities shall be obtained if any construction dewatering occurs as a result of this project and as required by the NDDH. A NDPDES Surface Water Discharge Permit for construction activities shall be obtained as required by the NDDH. Mitigation measures include implementation of BMPs for sedimentation, erosion control subject to the NDDH.

Wetlands. Impacts to wetlands would be mitigated and a Section 404 permit will be required for impacts to jurisdictional wetlands. All on site wetlands were assumed to be jurisdictional. An on-site wetland delineation was completed in the spring of 2015, a jurisdictional determination was requested on June 17, 2015, the USACE issued a preliminary jurisdictional determination on July 17, 2015 requiring a Section 404 permit.

The Airport submitted a permit application to USACE on July 24, 2015. On September 14, 2015, the USACE provide the draft 404 permit application for a 21-day public and agency review. This will allow for the review and approval of the wetland impacts and associated mitigation for the project.

Coordination with the environmental resource agencies will be completed during the design/404 permitting phase of the project for impacted wetlands. Ducks Unlimited has identified that mitigation credits are available and may be purchased through the Ducks Unlimited Wetland Mitigation Bank.

IX. FAA Findings and Orders

The FAA has conducted an independent review of the factual assumptions contained in the EA and determined the adequacy of the EA and takes responsibility for the document's scope and content. Individuals from the FAA have devoted substantial attention to the final EA to comply with NEPA, and other environmental requirements. Accordingly, I find that the independent and objective evaluation called for by the Council on Environmental Quality has been provided. The FAA has given this proposal the independent and objective evaluation required by the Council on Environmental Quality [40 CFR 1506.5].

I have carefully and thoroughly considered the facts contained in the attached final EA. Based on that information, I find that the proposed Federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives of Section 101(a) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). I also find the proposed Federal action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. As a result, FAA will not prepare an EIS for this action.

Therefore, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator of the FAA, I find that the proposed airport improvement projects described and evaluated in the attached final EA and addressed in this FONSI/ROD are reasonably supported and approved. I direct that action be taken to carry out the agency actions discussed in the following proposed action:

- Unconditional approval of the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) for the development listed in the final EA as the proposed action. A future action to extend the proposed relocated airport to meet ARC D-IV is shown for discussion purposes only. It is conditionally approved until such time as it is needed and a separate environmental analysis is required.
- Issue final airspace determinations for the development on the ALP for the proposed action.
- Eligibility for Federal grants-in-aid funds for eligible items.

- Environmental approval for the development or revision, implementation, and use of air traffic/flight procedures to allow for full use of the proposed action.
- FAA Finding of “No Historic Properties Affected” for the proposed action.
- FAA finding of “may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect” whooping cranes; “no effect” to the pallid sturgeon, gray wolf; interior least tern; piping plover, northern long eared bat and rufa red knot. Determination of may affect, not likely to jeopardize the species to Sprague’s pipit. Any new power lines required for the project would be placed underground to avoid the potential for whooping crane fatalities. Efforts to minimize impacts to migratory birds would be implemented. As it is assumed construction cannot avoid being completed from February 1– July 15, impacts to migratory birds would be minimized through either pre-construction migratory bird surveys to identify nests or mowing/maintaining the construction site so it is unsuitable for nesting prior to the nesting/breeding season..
- This project involves construction in designated wetland areas. As discussed in the EA, it is anticipated that the preferred alternative, Alternative E will result in an impact of approximately 6.6 acres of wetlands. As discussed in the EA, Alternative E is the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative. There are no prudent or practicable alternatives to this impact. The proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize impacts to wetland areas. We find that based on the discussion above and the description found in the attached EA, sufficient evidence exists to support the FAA’s Wetland Finding that: a) there is no practicable alternative to such construction; and b) the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use for the Proposed Action.

After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds that the proposed Federal action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and other applicable environmental requirements and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to Section 101(a) and Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA.

Having met all relevant requirements for environmental considerations and consultation, the proposed action is authorized to be taken at such time as the requirements have been met. These decisions are taken pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 40101, et seq. The FAA findings contained in the FONSI/ROD constitute an order of the Administrator, which is subject to review by the Courts of Appeals of the United States, in accordance with the provisions of Section 1006 of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, as amended, 49 U.S.C. § 46110.

Finally, having based upon the administrative review of this project, I certify, as prescribed by 49 U.S.C. 44502(b) that implementation of the Proposed Action is reasonably necessary for use in air commerce.

APPROVED: X



Barry D. Cooper, Regional Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Great Lakes Region Office

DATE: September 22, 2015

RIGHT OF APPEAL

This FONSI/ROD presents the Federal Aviation Administration's final decision and approvals for the actions identified, including those taken under provisions of 49 U.S.C. Subtitle VII, Parts A and B. This decision constitutes a final order of the Administrator subject to review by the Courts of Appeals of the United States in accordance with the provisions of 49 U.S.C. Section 46110.

APPENDIX A – Draft FONSI Comment Letter (OWAN)

2317 17th Avenue W.
Williston, ND 58801
September 18, 2015

Curt Cady
KLJ
4585 Coleman St.
Bismarck, ND 58053

Also via email: curt.cady@kljeng.com

SUBJECT: Comments on Environmental Assessment for Proposed Airport, Williston, ND

It was recently reported that the Environmental Assessment for the proposed new Williston airport will be “no significant impact.” I beg to differ.

The land that the City of Williston wants for its new airport is agricultural land and, I believe, represents the livelihoods of most or all of the “at least 8 landowners” involved. Loss of this land will force at least several of the landowners out of farming. It is land that probably has been in families for generations past and, in many cases, land that is being counted on to pass on to children and grandchildren who want to farm/ranch. In my opinion, loss of this agricultural land will have significant environmental, financial, social, and familial impacts.

When this part of North Dakota was settled a century ago, farming was much simpler and less expensive to get into. Although many homesteaders may have had little background in farming, those that survived did so through hard work and determination, learning over time.

Today farmers and ranchers pretty much have to be born into it. College agricultural degrees can help someone become a better farmer or to work in an agricultural-related field, but I seriously doubt that anyone could come out of college with the knowledge to start a successful wheat farm from scratch without years of firsthand experience. Farmers need to be knowledgeable in economics, chemistry, biology, mechanics, marketing, risk management, state and federal government regulations, all kinds of math (dealing with acres, rods, bushels, ounces, gallons, percentages, etc.), and more.

Also, farming takes a huge monetary investment. Tractors and combines cost in the mid-hundreds of thousands of dollars each, not to mention costs of seed, fertilizer, weed and insect control, fuel, insurance, tools, other machinery, equipment maintenance, etc. Oh, did I mention land mortgage or rental costs? Most people would be amazed at the amount of money that flows in and out of a farm in a year, with only a small percentage remaining to support the farmer’s family. Just as in the past, the phrase “asset rich, cash poor” still holds true for many farmers.

September 18, 2015

Curt Cady

RE: EA for Proposed Airport, Williston, ND

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Good agricultural land is a finite thing — there is only so much of it. It doesn't matter whether the Federal Farmland Protection Policy Act classifies it as “prime”, “unique”, or “farmland of statewide importance” or locally important farmland.” Farmland is not universally interchangeable for the various crops, plants, and animals that consumers want and need — each different soil and climate works better for specific things.

I have read several articles recently that predict the world's population will be 9 billion by 2050, requiring a substantially larger food supply, and that 50% of the population will live in cities. Many towns and cities grew up around good farm land. As those towns and cities grew, they built on the farm land. The same thing has happened here, and has exploded exponentially with the Bakken oil boom. Until about five years ago the City of Williston was around 7 square miles; it is now over 20 square miles.

The City of Williston wants to take an additional 1565 acres of agricultural land in Williams County for the proposed new Williston airport. Every 1 or 2 sections of land (640 or 1280 acres) has already had 6 to 20 acres taken out of agricultural production for an oil well pad (there are 36 sections in a Township, and Williams County has about 55 Townships). New pipelines, roads, water and electricity utilities, and oilfield waste running through, under, or adjacent to agricultural land have reduced some agricultural land's ability to produce as well as it did before, or have taken even more agricultural acres out of production.

Add in all of the agricultural land around Williston that has already been turned into industrial parks, commercial enterprises, and subdivisions. Then factor in the same things for every community in Williams County and for the 22 or so additional counties within the Bakken region.

Now think about the ancillary businesses that will inevitably sprout up around an airport, further reducing agricultural land and opportunities for farmers in Williams County. Although it is my understanding that Williams County, the City of Williston, and North Dakota Department of Transportation signed an agreement that there would be no development along the new U.S. Hwy 2 & 85 Truck Reliever Route (now in its final stages of construction) that will be used to service the proposed airport, the County has already approved an auction business near the airport and it has started construction.

Other development is sure to follow, again reducing available agricultural land, as stated in the FONSI: “The airport will coordinate with the city of Williston and/or Williams County to develop zoning regulations limiting the land use types near the new airport to those compatible with airport operations.” What kinds of uses would those be? Motels, gas station, restaurants, UPS/FedEx facilities?

Between the new airport proposal and the new Truck Reliever Route, there are a number of access roads and approaches to existing fields and/or pastures that have been or will be eliminated, leaving no access route to several fields and/or pastures. I wonder, is this an oversight or intentional inconvenience designed to force these farmers to sell their land?

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Curt Cady

RE: EA for Proposed Airport, Williston, ND

Page 3

The U.S. and the world do not have significant food reserves to last more than a few months. Droughts, floods, fires, war and unrest, disease, pests, and other catastrophes can all affect the kinds and amounts of food available here in the U.S. and throughout the world. Some scientists say the earth is warming, other scientists are predicting a mini ice age in 15 years (one in the 1600's lasted about 65 years); both can and will change weather patterns and food production.

In *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food*, Lizzie Collingham states that more people died from starvation (at least 20 million) than died military deaths (19.5 million). Europe understands hunger and, after suffering great deprivation as the result of two world wars fought on its soil in the last century, treats both agricultural land and farmers with great respect.

I believe we cannot rely on food production from other countries for these same reasons, as well as valid concerns about substandard food safety in food imported from some countries.

NOW, WHAT ABOUT THE AIRPORT? We do have other options, unlike when there is not enough farm land or not enough food.

The airport can be left where it is, at least for now. It is not ideal, but it works.

A lot of money has been spent in recent years on the airport — new terminal, parking, runways, fire truck, etc. (not to mention money spent on consultants, studies, and architects for the new airport plans). I don't know how much of that money came from Federal or State and how much of it came from the City and is included in the City of Williston's over \$400 million debt (compare that to Williston's \$20 million debt of the 1980s that took 20 years to pay off). No matter where the money has come from, it ultimately came, and will continue to come, from taxpayers' pockets.

I drive by the airport and see that the new 700-space parking lots are not full (the new airport plans to park 1500). People I know who have flown this year say there were empty seats and no problem getting a ticket. The Williston Job Service director reported at the recent WEST! event that many oil-field companies no longer pay for the travel of their workers to go back to wherever "home" was when the workers go on days off. As a result, many workers are purchasing a home here so their families can join them here. The urgent demand for airplane seats is not as great as it has been.

There has been a significant slowdown in the oil economy in the Williston area in the last 6 months or more which, I believe, will continue for some time and will negatively affect the rate and/or amount of growth of air traffic forecast in the Williston FONSI study.

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Curt Cady

RE: EA for Proposed Airport, Williston, ND

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I have heard or read Mr. Kjergaard, the airport manager, saying that they can't do the things that they need to do, but I have never heard or read him stating exactly what those things are.

I read the recently released *Draft Finding of No Significant Impact* (FONSI) report and much of the *Environmental Assessment* (EA). I understand that the current airport location, conditions, and flight paths are not ideal and, ultimately, should probably be moved to a new location.

But for now, we do have other options:

We have the option of keeping the 50-passenger planes, or even using smaller commuter-type planes again. We shouldn't be at the mercy of what United and Delta dictate what they want (ARC D-III aircraft), or that of the potential other airlines that these reports mention. The FONSI and EA reports reveal that these airlines are phasing out their 50-passenger planes in favor of larger planes, which necessitate a new airport designed to handle them. If these airlines want to phase themselves out of Williston's market, that is their problem. If they want to use bigger planes here, they should be required to help pay for the infrastructure needed to support the larger aircraft that THEY are choosing.

Using smaller airplanes at the current airport can alleviate the times when "150 passengers per hour, several times a week" are present, creating "delays in passenger throughput on a regular basis." Using smaller planes on a more often basis would spread people out over a wider time frame, lessening the amount of queuing at one time at the ticket counter, baggage claim, and TSA screening. The restrooms and hold room seating would more likely be adequate.

I have heard concerns that use of larger aircraft will result in reduction in the number of daily flights leaving Williston, thus resulting in longer layovers or missed connections at the hubs (Denver, Minneapolis, or Houston).

Larger aircraft with fewer flights would also result in more congested road traffic and terminal traffic, potentially creating another problem with queuing and seating like we have now.

There are other airlines that will serve smaller airports.

We have the option of driving to larger airports to fly on larger airplanes. We've done that for decades, and until three years ago that was very common, and some people still do that.

We have the option to have a friend take us to the airport, use one of the now numerous taxis in town, or take a Northwest Transit bus, rather than park our cars in airport lots.

We have the option to utilize the newly expanded facilities at Watford City for more of the private jets flying in and out of the area.

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Curt Cady

RE: EA for Proposed Airport, Williston, ND

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We have the option of waiting to put an airport where someone actually WANTS to sell their land, even if it might not be the most ideal location with the least costs to level and remove/swap wetlands.

We have the option of waiting to build a new airport at some future time. If the landowners don't want to sell now (and it is my belief that none of them do) and the City thinks it may have to use eminent domain to get the land, they will still have that option at a future time.

Oh, here's an interesting tidbit I heard from several reliable sources: when farmland values were recently appraised for tax purposes, the land values for the proposed airport land didn't go up but the surrounding farmland did. If that is true, who would benefit from that?

While a new airport might be a nice thing to have eventually (with all its "state of the art" and complete with its proposed "showcase" terminal), it is not essential at this time. Especially not while the City of Williston already is over \$400 million in debt.

We have the option to work with the neighboring towns in our region to build a Regional Airport, thinking about the benefits for the entire region, not just what the City of Williston can control and get out of it. Watford City, ND, (46 miles SE of Williston) recently expanded their airport facilities for private planes. Last time I checked, Sidney, MT, (45 miles SW of Williston) had six flights a day. Williston wants to be a regional economic hub, but it needs to become a team player and support and work together with surrounding towns to build their goodwill and work on projects together instead of alienating them and their constituents. I am saddened and disappointed to see this selfish attitude in City of Williston officials regarding the proposed airport.

SUMMARY

The airport issue has distressed me for quite some time, ever since I realized that it would not be a regional airport, situated and planned by and for the region as a whole. In full disclosure, I am not one of the owners of land for the proposed airport relocation, though I would have been if the alternate location had been chosen. It is 20 miles by road from our home in Williston to our farm, probably 14 miles as the crow flies. With a new airport, the City will suddenly be in our backyard, literally next door to land that we farm; this is something that, given the distance, should have taken decades to happen, if ever; not seemingly overnight.

I am concerned about my neighbors who will unwillingly lose their land, livelihoods, and way of life. I am concerned about the futures for my son and my neighbors' children and grandchildren who are planning to take over their families' farms and who may be crowded and forced out of their chosen livelihoods and way of life by further development around the airport and lack of farmland to buy or rent.

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Curt Cady

RE: EA for Proposed Airport, Williston, ND

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Food is essential. Just like money doesn't grow on trees, food doesn't magically appear on grocery store shelves without a farmer or rancher involved. Therefore, farmers and ranchers are essential. Farmers and ranchers need adequate land with a variety of appropriate soil qualities to produce the quantity and variety of food that everyone needs. U.S. and world populations are growing. Land is finite — we can't just make more. We do NOT have the option to get farmland back, so we have an obligation to think long and hard about giving it up.

Taking an additional 1565 acres of agricultural land for an airport may seem like just a "drop in the bucket" but, as we know with water, even little drips can cause a lot of damage over time, and eventually little drips can turn into small streams feeding even larger ones that can wreak major havoc and even death

We do have options. The need for a new airport is not so urgent that it must begin next year. I do fully understand and agree that sometimes, for the good of all, some must sacrifice; choices may have to be made that not everyone likes. In this case, which choice would be more inconvenient: living with the current airport (at least for a while longer) or your grandchildren going hungry for lack of food?

So in my opinion, yes, removing good agricultural land from production for a new airport DOES have a significant environmental impact.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Owan
Williston, ND

CC: Williston City Commissioners
Williams County Commissioners

APPENDIX A - COMMENT MATRIX

Draft FONSI Comments/Responses SLOULIN FIELD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT			
Name	Method	Comment	Response
Phyllis Owan	Letter sent by email.	Disagree that the project will have "no significant impact" and believe loss of this agricultural land will have significant environmental, financial, social, and familial impacts.	The various impacts these environmental categories are discussed throughout Chapter 4 of the EA. More detailed references are included in the responses below.
		Today's farmers and ranchers pretty much have to be born into it. Farming takes a huge monetary investment.	The EA discusses socioeconomic impacts of the proposed action in Section 4.2.15.1 of the EA.
		Good agricultural land is a finite thing. The City of Williston has grown from 7 square miles to 20 square miles. The City want to take an additional 1565 of agricultural land in Williams County for the airport. Approximately 6 to 20 acres of agricultural land has been taken out of agricultural production from each section in Willitams County and has reduced production around them. There is already the lost of ag land from industrail parks, commercial interprises, and subdivisions. The comment discusses the possibility of ancillary businesses that will occur around the airport and bypass and does not believe that the zoning agreement to restrict development will be enforced as an auction business has already been approved.	The cummlative impacts to loss of farmland from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions within Mott and Crow Creek township has been reviewed and is discussed in Sections 4.2.19-4.2.21 of the EA.
		What kind of land uses will be allowed near the airport? As stated in the FONSI: " The airport will coordinate with the city of Williston and/or Williams County to develop zoning regulations limiting the land use types near the new airport to those compatible with airport operations." Will these be motels, gas stations, restaurants, UPS/FedEx facilities?	Compatible Land Uses is discussed in Section 4.2.4 of the EA. Compatible land uses are those typically not negatively influenced by normal airport operations. The compatibility of existing land uses in the vicinity of an airport is usually associated with the extent of noise impacts occurring from airport property and safety concerns. Zoning laws would be implemented to restrict use of land adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of the airport to activities and purposes compatible with normal airport operations, including aircraft landing and takeoff. The expansion of hotels surrounding the existing airport was a function of overall demand in the market and availability of developable land surrounding the airport over the past decade. It was not specifically due to the proximity to the airport and providing service exclusively to the flying public. It is anticipated that travelers using the relocated airport would still go to Williston for services like restaurants and hotels. Service industries such as hotels, gas/convenience stores, and restaurants as well as residential development are not likely to occur until such time that the city limits of Williston begin to encroach upon the surrounding area. This is not anticipated to occur during the 20-year planning period. Additionally, a review of similarly located airports in the state (Grand Forks, Bismarck, and Dickinson) does not point to induced growth patterns caused by an airport. However, FedEx has expressed interest in constructing a service facility and sort station on the new airport. These facilities have been included on the Airport Layout Plan and were considered during the EA review process.
		Between the new airport proposal and the new Truck Reliever Route, there are a number of access roads and approaches to existing fields and/or pastures that have been or will be eliminated, leaving no access route to several fields and/or pastures.	Access to remaining farmland outside the new airport property would not be restricted. The proposed action includes a small township road relocation to ensure reasonable access to all adjacent properties.
		The U.S. and the world do not have significant food reserves to last more than a few months. States that more people died from starvation than died military deaths in Europe during WWII. Europe understands hunger and, after suffering great depravation as the result of two world wars fought on its soil in the last century, treats both agricultural land and farmers with great respect.	Comment noted.
		Believes there are other options for a new airport, unlike when there is not enough farm land or food. The airport can be left where it is, at least for now. It is not ideal, but it works.	The need for a new airport is discussed in Chapter 1 - Purpose and Need of the the EA.
		A lot of money has been spent in recent years on the airport. No matter where the money has come from, it ultimately came, and will continue to come, from taxpayers' pockets.	Comment noted.
I drive by the airport and see that the new 700-space parking lots are not full (the new airport plans to park 1500). People I know who have flown this year say there were empty seats and no problem getting a ticket. The Williston Job Service director reported at the recent WEST! event that many oil-field companies no longer pay for the travel of their workers to go back to wherever "home" was when the workers go on days off. As a result, many workers are purchasing a home here so their families can join them here. The urgent demand for airplane seats is not as great as it has been.	The local Social and Economic Characteristics including recent changes from the drop in oil price are discussed in Section 1.3.1 Local Social and Economic Characteristics of the EA. The growth in Williston's boardings has slowed down but year to date traffic is still approximately five percent higher than the same time last year (July 2014) according the the North Dakota Aeronatics Commission. Data from the North Dakota Industrial Commission and the Department of Natural Resources both indicate that continued growth in oil production in the region will continue into the future, and given the cyclical nature of the oil industry, the need for travel will increase at some time in the future. The operations at the airport have increased and/or remained steady throughout the study timeframe and are predicted through aviation forecasts to increase. The current airport does not meet FAA design standards.		

APPENDIX A - COMMENT MATRIX

Draft FONSI Comments/Responses SLOULIN FIELD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT			
Name	Method	Comment	Response
		There has been a significant slowdown in the oil economy in the Williston area in the last 6 months or more which, I believe, will continue for some time and will negatively affect the rate and/or amount of growth of air traffic forecast in the Williston FONSI study.	The recent economic factors have been reviewed and are documented in Section 1.3.1. Local Social and Economic Characteristics of the EA as mentioned above. The purpose of the proposed action is to develop aviation facilities that meet FAA airport design standards and accommodate current and projected levels of aviation activity for the Williston, ND area. The need for the proposed action is to develop aviation facilities necessary to meet the expected demand for the forecasted growth of air traffic in the Williston, ND area consistent with FAA airport design standards for ARC D-III aircraft, as well as provide the capability for anticipated future operations of larger aircraft.
Phyllis Owan (Continued)	Letter sent by email.	What are the things that can't be done at the existing airport as stated by the airport manager?	See response below for a list of issues for the No Action Alternative see Section 2.5.1 Alternative A - No Action . This list is a summary of the items that currently are restricted at the existing airport.
		I understand that the current airport location, conditions, and flight paths are not ideal and, ultimately, should probably be moved to a new location. But for now, we do have other options: option of keeping the 50-passenger planes, or even using smaller commuter-type planes again (If the airlines want to use larger aircraft, that is their problem. I have heard concerns that use of larger aircraft will result in reduction in the number of daily flights leaving Williston), the option of driving to larger airports to fly on larger airplanes, the option to have a friend take us to the airport, use one of the now numerous taxis in town, or take a Northwest Transit bus, rather than park our cars in airport lots, the option to utilize the newly expanded facilities at Watford City for more of the private jets flying in and out of the area, the option of waiting to put an airport where someone actually WANTS to sell their land, the option of waiting to build a new airport at some future time, and the option to work with the neighboring towns in our region to build a Regional Airport.	The use of turbojet aircraft at Williston was reviewed in a previous EA that was approved in October of 2012. Several options to the use of turbojet aircraft, (typical 50 seat or larger commercial aircraft) were considered at that time including an expanded turboprop schedule, driving to other airports, and expanded bus and rail service. This alternative would not meet purpose & need. A regional airport located centrally between Williston, Watford City and Sidney, MT, was studied during the site selection process. A GIS model was used to rank areas in Williams, McKenzie and Richland Counties for their compatibility with airport development. The area where Alternatives were developed ranked the highest due to a variety of factors, including terrain and avoidance of known environmental issues. (Landownership and willingness to sell was not included as a factor in the site selection process.) Additional information can be found in Chapter 2 of the EA and in the Sloulin Field International Airport Feasibility/Site Selection Study . The option of not moving the airport, or waiting, was considered under the required No Action Alternative. As stated in Section 2.5.1, Alternative A - No Action the airport would not meet design standards for the airplanes currently using the airport, including the 50-passenger planes that the airlines are operating and private aircraft flying into the airport. The challenges described in Chapter 1 Purpose and Need that were being evaluated prior to the need for a change of ARC would remain. In addition to not meeting D-III design standards, the airport would continue to have the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶▶ The runway length, pavement strength and rising terrain to the north of the airport would continue to limit existing airline operations with full aircraft. Passengers and baggage would continue to be bumped from flights. ▶▶ The relocated threshold on the south end of the runway shortens the available runway landing distance, which limits certain aircraft from landing. ▶▶ The terrain north of the airport would continue to limit the ability to develop precision instrument approaches and departures for Runway 11. This would limit certain aircraft's ability to land in inclement weather. ▶▶ The primary runway and taxiway would need to be reconstructed, as the pavements are at the end of their useful life. Some of the pavements are over 40 years old and are stressed because of increased use and limited pavement strength. ▶▶ Transmission lines that interfere with departures on Runway 29 by restricting useful loads of turbine aircraft would require removal/modification. ▶▶ Wetlands located on the airport have been identified as high level wildlife attractants would continue to exist and should be modified so they do not pose a hazard to aircraft. This includes the two ponds on the Williston Municipal Golf Course. ▶▶ The Williston Municipal Landfill, located 2.3 miles east of the airport, would continue to be identified as a contributing factor to the presence of hazardous wildlife on the existing airport. ▶▶ The nearby Missouri and Little Muddy Rivers would remain and have been identified as hazardous wildlife attractants. ▶▶ The RPZ for the Runway 29 end would continue to contain areas of development, which FAA standards do not recommend. ▶▶ The current terminal building would remain at its current size, which is drastically undersized, at 9,600 square feet. The Sloulin Field International Airport Feasibility/Site Selection Study, included on the Reference Documents CD recommended a terminal of over 55,000 square feet to handle the current traffic the airport is experiencing. This was recommended only to handle the existing level of boardings and would not accommodate the forecasted boardings, as is being planned for the build alternative. ▶▶ Vehicle parking would continue to be limited at the airport as all airport property in the vicinity of the terminal that could be used for parking has been converted to parking and are being filled regularly. ▶▶ The general aviation and air cargo (including US Customs) would continue to be negatively impacted as aircraft parking and taxiing within the object free zone is compromised. Currently, aircraft park on the taxiways within the apron, limiting taxiway flow and restricting aircraft movement. The other options do not meet purpose & need as stated in Chapter 1 Purpose and Need .
		With a new airport, the City will suddenly be in our backyard, literally next door to land that we farm; this is something that, given the distance, should have taken decades to happen, if ever; not seemingly overnight. I am concerned about my neighbors who will unwillingly lose their land, livelihoods, and way of life. I am concerned about the futures for my son and my neighbors' children and grandchildren who are planning to take over their families' farms and who may be crowded and forced out of their chosen livelihoods and way of life by further development around the airport and lack of farmland to buy or rent.	Please refer to Section 4.2.14 Socioeconomic Impacts, Environmental Justice, and Children's Environmental Health .
		U.S. and world populations are growing. Land is finite — we can't just make more. We do NOT have the option to get farmland back, so we have an obligation to think long and hard about giving it up.	Impacts of the proposed actions to farmland were considered and are discussed in Section 4.2.7.1. Farmland Impacts/Mitigation . It was determined that there was no practicable alternative impacts to the farmland as the No Action alternative did not meet the Purpose and Need for the project and both build alternatives had impacts to farmland with the preferred alternatives farmland impact rating being slightly higher. The preferred alternative was selected as such due to the consideration of all environmental impacts combined. The preferred alternative would result in a conversion of 0.1 percent of farmland in the county or local government unit to be converted.
		So in my opinion, yes, removing good agricultural land from production for a new airport DOES have a significant environmental impact.	FAA Order 1050.1E, Appendix A , provides FAA's significance thresholds for many resources FAA actions often affect. A significant impact would occur pursuant to NEPA when the total combined score on Form AD 1006 (copies available from NRCS) ranges between 200 and 260 points. Note that impact severity increases as the total combined score approaches 260 points. The proposed action received a score of 195 on the Form AD 1006.