

Frequently Ask Questions About the Need and Construction of XWA

1. What are the primary reasons that there is a proposal to relocate the airport?

- Sloulin Field does not meet Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) design standards for many of the aircraft currently using this airport, primarily aircraft used by Delta and United Airlines, as well as larger corporate jets. Standards that need to be addressed include:
 - The slope of the existing runway is too steep and requires extensive rework to correct the issue.
 - The taxiway is closer to the runway than standards allow.
 - The pavement strength is not designed for the aircraft currently using the airfield, or that are projected to use the airfield.
- The existing airfield is in need of major reconstruction, but to receive federal funding, the FAA requires Williston reconstruction projects to be in conformance with design standards.

2. Could Sloulin Field be fixed?

- Yes. The analysis has shown that Sloulin Field could be fixed; however, this was determined to be an impractical solution for following reasons:
 - Costs of fixing the airport are comparable to the relocation.
 - The airfield would be closed for at least two years for construction.
 - More environmental impacts will occur than the proposed relocation.
 - There are limitations on additional commercial air service.
 - It would not allow sale of the existing airfield to help cover program costs.

3. What is the benefit of the new airport for our community?

- The new airport will meet all FAA design standards for aircraft anticipated to use the airport in next five years.
- Airlines will not be constrained by airfield facilities (i.e. no more limiting passengers due to limitations currently impacting Sloulin Field).
- Williston will be able to compete for air service with other communities. The new airport will put the community on an equal playing field with Minot and Bismarck for attracting and retaining air service.
- While the airport has been planned to accommodate the existing activity present at Sloulin, it has been laid out to allow for a significant amount of expansion in the future should activity levels increase.
- The airport will provide additional economic activity from those using it and potential new business development.

4. How was the new site selected?

- A geographic information system (GIS) model was used to evaluate land in Williams and McKenzie County for compatibility with airport development. The territory reviewed was from the Montana state line on the west to 20 miles east of Williston and from Alexander north to south of Highway 200.

- Alternatives were developed and ranked from the highest to lowest considering a variety of factors, including terrain, wildlife attractants, airspace obstructions, environmental impacts, compatible land use, such as existing development, and access to emergency services.
- Additional information on the site selection process can be found in Chapter 2 of the Environmental Assessment and in Appendix 1a and 1b in the Feasibility/Site Selection Study.

5. With reduction in oil prices, why is the relocation of the airport still required?

- The existing airport was designed for aircraft ranging from smaller general aviation aircraft to small business jets and air carriers using smaller turbo propeller aircraft such as Great Lakes Airline.
- As long as larger corporate jets and regional jets, such as those used by Delta and United Airlines, are using the airport, FAA design standards are not being met.
- There is no indication by Delta or United Airlines of discontinuing service. Given the international significance of Williston Basin oil reserves, the complete loss of air service appears highly unlikely.
- The current traffic levels, as well as forecasted traffic levels for the airport, exceed the existing airport's capacity.

6. How long will it take to build the airport?

- The City would like to have the airport constructed as quickly as reasonably possible.
- The engineers anticipate it will take three to four construction seasons to build. The airport will commence operations on October 10, 2019.

7. What are the anticipated costs of relocation?

- The current budget estimate for the project is \$265 million. As design progresses, more refined cost estimates will be developed.
- The breakdown of costs are:
 - Airfield – \$165 million (land, runways, taxiways, aprons and navigation aids)
 - Structures – \$70 million (terminal and airport support facilities)
 - Associated Projects – \$30 million (roads, parking lots and utility extensions to site)

8. How is land acquisition being handled?

- Land will be federally-funded; therefore, acquisition must follow the Uniform Relocation Act and federal land acquisition policies.
- This federal process tends to take longer than routine land acquisition.
- Ultimately, the City determines the offer amounts, and the City or its agent will make offers to the land owners and negotiate to acquire the land.
- The City will receive independent appraisals of the land to determine the offer amounts.

9. What happens to the existing airport?

- The City has selected the Cardon Development Group to assist with redevelopment of existing airport land after it has been decommissioned.
- Initial concepts include re-purposing the land for a mix of commercial, retail, residential and municipal purposes. The final development of this property will be determined over the next few years by the City of Williston.
- The proceeds from the sale of Sloulin Field will be used to pay for the City's share of the airport relocation project.

10. What additional air services will be at the new airport?

The City will continue to work with the airline industry, along with the community and businesses with regards to increasing services at the new airport. For now, it is too early to have any commitments for any other services.

11. How is the project going to be bid out?

- The relocation project will be let as a series of individual construction projects, depending on funding and ability to maximize the efficiency of constructing this "greenfield" project.
- The bidding process will follow federal and state requirements for the bidding the projects and selection of the winning bidder.

12. How can firms participate in the construction of the airport?

We anticipate there will be multiple firms that will be bidding on various projects.

- The plans for each project will be developed by the selected project engineer, advertised and posted online. For more information check the Doing Business section of the website.
- We encourage all contractors to review the plans for the airport and submit bids, or partner with other contractors, as appropriate, to offer bids on the work.

13. What are some of the anticipated hurdles?

- As the project transitions from the planning to the design and construction phase, there are several potential hurdles that may impact the commissioning of the project. They include:
 - Issues in acquiring land
 - Uncertainty in the timing and amount of FAA and North Dakota Oil Impact funding
 - Unforeseen increases in costs of various program elements
 - Delays in permitting approvals from regulatory agencies (storm water, utilities, pipeline relocations)
 - Harsh or long winter weather impacting length of construction each year
 - Delays in review and approval of critical path projects by federal, state or local agencies
 - Delays in construction by contractors in a critical path project