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# NEWS RELEASE

## Durango-La Plata County Airport To Acquire Land For Terminal Development

**Durango, CO:** The Durango-La Plata County Airport (DRO) announced plans today to acquire a parcel of land adjacent to the existing terminal facility in order to allow for long-term airport growth and open new development alternatives for consideration. The Durango City Council and La Plata County Board of County Commissioners will review and vote on a purchase contract during meetings February 5 & 12.

The contract includes the \$3.9 million purchase of a 12.523 acre land parcel and two commercial buildings located north-northeast of the existing terminal complex. The parcel is currently owned by Koinonia Properties, LLC.

The transaction will be funded entirely through airport enterprise funds, and will not require any investment from the City of Durango or La Plata County. The airport does not receive any local public tax dollars and funds all airport operations through revenue generated by its users and tenants.

To fund the acquisition, the airport will secure lease/purchase financing backed by existing Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) revenue. DRO collects a \$4.50 PFC for every enplaned passenger, meaning that all funds are derived directly from the users of the airport facilities. There are no plans to increase PFC's at DRO to fund the acquisition. The current PFC amount has been in place since 2000, and is capped at this level nationwide by Congress.

Acquiring the land will allow for more unconstrained development alternatives to be considered by the airport to meet its growing demand for commercial air service. The land is likely to be used for passenger vehicle parking expansion, rental car facilities, and a circulation road or airport entrance road realignment, which would free land for eventual terminal expansion.

"Residents of the Durango, La Plata County, and the entire Four Corners region continue to demand additional air service" said Director of Aviation Tony Vicari. "Capital investments must be made to the terminal infrastructure at DRO to sufficiently support this growing demand.

**MORE**

## DURANGO-LA PLATA COUNTY AIRPORT TO ACQUIRE LAND FOR TERMINAL DEVELOPMENT

“Passenger traffic at DRO increased 1.8% in 2018, continuing a long-term growth trend. Traffic has more than doubled over the past 15 years at DRO, pressuring our facilities and infrastructure,” Vicari explained. “If we want to see additional air service in our market, we need to make the investments necessary to accommodate growing demand and the ever-evolving needs of the airline industry. Our 30 year old terminal facility has served us well, serving over 7.3 million passengers since 1988, but it is not designed to handle the level of air traffic that we see today.”

Vicari noted that the June 2019 addition of seasonal service to Chicago by both American and United Airlines and United’s new seasonal service to Houston illustrates the strong demand for air service in SW Colorado and the Four Corners region, and the willingness of airlines to serve the market.

“With their vote on ballot measure 1B in 2016, the residents of La Plata County delivered a message that the Durango-La Plata County Airport would need to pursue a less aggressive and self-funded development strategy”, said Vicari. “This acquisition relieves our landlocked position, and will allow the airport to study a new range of terminal development alternatives while removing concern that the existing terminal site will not be able to accommodate decades of future growth without expensive vertical development.”

If the purchase is completed, the airport will conduct a comprehensive Terminal Area Plan study. The findings of this study will allow the airport to evaluate the existing terminal facilities along with the newly acquired parcel for long-term consideration of renovation, expansion, or new construction of airport terminal facilities. The plan will also outline an incremental development and funding strategy that utilizes the funding streams available through airport revenue sources.

### **About Durango-La Plata County Airport**

Durango-La Plata County Airport (DRO) is the primary regional airport for southwest Colorado, northwest New Mexico, and the entire Four Corners Region. DRO welcomed over 378,000 passengers in 2018 and contributes \$280 million annually to the regional economy. DRO is served by two of the four largest U.S. airlines (American and United), offering nonstop routes to Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW), Denver (DEN), Phoenix (PHX) and seasonally to Chicago (ORD), Houston, (IAH), and Los Angeles (LAX). For more information, please visit [www.flydurango.com](http://www.flydurango.com). Follow us on [twitter.com/DROAirport](https://twitter.com/DROAirport) and [facebook.com/DROAirport](https://facebook.com/DROAirport).

DRO operates as an enterprise fund of the City of Durango, and generates self-sustaining revenue from airport tenants and users in the form of airline rent and landing fees, terminal concessions, ground leases, and parking fees. The airport does not receive any local tax funding.

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Enclosure: Map of land parcel



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