

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
DAKOTA-MINNESOTA AIRPORTS DISTRICT OFFICE
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR THE CROSSWIND RUNWAY
RELOCATION PROJECT
AT THE
NEW ULM MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
CITY OF NEW ULM, BROWN COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) prepared this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Crosswind Runway Relocation Project at the New Ulm Municipal Airport (ULM). The proposed action and potential environmental impacts are described in detail in the Environmental Assessment (EA) that was completed for the project dated March 2025, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference. The EA was prepared in accordance with the guidelines and requirements set forth by the FAA to implement the environmental review and disclosure provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

Based on the evaluation in the EA and mitigation commitments defined in the document, no significant impacts associated with the Project were identified in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1F, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures* and FAA Order 5050.4B, *NEPA Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions*. Therefore, it has been determined that an environmental impact statement is not needed, and this FONSI was prepared. This FONSI provides a summary of the Airport Sponsor's Proposed Action, mitigation requirements, and the basis for the FAA's finding.

I. Project Description

ULM is proposing to relocate their existing turf crosswind runway involving construction of a new 2,478-foot-long turf crosswind Runway 9/27, acquisition of approximately 25.2 acres of land for runway protection areas, realignment of Taxiway A, and decommissioning the existing 2,478-foot-long turf crosswind Runway 4/22. In March 2024, the United States Congress directed funding to the City of New Ulm, specifically to fund the relocation of the turf crosswind runway as described in the 2023 Airport Master Plan (AMP), 2023 FAA-approved Airport Layout Plan (ALP), and 2023 Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) approved Airport Zoning Ordinance.

II. Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed project is to maintain the functionality and usability of the airport and enhance safety for airport users and neighbors. The proposed project arose from the needs of the airport to accommodate additional building development and the needs of the city to accommodate development beneath the existing crosswind runway's flight path. While a reconfigured runway is under consideration, it is also an opportune time to optimize wind coverage needs, which guide runway orientation and lead to enhanced safety.

More specifically the project objectives are to: resolve incompatible land use, improve crosswind runway coverage, maintain existing runway length, enable planned building area expansion, and adhere to FAA design standards. **See EA Chapter 1 Sections 1.3 Project Purpose and Section 1.4 Project Need.**

III. Alternatives Considered

The EA includes a no action alternative and two build alternatives, including the proposed action alternative, as summarized below and described in further detail in **EA Chapter 2 Alternatives.**

Alternative 1 - No Action

This alternative would maintain and make no changes to the existing airfield configuration and turf Runway 4/22 would remain in its existing location and orientation. This alternative would not meet the project purpose and need, however as NEPA requires, the no-action alternative was carried forward in the EA as a baseline for comparison with the other alternatives.

Alternative 2 - Construct 2,478-foot turf Runway 6/24

This alternative presents a 6/24 runway alignment and shifts the crosswind runway to the southwest. This alternative was rejected because it would not fully resolve incompatible land uses within runway safety areas.

Alternative 3 - Construct 2,478-foot turf Runway 9/27 (Proposed Action Alternative)

This alternative presents a 9/27 runway alignment and shifts the runway to the southwest. This alternative meets the project purpose and need and objectives and was chosen as the preferred alternative.

The Proposed Action (as shown on the attached figure) includes:

- Design and construct new Runway 9/27
- Design and construct storm water infrastructure including storm drains for new Runway 9/27
- Decommission existing crosswind Runway 4/22
- Impact an estimated 0.05 acre of previously delineated wetland on east end of new Runway 9/27
- Acquire approximately 25.2 acres of fee simple land to protect the new Runway 9/27 Runway Protection Zone and Minnesota Department of Transportation Clear Zone
- Realign Taxiway A to cross new Runway 9/27 at a 90° angle and update markings as appropriate, including adding hold lines for new runway crossing
- Extinguish or vacate existing blanket easements for drain tile and power utilities within the project footprint

IV. Environmental Consequences

After careful analysis and consultation with various state and federal resource and regulatory agencies, it was determined that the Proposed Action satisfies the purpose and need for the project while causing no significant environmental impacts. The proposed action will not significantly affect environmental resources, as summarized in the table below. **See EA Chapter 3 Environmental Consequences.**

EA Table 3-5: Summary of Environmental Consequences				
Environmental Impact Category		No-Action Alternative Impact	Preferred Alternative Impact	Permitting/Mitigation & Associated Actions
Farmlands		No impact	Not significant Up to 55 acres converted.	Potential to lease on-airport farmland after acquisition.
Hazardous Materials, Solid Waste, and Pollution Prevention		No impact	No impact	Dispose of two small debris piles (BERs) prior to construction Dispose of construction materials and solid waste in accordance with state and local laws.
Historical, Architectural, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources		No impact	No impact	-
Land Use	Zoning	No impact State Airport Zoning guidelines non-conforming. Continuing of non-compliance may require the acquisition of approximately 15 acres of additional airport property or cause the existing crosswind runway 4/22 to close in the future.	No impact Runway ends will align with existing safety zoning.	-
	Ground Transportation	No impact	No impact	-
	RPZ	RPZs nonconforming.	RPZs conforming.	Land acquisition to establish governing control of RPZ.
	Utilities	No impact	No impact	Extinguish or vacate existing blanket easements for drain tile and power utilities
	Wildlife Attractants	No impact	No impact	To minimize wildlife attractants, vegetation management post-construction would continue with regular mowing, unless the area would be cropland.

Natural Resources and Energy Supply		No impact	No impact	-
Socioeconomics and Children's Health and Safety		No impact	No impact Acquire 25.2 acres of agricultural land	Land acquisition in compliance with The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act.
Water Resources	Surface Waters and Stormwater	No impact	No impact	A project-specific SWPPP would be developed. Airport remains party to existing drainage easement.
	Wetlands	No impact	Not significant	0.03-acre incidental wetland fill, 0.02 acres indirectly impacted.
Cumulative Impacts		No substantial impacts.	No substantial impacts.	-

V. Community Planning Consistency Statement

The proposed action is consistent with community planning. The New Ulm Municipal Airport developed a Master Plan in 2023 that will guide the Airport and community in meeting the aviation needs for the next 20 years. Further, the Public Involvement Plan, developed as part of the master planning process, included various tools to ensure that stakeholders participated and were informed throughout the process.

VI. Commitments and Compliance

The following mitigation measures shall be implemented as a condition of this environmental approval and FONSI:

1. The Airport shall dispose of two small debris piles (BERs) within the project area prior to construction.
2. The Airport shall dispose of all construction materials and solid waste in accordance with state and local laws.
3. The Airport shall extinguish or vacate the blanket power utility easement located within Parcels 12, 13, 14, and 16 to be acquired for the project to comply with FAA's good title requirements.
4. The Airport shall remain party to the existing drainage easement within the land acquisition limits of Parcels 13, 14, 15, and 16. The agreement shall be amended to clarify financial responsibility and eliminate access to existing and future airport property to comply with FAA's good title requirements.
5. All land acquisition shall comply with The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act.

6. A project-specific Stormwater Pollution Protection Plan (SWPPP) shall be developed prior to construction.
7. The Airport shall obtain all required Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Clean Water Act approvals for the project prior to construction.

VII. Public Review and Comment

To inform the public of the project and to gather comments, the draft EA was made available for public review and comment from January 25 through February 24, 2025. Along with the notice of publication, an opportunity to request a hearing was published in the New Ulm Journal newspaper and mailed to impacted landowners. The notice can be found in EA Appendix E. The draft EA document was available for viewing online at the City's website, and in person at City Hall.

No requests for a public hearing were received. Two written comments were received from agencies during the comment period, including minor comments from the Environmental Protection Agency and a response from the Minnesota Department of Transportation indicating that they had no comments on the proposal. All comments received and how they have been addressed are in the Final EA. **See EA Appendix E Agency and Public Engagement.**

This FONSI will be published in the New Ulm Journal newspaper and the FONSI and Final EA will be made available for public review for 30 days online at the City's website and in person at City Hall.

VIII. Finding

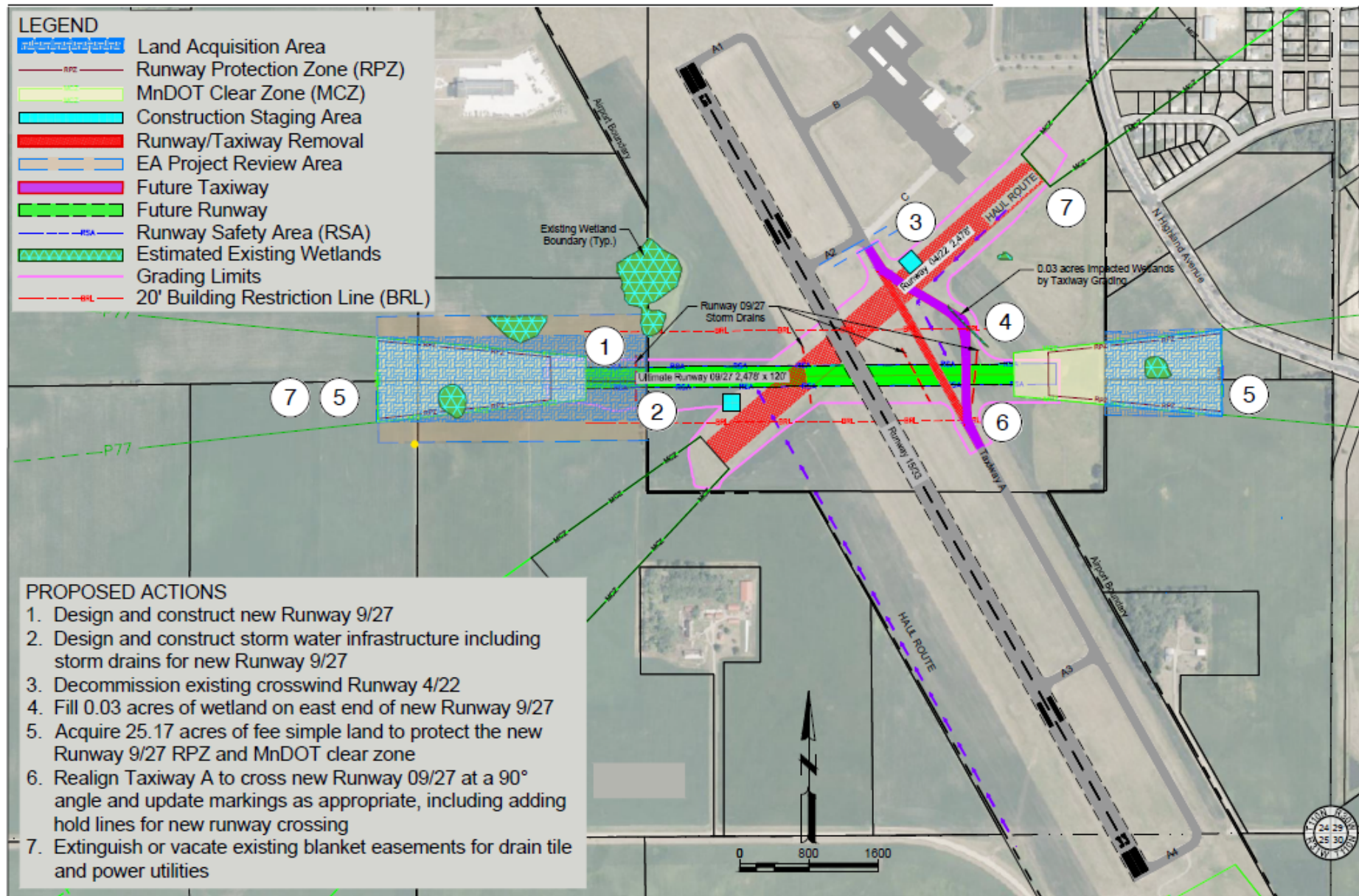
After careful and thorough consideration of the facts contained herein, the undersigned finds that the proposed Federal action, namely the Airport Sponsor's Proposed Action, is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 of NEPA and other applicable environmental requirements and does not significantly affect the quality of the human environment or otherwise include any condition requiring consultation pursuant to Section 102 (2) (C) of NEPA. As a result, the FAA will not prepare an environmental impact statement for this action.

APPROVAL:

Name: E. Lindsay Terry, Manager, Dakota-Minnesota ADO
Responsible FAA Official

Signature: 

Date: 05/19/2025



NEW ULM
MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
ULTIMATE CROSS WIND
RUNWAY 09/27

1416900-231225.01
12/2024

PROPOSED ACTION

**Mead
& Hunt**

Figure 2-4