American Airlines holding off decision to cut some flights

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American Airlines confirmed Monday it is holding off on its decision to cut flights to Stillwater, Oklahoma, and Roswell, New Mexico, but warned that slumping demand in some markets is forcing the company

to consider "difficult decisions to right-size our airline."

American announced last month it was planning to drop flights to 15 smaller U.S. cities when a federal requirement to serve those communities ends. But the company said in a statement it is deferring its decision on Roswell and Stillwater while conversations are ongoing with local officials.

"While our flights to Stillwater and Roswell are among those that have suffered when it comes to demand and profitability, we have been in touch with local officials, and we're deferring our decision to suspend service to those markets as those conversations are ongoing," the airline said.

The airline blamed low demand during the coronavirus pandemic and the failure of Congress to extend the federal Payroll Support Program.

Among the other cities targeted for dropping flights in October are: Del Rio, Texas; Dubuque, Iowa; Florence, South Carolina; Greenville, North Carolina; Huntington, West Virginia; Joplin, Missouri; Kalamazoo-Battle Creek, Michigan; Lake Charles, Louisiana; New Haven, Connecticut; New Windsor, New York; Sioux City, Iowa; Springfield, Illinois; and Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

The company notified the federal Department of Transportation on Aug. 28 that maintaining services to Joplin and Sioux City is not financially viable in this environment and that it planned to discontinue all services to those airports by Dec. 1. The airline reported that since the pandemic began in the spring, American's operations in Joplin and Sioux City produced losses of $2.2 million and $1.9 million, respectively.

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