

## WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Air Transportation Technical Advisory Committee  
Unmanned Aircraft Systems Workshop  
April 1, 2015

### OVERVIEW

North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) hosted an Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) workshop on April 1, 2015, with members of the Air Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (ATTAC), regional industry stakeholders, and interested parties.

As a recommendation from the [Regional General Aviation and Heliport System Plan](#), NCTCOG monitors industry trends and policies for potential impacts to regional aviation system planning. Due to the potential impact of the emerging UAS sector on aviation safety, members of the Air Transportation Technical Advisory Committee requested that NCTCOG provide resources and other tools to assist municipalities, academia, and regional aviation decision makers in making informed policy decisions for local-level integration of UAS technology. This workshop was requested as part of this effort to better understand impacts and encourage regional dialogue.

### GOALS

Given the dense population, complex airspace, and concentration of aviation activity in North Central Texas, UAS may present heightened airspace safety concerns and challenges for airport staff and law enforcement. This workshop was intended to provide an open forum to discuss these issues.

Primary goals for the workshop, included:

- **Listening** to concerns of aviation community regarding UAS operations
- **Understanding** operational requirements of UAS users in North Texas
- **Communicating** current regulatory information and outreach materials
- **Documenting** UAS impacts to North Texas airports and airspace
- **Facilitating and recommending** best practices based on feedback from stakeholders
- **Coordinating** with FAA and other industry groups

Note this workshop was not intended to:

- **Debate** legality of federal or local regulation
- **Duplicate**, infringe upon, or contradict FAA, Test Sites or other efforts
- **Create** absolute policy or regulation of UAS operations in North Texas
- **Solve** all facets of UAS industry impacts
- **Restrict** all UAS operations

### INVITED PARTIES

Various groups were invited to be a part of this workshop. Although formally organized through the ATTAC committee, others invited included:

- Airports
- Academic Institutions
- Regulatory agencies (FAA, TxDOT)
- Local UAS operators (NTX Drone Users Group, Academy of Model Aeronautics)

- Law Enforcement and Emergency Preparedness officials
- Military
- Other NCTCOG Committees (RTC, STTC, RCC)

## **GUEST SPEAKERS**

*Cpt. Gil Miller, Commander, NAS Fort Worth, JRB* presented a high level overview of the safety issues associated with recent airspace encroachment by unauthorized UAS operations near the installation. Captain Miller indicated there was a need to develop operational training, tracking, and other best practices for the region. Authorized UAS operations are currently being conducted on NAS Fort Worth, JRB property at the discretion of the military.

*Mike McNair, University of Texas at Arlington Research Institute (UTARI)*, gave an overview of the Texas UAS Test Site near Corpus Christi, Texas, designated by the Federal Aviation Administration. He shared information related to UTARI research initiatives and described current and forecasted positive economic impacts from the increased use of UAS technology.

*Sgt. Brook Rollins, City of Arlington Police Department Aviation Unit*, gave a briefing on the current use of UAS for law enforcement purposes, as well as an overview of the recent FAA guidance to law enforcement. He emphasized the need for local coordination to assist with airspace safety and privacy violations by unauthorized users.

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

Expertise shared by presenters, combined with vigorous feedback and discussion among attendees, led to four specific focus areas. NCTCOG may be of assistance in several areas while others will be general considerations for outside discussion.

### Operations:

- Utilize UAS to monitor and protect critical infrastructure
- Consider the use of UAS to support Intelligent Transportation Operation and Management
- Adopt uniform training, education, and certification requirements for all UAS operators

### Local Control:

- Draft and enact local and regional enforceable resolutions, ordinances, and zoning to prevent unauthorized operations that encroach on controlled airspace and aviation facilities
- Prevent takeoff and landing from locations identified as creating safety hazards, near critical infrastructure, and other predetermined operational restrictions such as near public venues
- Local law enforcement is not equipped to address suspicious activity or investigate unauthorized use of UAS; mechanisms are needed to enforce unauthorized/suspicious activity

**Outreach:**

- Assist ATTAC with response to Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
- Continue to monitor legislation, particularly HB 2167, 3628, and 1481
- Engage the public through education and outreach materials

**Data Tracking:**

- Create and implement an operational tracking tool capable of sharing data across platforms
- Review Certificate of Authorization (COA) requests to understand users and requirements in Texas

**SURVEY**

The workshop concluded with an exit survey to help determine next steps for future planning, coordination, and implementation of UAS policy. Detailed survey responses are attached. Sample participant highlights are noted below.

- Over 90% would find UAS ordinances, land-use, and zoning strategies valuable
- Over 80% agreed a framework to assist reporting unauthorized UAS activity is needed
- Nearly 70% find solutions are needed to track and report UAS activity
- Over 95% believe an assessment of potential impacts to airspace is needed

For more information about planning for unmanned aircraft in North Central Texas please visit [www.nctcog.org/uas](http://www.nctcog.org/uas).