General Aviation
North Central Texas Council of Governments
The Importance of Regional General Aviation Planning

North Central Texas relies heavily on general aviation facilities to enhance growth and economic prosperity. Through connectivity to global markets, the region’s general aviation facilities provide economic development opportunities, the ability to conduct business in local communities, movement of time-sensitive cargo, as well as leisure and tourism opportunities throughout the world. Thus, the region’s general aviation facilities serve as vital transportation assets that require proper coordination, protection and support.

In short, aviation planning is necessary to help sustain the region’s expansive general aviation system.
General Aviation is an essential part of the North Central Texas economy and serves as a vital transportation option for the region. As the nation’s largest inland port and the fourth–largest metropolitan area, North Central Texas depends heavily on the success of its general aviation system.

Since 1903, when the Wright brothers successfully completed the first powered flight, general aviation has reached many diverse segments of the public. Pilots, air traffic controllers, aircraft mechanics, avionics technicians and other skilled professionals and amateurs have driven the industry’s growth. These specified components fuel a much larger system of aviation, requiring planning, communication and investment.

In particular, general aviation provides a connection to a growing global market while sustaining local economic development in the region. From effectively transporting business people in corporate jets, to training future pilots in single-engine aircraft, general aviation contributes billions of dollars to local economies and helps drive growth in the region’s communities.

General aviation is a vital resource to North Central Texas, and its purpose must be preserved to meet future demand in the region.

What is General Aviation?

General aviation is one of the most commonly misunderstood terms today. Formally, it involves any aircraft operations other than scheduled airline service, excluding the military. Of the 19,734 landing areas reported in the Federal Aviation Administration’s 2011-2015 National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems, airlines only serve 503. The other landing areas support general aviation operations and are the lifeline to thousands of communities. Examples of general aviation flight operations include:

- Corporate or Business
- Air Medical Services
- Law Enforcement
- Air Taxi Services
- Instructional
- Sightseeing and Helicopter Tours
- Aerial Observation and Photography
- Aerial Application for Agriculture or Forestry
- Personal/Recreation

Currently, there are over 400 landing facilities in the 16-county North Central Texas region. All serve the needs of the general aviation community.
In North Texas alone, general aviation carries approximately 166 million passengers annually on a variety of aircraft ranging from single-engine, piston-powered aircraft to luxurious corporate jets. General aviation accounts for millions of jobs and billions of dollars in economic output and contributes to the growth of cities, businesses, services and manufacturing facilities worldwide.

Additionally, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association reported that Standard and Poor’s 500 businesses utilizing general aviation resources realized 146 percent more return than their competitors who did not. These facts aren’t surprising considering aviation facilities offering general aviation or business aviation services contributed over $150 billion to the US economy in 2007 and provided over 1.2 million high-paying jobs, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

In 2008, the state of Texas was ranked No. 2 in industry-related gross domestic product (GDP). Contributing to the GDP in the region are companies in the aerospace manufacturing sector – six of the nine major aerospace industries have operations in Texas. More prominent companies operating in North Central Texas are Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Bell Helicopter Textron with more than 20,000 combined employees. Furthermore, in 2009, the National Business Aviation Association reported over 350 member companies in the North Central Texas region.

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**General Aviation Activity in Texas Creates...**

- 61,900 Jobs
- $8.7 Billion Economic Output
- $2.5 Billion Payroll

**Corporate jet during pre-flight**

Source: 2005 TxDOT Aviation Economic Impact Study

### Local Airports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Airports</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Payroll</th>
<th>Economic Output</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addison</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>$128,000,000</td>
<td>$611,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance</td>
<td>6,677</td>
<td>$297,600,000</td>
<td>$1,300,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arlington</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>$30,100,000</td>
<td>$93,300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collin County</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>$34,000,000</td>
<td>$79,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Executive</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>$20,000,000</td>
<td>$73,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denton</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>$8,800,000</td>
<td>$58,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Prairie</td>
<td>1,445</td>
<td>$60,700,000</td>
<td>$240,800,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lancaster</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>$4,700,000</td>
<td>$12,900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meacham</td>
<td>2,497</td>
<td>$93,800,000</td>
<td>$379,900,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mesquite</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>$3,200,000</td>
<td>$12,300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spinks</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>$3,900,000</td>
<td>$17,800,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>17,856</td>
<td><strong>$684,800,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,879,400,000</strong></td>
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</table>
As population is expected to increase from 6.5 million to over 9.1 million by 2030, the importance of coordinated development of the regional aviation system alongside statewide transportation systems is a key element in supporting economic growth and protecting airports in North Central Texas.

General Aviation facilities in North Central Texas create over 28,000 jobs, a $1.1 billion payroll and a total economic impact of over $4.2 billion. (Source: 2005 TxDOT Economic Impact Study)

“Manufacturers in the know set up shop within 10 miles of public-use airports, which allows them to send time-critical parts and materials to customers.”
— GAServesAmerica.com
General Aviation’s Value in the Community

Community Support for General Aviation Airports

General aviation is an economic asset that, according to the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, employs more than 1.2 million people nationwide. As an essential component to the industry, general aviation creates possibilities for the advancement of:

- Business
- Public Safety
- Emergency Medical Services
- Disaster Relief Efforts
- Science and Research
- Agriculture

For airports, air shows are one of the most popular and widely accepted means of educating the community about the airport’s role and uses. Typically, air shows are multi-day events including:

- Static Aircraft Displays
- Interactive Booths
- Concerts
- Air Performances

An effective way to help preserve the general aviation community and its infrastructure is through awareness of areas surrounding local airports. The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association has a program through the Airport Support Network in which volunteers act as the “eyes and ears” of airports.

The Texas Department of Transportation also encourages communities to support local airports through the “Adopt an Airport” program. This program promotes volunteering at local airports to learn about their operations and the economic impact on communities.

Introducing youth to general aviation is another effort positively supporting the industry and its future. As recognized by the North Texas Aviation Education Initiative, in the coming years demand for aviation resources is projected to increase. Pilots, aircraft technicians and air traffic controllers will be essential if the region is to meet future aviation demand. To gain the interest of youth, many organizations sponsor youth education programs such as the Experimental Aircraft Association’s Young Eagles, geared toward young people ages 8-17. This program gives youth the opportunity to experience a free flight in a general aviation aircraft.

Since 1992, the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) has sponsored free flights for over 1 million Young Eagles flown by more than 42,000 volunteer pilots.

North Texas Aviation Education Initiative
Issues Affecting General Aviation Airports

Sustaining a secure and safe environment for the operation of aircraft is a primary goal for airports. General aviation has had to endure many obstacles including encroachment pressures from residential development, increased security and regulation, and economic instability. Identifying compatible land uses around general aviation airports supports this goal and allows an airport to continue its role as a local economic driver. Steps toward developing compatible land-use and planning initiatives around an airport can be seen in the example below.

Encroachment’s Effect on a Local Airport

A 10-year aerial photography timeline of Saginaw Airport demonstrates the pressures airports can experience from the lack of compatible land-use practices. Airports and communities working together will benefit the region as a whole by promoting future compatible land-use practices and planning initiatives. Below is a series of photographs showing increased encroachment at Saginaw Airport, which closed in 2002.
The 16-county region of North Central Texas is home to a variety of public and private aviation facilities including:

- 2 Primary Commercial Service Airports
- 11 Reliever Airports
- 56 General Aviation Airports
- 1 Military Training Airfield
- 3 Public-Use Heliports
- Over 300 Private-Use Aviation Facilities

Commercial Service Airports provide locations for scheduled commercial airlines to compete for the opportunity to serve the general public. Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) and Dallas Love Field are North Texas’ commercial airports.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) designated Reliever Airports to attract general aviation traffic and alleviate congestion for significant commercial aviation destinations such as DFW Airport and Love Field.

Federal Aviation Administration designated reliever airports include:

- Addison
- Arlington Municipal
- Collin County Regional (at McKinney)
- Dallas Executive (formerly Redbird)
- Denton Municipal
- Fort Worth Alliance
- Fort Worth Meacham International
- Fort Worth Spinks
- Grand Prairie Municipal
- Lancaster Regional
- Mesquite Metro

National General Aviation Hours Flown by Use (2008)
The region is home to one Military Training Airfield, on the western edge of Tarrant County, the Naval Air Station Fort Worth, Joint Reserve Base.

The region is also home to three Public-Use Heliports: Dallas Central Business District Vertiport, Garland Heliport and Ferris-Red Oak Municipal Heliport.

Additionally, over 300 Private-Use Aviation Facilities are used for a variety of flight purposes, including emergency medical support, media coverage, efficient corporate and business transportation, and law enforcement for the public’s safety. The facilities also provide operational capabilities from recreational flights to short takeoffs and landings and sail-planes.

Federal Aviation Administration designated general aviation airports include:

- Bridgeport Municipal
- C. David Campbell-Corsicana Municipal
- Caddo Mills Municipal
- Clark Field Municipal
- Cleburne Municipal
- Commerce Municipal
- Decatur Municipal
- Ennis Municipal
- Granbury Municipal
- Hillsboro Municipal
- Majors Field
- Mid-Way Regional
- Mineral Wells Airport
- Rockwall Municipal

North Central Texas is home to 15 air traffic control towers at commercial, reliever and general aviation facilities that coordinate the operations for over 6,300 aircraft based in the region.
1903 The Wright brothers successfully complete the first powered flight.

1910 The first aircraft flies over Dallas during an exhibition at Fair Park.

1925 Fort Worth Meacham International is opened.

1933 Globe Aircraft Company established in Saginaw for the development of an aircraft factory and airfield at former Saginaw Airport.

1947 The city of Denton uses 550 acres of land on the west side of the city to build an airport with a single concrete runway, 4,150 feet long and 150 feet wide.

1953 Dallas’ Redbird Airport acquires additional property for an expansion to include a new northwest-southeast runway (4,450 feet by 150 feet), new taxiways and ramps, runway lighting and an airport beacon.

1968 Grand Prairie Municipal Airport is relocated from near downtown Grand Prairie to its existing location, southwest of downtown.

1977 With the first federal grant to the city of McKinney, on June 15, 1977, what is now Collin County Regional Airport is constructed.

1989 A North Central Texas Council of Governments System Plan indicates a demand in the region for additional aviation infrastructure, leading to the construction of Alliance Airport.

1995 Bombardier Flexjet begins operations out of Addison Airport, creating more than 1,250 jobs.

2008 Lancaster Municipal Airport Demonstration Encoachment Analysis conducted to show how compatible land-use planning and development can maximize long-term functionality and economic development of the airport and adjacent property for the benefit of both the community and region.

2012 Estimated completion of the North Central Texas Regional General Aviation and Heliport System Plan.
In addition to traditional metropolitan planning organization roles, NCTCOG aviation staff is working with the FAA, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), regional airport managers and others interested in the region's general aviation system on a multi-year effort to produce the Regional General Aviation and Heliport System Plan for the 16-county NCTCOG region, plus Cooke, Grayson and Hill counties. System planning efforts include:

- Regional Aviation Inventory Update
- Development of an Online Regional Aviation Data Management System (ORADMS)
- Analysis of Current and Forecast Aviation System Demands
- Resources for Regional Airport Sponsors

Typically general aviation airport capital improvement projects are funded through the Federal Aviation Administration Airport Improvement Program and the Texas Aviation Facilities Development Program.
Regional General Aviation System Planning

The North Central Texas Regional General Aviation and Heliport System Plan will also include an exploration of market demands, system deficiencies, a needs assessment and economic impacts of the airport and heliport system. The work will require more coordination with federal, state and local planning agencies and municipalities to ensure that regional priorities are being considered in planning and funding decisions. Furthermore, the effects of population and employment growth, an aging aviation infrastructure, low-cost carriers, very light jets, regional jets, fractional ownership and fuel prices have not been cataloged and analyzed as they apply to the North Central Texas aviation system.

Additionally, the most recent North Central Texas system plans were performed prior to construction of Fort Worth Alliance Airport and the closure of Naval Air Station Dallas in 1998. So, there is a need to identify further effects on the region’s aviation system through the system planning process and to incorporate these findings into regional planning documents.

Funding for General Aviation Airport Capital Improvement Projects

The TxDOT Aviation Capital Improvement Program is a plan for general aviation airport development in Texas and details the potential projects based on the anticipated funding levels of the Federal Aviation Administration Airport Improvement Program and the Texas Aviation Facilities Development Program. The Improvement Program facilitates general aviation airport development in Texas.

Through multi-year programming, the Federal Aviation Administration, TxDOT and airport sponsors are able to anticipate airports’ needs and accommodate changes in project scope and cost, and schedule improvements more easily. The project participants know when projects are scheduled, enabling them to plan for implementation.

— For more information, read the current TxDOT Aviation Capital Improvement Projects Report online at txdot.gov
Corporate and business aviation continue leading general aviation growth, driving the importance of general aviation airport sustainability both economically and environmentally. To meet the future demands in aviation and to efficiently increase capacity, general aviation can expect changes in:

- Airspace
- Cockpit Avionics and Flight Procedures
- Weather Data Reporting
- Automation and Communication Technologies
- Aircraft Design

As North Central Texas grows, regional airports will be granted opportunities to assume new, innovative and economically stable roles to meet future aviation capacity and demand.

**Future Changes in General Aviation**

**Airspace, Avionics, Data and Procedures**

In an effort to modernize the national airspace system, the Federal Aviation Administration is developing the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) to address airspace capacity limitations. NextGen will promote improved safety and efficiency in airspace management with three-dimensional satellite-based navigation, “real time” up-linked weather information, communications data and collision-avoidance networks.

One of many revolutionary NextGen technologies and part of the airspace system overhaul is the Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast System (ADS-B). Primarily, ADS-B will contribute to the NextGen initiative utilizing global positioning systems (GPS) to provide accurate and timely airspace-surveillance capabilities to air traffic controllers and pilots operating aircraft close to each other. Additionally, both the public and the environment will benefit from the implementation of NextGen for several reasons. Among them are reduced noise and fuel consumption through the advancement of safer and more efficient flight operations such as continuous descent approaches.

At local general aviation airports, implementation of NextGen technology has resulted in the installation of new GPS area navigation approaches that include benefits such as:

- Point-to-Point Navigation
- Enhanced Route Flexibility and Navigation
- Increased Instrument Flight Rule Service to Helicopters
Future General Aviation Aircraft Design

Future general aviation aircraft will be designed and manufactured to:

- Reduce flight times using modern avionics equipped with GPS navigation
- Be lighter and more durable due to composite materials that extend aircraft life expectancy
- Decrease environmental impacts with reduced noise and emissions using alternative “clean” fuels
- Increase range of flights using more efficient aircraft engines

As new aircraft enter the general aviation market, significant growth potential has centered on light sport aircraft (LSA) – licensed by the Federal Aviation Administration in 2005. Widespread interest in LSA shows promise for this new aircraft market, which recorded 1,118 aircraft registrations from 2004-2008.

Adding to the LSA’s success are revised airman medical standards for this category of aircraft, which allow more pilots the opportunity to begin flying if they hold a valid driver's license.

Understanding the impact of changes to the aviation industry in North Central Texas is important to effectively plan for aviation access and facility development. Future advancements in aviation will aid the regional aviation system, its utility, efficiencies and its profitability.
Local Support for General Aviation Airports

Ultimately the best way to support general aviation is to be . . .

**INVOLVED**

- Inform communities of general aviation’s importance
- Notify airport managers of public outreach opportunities
- Volunteer to support general aviation
- Organize to protect the sustainability of local general aviation airports
- Listen to community voices
- Verify general aviation airport infrastructure is adequate
- Educate the public on general aviation’s economic and recreational value
- Determine solutions to incompatible land use
**NCTCOG Executive Board 2010-2011**

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<td>Secretary-Treasurer</td>
<td>Bobbie Mitchell</td>
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<td>Past President</td>
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**Regional Transportation Council 2010-2011**

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<td>Director</td>
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**Surface Transportation Technical Committee**

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<td>Chair</td>
<td>Ruben Delgado</td>
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**Aviation Management Staff**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Morris, P.E.</td>
<td>Director of Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dan Kessler</td>
<td>Assistant Director of Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Mallonee</td>
<td>Senior Transportation Planner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Branum</td>
<td>Transportation Planner II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Wilson</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristy Libotte Keener</td>
<td>Graphic Design Coordinator</td>
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What Is NCTCOG?

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) is a voluntary association of local governments within the 16-county North Central Texas region. The agency was established in 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional development. North Central Texas is a 16-county region with a population of 6.6 million and an area of approximately 12,800 square miles. NCTCOG has 240 member governments, including all 16 counties, 169 cities, 24 independent school districts, and 31 special districts.

Since 1974, NCTCOG has served as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area. The Regional Transportation Council (RTC) is the policy body for the MPO. The RTC consists of 40 members, predominantly local elected officials, overseeing the regional transportation planning process. NCTCOG’s Transportation Department is responsible for support and staff assistance to the RTC and its technical committees, which comprise the MPO policy-making structure.

We would like your comments...

If you have questions or comments regarding the transportation and air quality programs of the North Central Texas Council of Governments and the Regional Transportation Council or need additional information, please contact the NCTCOG Transportation Department at 817-695-9240, by fax at 817-640-3028, via e-mail: transinfo@nctcog.org, or visit our website at www.nctcog.org/trans.

Regional Mobility Initiatives Issues

- Advanced Transportation Management, March 1996
- Air Quality, July 1996
- Traffic Congestion, October 1996
- Multimodal Solutions in the North Central Corridor, July 1997
- Toll Roads, February 1998
- Major Investment Studies, August 1998
- The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, October 1998
- High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes, December 1998
- Travel Demand Forecasting Procedures, June 1999
- Commuter Traffic, December 2000
- Pedestrian Transportation, August 2002
- Metropolitan Planning Organization, November 2002
- Rail Station Access, February 2003
- Traffic Congestion, October 2004
- Regional Rail, October 2005
- Goods Movement, January 2006
- North Texas Regional ITS Architecture, December 2006
- SAFETEA-LU, May 2007
- Metropolitan Planning Organization, August 2007
- Air Quality, September 2007
- The Congestion Management Process, April 2008
- Traffic Congestion, December 2008

The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors who are responsible for the opinions, findings, and conclusions presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or the Texas Department of Transportation. This document was prepared in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration.
Aviation Terms to Know

General Aviation - any non-scheduled aircraft operations excluding the military.

Fixed Based Operator (FBO) - a commercial business authorized to provide services at an airport such as fueling, hangar services, tie-down and parking, aircraft rental and maintenance, flight instruction, etc.

Avionics - electronics designed for use in aircraft.

Continuous Descent Approach - landing an aircraft using a constant descent angle that reduces noise and fuel consumption.

Airport Sustainability - an approach to managing an airport to ensure Economic viability, Operational efficiency, Natural resource conservation, and Social responsibility (EONS) of the airport.

Air Taxi Services - passenger or cargo transport services operating on-demand.

For more information about NCTCOG aviation planning or to view North Central Texas general aviation media and public outreach materials please visit: www.nctcog.org/aviation
For more information:

Phone: 817-695-9240
E-mail: transinfo@nctcog.org
Web: www.nctcog.org/trans
Social media: Facebook.com/nctcogtrans
Twitter.com/nctcogtrans

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