

Chapter One: Overview of the System Plan

The state of Iowa has a rich history in aviation covering more than 100 years. Iowa's aviation system consists of 117 public use airports that support over one million annual aircraft operations, more than 2,800 based aircraft and 6,991 pilots. The aviation system in Iowa provides important transportation, economic and quality of life functions. The 2009 report *Uses and Benefits of Aviation in Iowa* estimated that the aviation system in Iowa supports an estimated 47,000 jobs and an associated annual payroll of \$2.7 billion. The overall economic output related to aviation is \$5.4 billion. Maintaining and developing an air transportation system that can sustain and grow that level of economic support is important to the future of Iowa's business climate and economy.

In an effort to ensure that the aviation system continues to meet the needs of existing and future users, it is important to plan at both the individual airport level and the state level. Each airport is responsible for its own planning efforts through the traditional master planning process. Planning at the state level is done through the Iowa Aviation System Plan process.

The Iowa Department of Transportation Office of Aviation (Office of Aviation), working closely with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), strives to ensure that Iowa's system of airports is positioned to meet the needs of businesses, residents and visitors to the state. The Office of Aviation's mission is to support a safe and comprehensive air transportation system, meeting the vision for Iowa's aviation system:

**Office of Aviation
Vision for Iowa Airports:**

"To have safe, quality facilities and services that support transportation demands while meeting economic and quality of life needs in the state."

The 2004 Iowa Aviation System Plan provided a solid foundation for the state's aviation planning efforts. The 2004 plan established goals and objectives for the development of the airports within the state over the past six years. This study outlined a number of development objectives as well as follow-on studies to enhance Iowa's air transportation system. Many of the recommendations and studies have been accomplished since the adoption of the 2004 study. The 2004 Iowa Aviation System Plan was a valuable resource tool for decision makers to guide development of the aviation system.

To continue planning for the future, the Office of Aviation initiated a 2010 Iowa Aviation System Plan update. The 2010 update will provide a blueprint for the development of the system over the next twenty years. The 2010 Iowa Aviation System Plan update evaluates the current system compared to the needs of the aviation system users during the next twenty years. Recommendations to enhance the aviation system provide the framework for making informed decisions related to the development of the airports within the state system.

This chapter describes the system planning process and the inter-relationship with the national and local planning processes.

1.1 System Planning Overview

The FAA provides guidance on developing state aviation system plans in Advisory Circular 150/5070-7 *The Airport System Planning Process*. A state system plan provides the blueprint for developing a system that meets the air transportation needs for users of the aviation system. The state aviation system plan is used as a tool by the FAA, the Office of Aviation, planning agencies, local decision makers, and airport sponsors as development and operational decisions are determined. The planning includes public input through an advisory committee and public input meetings.

There are three primary planning purposes for developing a state system plan:

- Determine the system's goals and objectives that will serve as the framework to meet the current and future needs. The goals and objectives established during this planning process considered a full range of system users including general aviation, commercial air carriers, cargo operators, military operations, agricultural operations and medical uses.
- Determine measurable benchmarks for the future development of the system to document improvements; and
- Provide the framework for decision makers to implement the recommendations that will help ensure an aviation system that will meet the needs of users, consistent with established goals and objectives.

The system planning process uses a systematic approach. This update used the 2004 Iowa Aviation System Plan as a framework for discussion. The planning steps included:

- Revising goals and objectives for an aviation system that will meet the needs of the system users over the twenty year planning period. Six goals were established for the 2010 update: safety and security; infrastructure and user support; accessibility; economic support; coordination with local planning, and education and outreach. These goals are discussed in the following chapter.
- Identifying performance measures to evaluate the current operation of the existing aviation system within the state.
- Inventorying the current airport facilities and services, with particular attention paid to the facilities and services that contribute to meeting the goals and objectives.
- Evaluating the roles of each airport within the overall system.
- Forecasting future demand of aviation activities in order to provide a target for the types of facilities and services that will be necessary to meet future needs.
- Evaluating the current system compared to those facilities and services identified as necessary during demand forecasting, resulting in a summary that highlights the system strengths, inadequacies, and overlaps.
- Developing options and cost estimates to address the infrastructure needs identified in the system assessment, to provide decision makers with a general estimate of the financial costs involved to meet the system goals.
- Developing recommendations for the aviation system to meet the needs of users over the next twenty years.

Public input is important throughout the planning process. An aviation system plan technical committee, consisting of airport managers, pilots, fixed base operators, planners, and community leaders, was established to provide input at each stage of the plan. **Appendix A** at the end of this report lists the individuals that participated in the technical advisory committee. A web site was established to provide progress updates and a forum for public input. Two public input meetings were held early in the planning process (October 2009) to identify how the 2004 plan was used, what was needed in the new plan, and to how to address current issues important to aviation users in Iowa. Four additional public input meetings were held after draft recommendations were developed in November 2010. A summary of each public input meeting is provided in **Appendix B** at the end of this report.

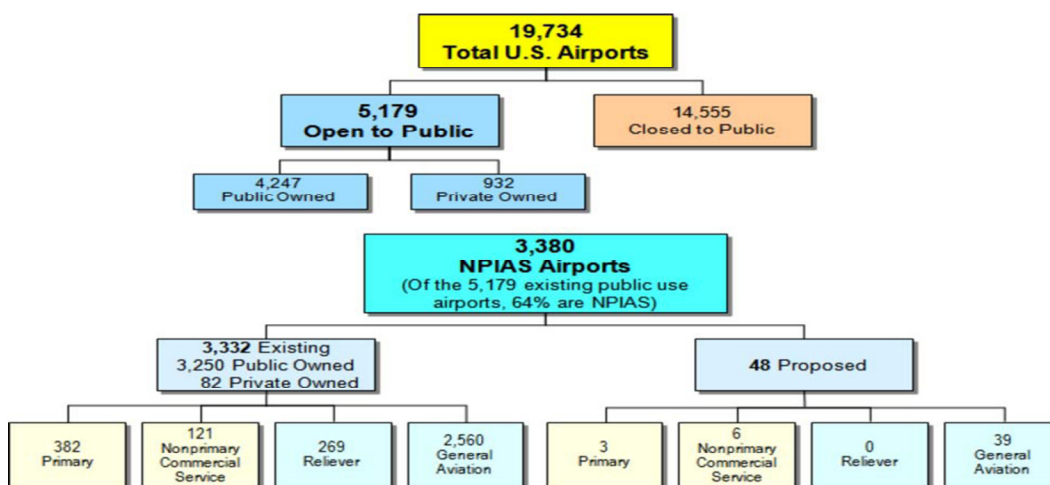
1.2 National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS)

The NPIAS is a biennial report developed by the FAA for Congress that describes the national airport system and identifies the five-year development needs for airports that are included in the national system. The NPIAS is used by the FAA to guide and administer federal funding for airport projects. In order for an airport to be eligible to receive Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant funding, it must be included in the NPIAS. Future airport specific projects listed in the NPIAS are eligible to receive AIP grant funding when justified by the airport and consistent with the state's aviation system plan.

The 2011-2015 NPIAS identified 3,380 public use airports significant to the national air transportation system. The NPIAS categorizes airports as primary (more than 10,000 annual passenger enplanements), commercial service (more than 2,500 passenger enplanements), reliever (relieves a primary airport operating at more than sixty percent capacity), and general aviation airports. To be included in the NPIAS, an airport must be part of the state aviation plan, have at least ten based aircraft, be located more than thirty minutes driving time from another NPIAS airport, and be governed by an eligible sponsor.

Figure 1-1 illustrates the classifications of the airports within the most recent NPIAS.

Figure 1-1: Existing and Proposed Airports by Ownership and Use (February 2010)

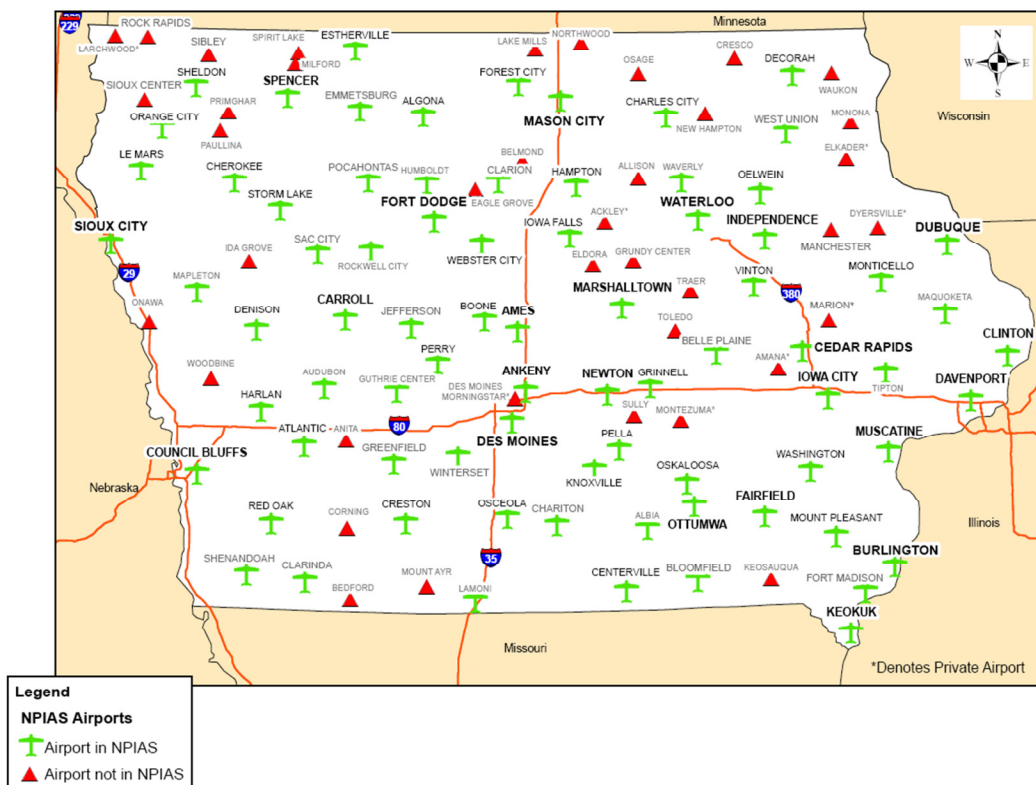


Source: 2011-2015 *National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems*

Seventy-eight (78) current and two proposed public use airports in Iowa are included in the NPIAS: six are categorized as primary airports, two are commercial service airports, two relievers, and sixty-eight (68) general aviation airports.

While the NPIAS reviews the aviation system on a national level, the state aviation system plan reviews the aviation system on the state level. Public use airports not included in the NPIAS are included in the state aviation system plan. The 2010 Iowa Aviation System Plan update includes thirty-one (31) public owned airports not in the NPIAS, as well as eight private owned-public use airports as identified in **Figure 1-2**. While these airports were not considered as having national significance in the current NPIAS, these airports will be reviewed to identify their roles within the state and an analysis completed to see if any meet requirements to be included in the NPIAS.

Figure 1-2: NPIAS/Non-NPIAS Airports



Source: Kirkham Michael (2010)

Airports eligible for inclusion in the NPIAS must be identified in the state aviation system plan. Non-NPIAS airports that meet NPIAS entry requirements, as identified in **Table 1-1**, and provide justification may be recommended to the FAA for inclusion into the NPIAS. Proposed airports with intentions to replace an existing NPIAS facility are also eligible for inclusion. Recommendation in a state aviation system plan does not guarantee an

airport will be included in the NPIAS, nor does inclusion guarantee federal AIP funding, as these are subject to review by the FAA and are based on agency priorities and objectives.

Table 1-1: NPIAS Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility requirements for NPIAS inclusion

1. Public use airport that is:
 - Publicly owned.
 - Privately owned but designated a reliever by FAA.
 - Privately owned but has scheduled air service and at least 2,500 enplanements annually.
2. Ten (10) based aircraft or engines within five years.
3. Serves a community located at least a 30 minute drive from nearest NPIAS airport.
4. Eligible sponsor willing to undertake ownership and development of the airport.

Source: National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems

1.3 Airport Planning

Local airports develop Airport Layout Plans (ALPs) and/or master plans to guide development at the local level. These local plans should refer to the state system plan for guidance as to objectives to meet the role of the airport within the state system. Individual airport reports developed as part of the system plan can be used by the local airport to provide information to decision makers. The state system provides objectives for local airports; however, local airport development may exceed Iowa Aviation System Plan objectives if justification is established.

1.4 Summary

The aviation system of the state of Iowa plays an important role in the transportation system and economy of the state and the nation. Planning, as part of the 2010 Iowa Aviation System Plan, provides a blueprint to prioritize and coordinate investments in the aviation facilities. As operational standards and technology continue to change, infrastructure and facility needs may change as well. Travelers' needs, preferences, and expectations evolve and produce demands for new and improved facilities and amenities at an airport.