

**APPENDIX B
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AIRPORT SYSTEMS**

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The Airport and Airway Improvement Act of 1982 directed the Secretary of Transportation to prepare, publish, and revise every two years a national airport system plan – the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) - for the development of public-use airports in the United States. The NPIAS is a system that emphasizes system planning and development to meet current and future aviation needs; it includes development considered necessary to provide a safe, efficient, and integrated airport system meeting the needs of civil aviation, national defense, and the United States Postal Service. It takes into account, amongst other things, the relationship of each airport to the rest of the transportation system in a particular area, the forecast of technological developments in aeronautics, and the development forecast in other modes of transportation.

Projects eligible for funding under the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) must be included in the NPIAS. The NPIAS currently includes 3,364 of the 5,314 airports open to the public. Approximately 1,000 publicly owned, public use airports are not included because they do not meet the minimum entry criteria of ten based aircraft, are within 20 miles of a NPIAS airport, or are located at inadequate sites and cannot be expanded and improved to provide safe and efficient airport facilities. The remaining airports that are excluded from the NPIAS are privately owned, public use airports that are not included because they are located at inadequate sites, are redundant to publicly owned airports, or have too little activity to qualify for inclusion. In addition, nearly 14,000 civil landing areas are not open to the general public and are not included in the NPIAS.

Airport facilities included in the NPIAS are classified under two different categories: service level and airport role.

B.1 SERVICE LEVEL

The airport service level reflects the type of public use the airport provides to the community and the funding categories established by Congress to assist in airport development. The following list defines the different types of service levels:

- Commercial service airports are public airports that enplane in excess of 2,500 or more annual passengers and receive aircraft offering scheduled passenger service.
- Primary airports are commercial service airports that have more than 10,000 annual enplaned passengers.
- Large hub airports are those primary airports that enplane at least one percent of total U.S. passenger enplanements.
- Medium hub airports are those primary airports that enplane between 0.25 percent and one percent of total U.S. passenger enplanements.

- Small hub airports are those primary airports that enplane between 0.05 percent and 0.25 percent of the total U.S. passenger enplanements.
- Non-hub primary service airports are those primary airports that enplane less than 0.05 percent of all commercial passenger enplanements but more than 10,000 annual enplanements.
- Cargo service airports are served by aircraft providing air transportation of property only, including mail, with an aggregate annual aircraft landing weight in excess of 100,000 thousand pounds.
- Reliever airports provide substantial capacity or instrument training relief to a commercial service airport that serves a metropolitan statistical area with a population of at least 250,000 persons or has at least 250,000 annual enplaned passengers and operates at 60 percent of its capacity; or would be operated at such a level before being relieved by one or more reliever airports; or is subject to restrictions that limit activity that would otherwise reach 60 percent of capacity. An airport not meeting these criteria may be included in the NPIAS as a reliever airport if it is so designed in a state, regional, or metropolitan system plan and the FAA concurs with that portion of the plan.
- General aviation airports that receive U.S. mail services, are listed as a scheduled stop by an air carrier transporting mail pursuant to a current contract with the U.S. Postal Service, or area otherwise designated by USPS and served through a public airport are included in the plan. A general aviation airport can also be listed if it is included in a state system plan, serves a community more than 30 minutes from the nearest existing or proposed airport included in the NPIAS, is forecasted to have 10 based aircraft during the short-term planning period, and has an eligible sponsor willing to undertake ownership and development of the airport.
- Public use heliports that do not meet other service level criteria but are included in the plan if they make significant contributions to public transportation. Helicopter landing areas are included in the plan if they have at least four based rotorcrafts or 800 annual itinerant operations, or 400 itinerant operations by air taxi rotorcraft.

There are currently 546 commercial service airports included in the NPIAS; of these, 422 have more than 10,000 enplanements and are classified as primary airports. Primary airports receive an annual apportionment of at least one million dollars in AIP funding, when funding levels meet or exceed \$3.2 billion, with the exact amount determined by the number of enplaned passengers. Of these, 31 are classified as large hub commercial airports and account for nearly 70 percent of all passenger enplanements. Large hub airports tend to focus on airline passenger and freight operations and have limited general aviation activity.

Reliever airports are typically high capacity general aviation airports in major metropolitan areas. These specialized airports provide pilots with attractive alternatives to using the congested hub airports. There are 260 reliever airports that average 228 based aircraft and together account for 27 percent of the Nation's general aviation fleet.

General aviation airports are typically located in communities that do not have commercial service and account for enough activity, usually at least ten based aircraft, and are located a minimum of 20 miles from the nearest NPIAS airport. There are 2,558 general aviation airports included in the NPIAS and tend to be distributed on a one-per-county basis in rural areas. These airports average 32-based aircraft and account for nearly 38 percent of the Nation's general aviation fleet. These airports tend to be of particular importance to rural areas.

B.2 ROLE

An airport included in the NPIAS is further classified into one of four basic service levels, which describe the type of service that the airport currently provides to the community and is anticipated to provide to the community at the end of the five-year planning period. The four roles include:

- PR – primary commercial service
- CM – non-primary commercial service
- RL – reliever
- GA – general aviation airport